

**Animal Dialectics:
Towards a Critical Theory of Animals
and Society**

Zipporah Weisberg

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Abstract

Building on the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School, Marxian psychoanalytic theory, and existential phenomenology, this dissertation argues that there is a direct correlation between animal exterminationism—or the systematic annihilation of animals as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life in both theory and practice—and the psychosocial, ethical, and political impoverishment of the human subject in late capitalist modernity. The increasing biotechnological manipulation of nonhuman animals, which enables human beings to seamlessly integrate them with the machinery of production, signals the final and most devastating moment in the history of nonhuman animals' subjugation so far. Animal extermination is not isolated, but is inextricably linked with the repression of human animality. Animal extermination compounds humans' self-estrangement under capitalism, and has led to a host of neuroses and pathological tendencies such as ambivalence, guilt, and misplaced aggression, among other things. However, while the mutual alienation of human and nonhuman animals appears to have reached unprecedented heights in the twenty-first century, so has awareness about the richness of animal subjectivities. The recent rise of animal studies has contributed to the destabilization of the prejudicial presupposition that humans and animals are separated by a vast metaphysical gulf. Unfortunately, with its enthusiasm for boundary dissolution and hybridity, the posthumanist strand of animal studies risks re-affirming rather than undermining the logic of late capitalism, which thrives on the violation of ontological distinctions between humans, animals, and technics. Other traditions, such as phenomenology and ethology, strike a better balance between asserting the self-unity and

co-relationality of the subject and therefore offer a superior platform for restoring, reconciling, and re-enchanting human and nonhuman animal subjects. Despite the anthropocentrism endemic to all forms of humanism, we ought to revive rather than abandon the Left humanist project because its fundamental aims and tenets—namely, the defence of the subject against its reification under capitalism, the pursuit of universal responsible freedom, the revival of the dialectical tradition, and the belief in historical progress—can be easily purged of their anthropocentric biases. When re-invented beyond the human, Left humanism provides an excellent framework for the development of a coherent and realizable interspecies emancipatory project.

For my four-legged friends (you know who you are), who make me feel at home in the world.

...

And for the forsaken ones, whose unspeakable suffering tears me apart.

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The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.

Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

...the critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgment.

Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*

The Orphic and Narcissistic experience of the world negates that which sustains the world of the performance principle. The opposition between man and nature, subject and object, is overcome. Being is experienced as gratification which unites man and nature so that the fulfillment of man is at the same time the fulfillment, without violence, of nature. In being spoken to, loved, and cared for, flowers and springs and animals appear as what they are—beautiful, not only for those who address and regard them, but for themselves, 'objectively.'

Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*

Introduction

My dissertation focuses on the dialectical relationship between humans' domination of nonhuman animals in late capitalist society and what critical social theorists have long argued is the human subject's increasing psychic and social alienation since early modernity. I draw principally on the critiques of alienation under capitalism launched by Karl Marx in the mid-nineteenth century and adapted by the critical theorists of the early Frankfurt School: Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse in the mid-twentieth century. I seek to expand these thinkers' respective discussions of human alienation from and repression of "nature" as a whole to an analysis of the psychosocial implications of humans' tyrannical relationship to other animals in particular. I contend that there is an inextricable link between the degradation of the animal subject in theory, the normalization of violence against animals in the agricultural, medical, entertainment, and fashion industries—which together comprise the so-called "animal industrial complex"—and the reification of human consciousness.¹ The subordination of human and animal life to what Marcuse calls "technological rationality" and Jacques Ellul calls "technique"—or the totalitarian organization of social, economic, intellectual, and erotic activity according to the principles of technological, scientific, and economic rationalization, and the concomitant instrumentalization of reason and nature—has had especially deleterious effects on human-animal relationality.

Animal Exterminationism

The central assumption underlying my analysis is that a collusion of forces since classical antiquity has constituted what we can fairly call a *war of extermination* against other animals.² Animal exterminationism on my usage refers to five things: 1) the organization of thought and being along technical lines that prioritize calculability, efficiency and control over nonhuman animals, 2) the actual harmonization of human and animal life-activity with technique, and the corresponding repression of and estrangement from human animality, 3) the cultivation of a technological consciousness to encourage humans' active participation and/or complicity in mass atrocities against a nonhuman animals, 4) the belief that human and nonhuman life can and ought to be "improved" by way of "technological enhancement," and 5) the marginalization, demonization, and criminalization of opposition to such practices. Animals are exterminated in the sense of being "drive[n] beyond the boundaries" of meaningful existence, and "destroyed completely" or "completely wiped out" as subjects.³

Although the term "extermination" may appear hyperbolic, it is in fact more precise and more accurate than other terms such as "oppression" or "exploitation" that are typically used to describe animals' systemic abuse. It goes without saying that nonhuman animals in the animal industrial complex are "oppressed" in the sense of being "ke[pt]down by the cruel or unjust use of power," and "burden[ed] with harsh, rigorous impositions...crush[ed]," and "trampl[ed] down."⁴ Pigs, calves, and hens immobilized in gestation crates, veal crates, or battery cages, for example, are *literally* "kept down" and "crushed" by human power. These and other animals are also "exploited" in the sense of

being instrumentalized or “ma[de] unethical use of for [our] own advantage or profit.”⁵ As unwaged labourers, instruments (e.g. “tools for research”), and commodities, animals in factory farms, laboratories, fur farms, circuses, and other sites of violence are the epitome of the exploited. But horrible as oppression and exploitation are, these terms do not capture the full extent of animals’ treatment today. Oppression and exploitation are only two aspects of the overarching and more comprehensive program of extermination which seeks not only to subdue and use animals, but, as noted above, to eliminate them as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life.

On Tom Regan’s definition, “subjects-of-a-life” are beings who “bring the mystery of a unified psychological presence to the world,” they “possess a variety of sensory, cognitive, conative, and volitional capacities,” they “see and hear, believe and desire, remember and anticipate, plan and intend.” They are subjects-of-a-life because “what happens to them matters to them” and because “physical pleasure and pain . . . but also fear and contentment, anger and loneliness, frustration and satisfaction, cunning and imprudence” are important dimensions of their subjective experience.⁶ Regan regrettably limits subjects-of-a-life to “mentally normal mammals of a year or more,” but I broaden its scope significantly to encompass all mammals, birds, fish, insects, and many invertebrates, such as shark and octopuses. I also adjust Regan’s term to subjects-of-a-*meaningful-life* to better reflect the *phenomenological* understanding of subjectivity as grounded in sensuous and conscious *intentionality* and world-making, and to emphasize the importance of recognizing that other animals’ lives are meaningful *for them*, even if the

source and experience of meaning might be qualitatively different from that of human beings.

In the context of an exterminationist regime animals are prevented from fulfilling their entelechy; they are forced to exist as living negations of who and what they *are*. Exterminationism therefore involves what Marcuse describes as the negation of a being's "essence." In Marcuse's words, "In this universe, there are modes of being in which men and things are 'by themselves' and 'as themselves,' and modes in which they are *not*—that is, in which they exist in distortion, limitation or denial of their nature (essence)."⁷ By "essence" Marcuse does not mean some fixed or predetermined set of characteristics, nor a set of traits to which a being can be *reduced*. Rather, building on the explicitly *dynamic* Marxian conception of essence and "human nature," Marcuse's conception of essence refers instead to the particular range of needs, behaviours, talents, skills, and potentialities that are constitutive of each being (human and nonhuman), the expression of which is integral to the being's flourishing. It is undeniable that as reified commodities who are assimilated in every way to the laws of production, animals exist in total distortion, limitation, and denial of their nature and essence. A sow confined in a gestation crate for months or years on end is, for all intents and purposes, no longer a sow; she is *pure pain*, the embodiment of capital's excesses and cruelties; a chimpanzee confined in isolation in a steel cage in a cinderblock laboratory, poked and prodded, cut open and sewn shut again for twenty-five years until his premature expiration from all the suffering, is no longer a chimpanzee, but a monstrous caricature of himself; a self-mutilating and cannibalizing mink gone cage-mad is no longer a mink, but a crazed, tormented mockery of what a

mink is and ought to be; an elephant permanently chained by the foot in a tiny concrete enclosure for years on end, carted around from country to country on long, arduous journeys in inclement weather, released only to perform ridiculous tricks for human spectators that she “learned” through years of relentless physical and psychological abuse and torment, is no longer an elephant but the picture of abjection—a degraded object of human amusement and derision. In all these cases, the animals’ existence is defined by brutal, involuntary self-negation.

It should be noted that my use of the term exterminationism is not to be confused with other uses of the term in the context of animal studies. Donna Haraway suggested that vegans—who refuse to consume animal-derived and animal-tested products, or to participate in activities otherwise involving the instrumentalization, harm, and killing of animals—are “exterminationists.” Her argument is based on the fallacious notion that if everyone adopted a vegan diet, domesticated animals who are brought into existence for human use and consumption would become extinct.⁸ But veganism, which calls for the rescue and rehabilitation of currently enslaved animals, and which opposes the endless breeding and proliferation of animal slaves and commodities, is a far cry from exterminationism. The chief objective of an ethically and politically motivated veganism is to *enable* and *promote* meaningful life—that is, to create the conditions for all animals to lead fulfilling lives, to flourish in the world as self-determining subjects. That said, some abolitionist animal rights theorists, such as Gary Francione, advocate a kind of mass sterilization policy for domesticated animals, which could be regarded as “exterminationist.” Francione argues that not only should we stop breeding nonhuman

animals for human use, but also that we should not allow any domesticated animals, including companion animals, to reproduce at all. The primary reason he provides for such a radical proposal is that because domesticated animals have been bred to suit human needs, uses, and tastes, they effectively *embody* the very spirit of human supremacism.⁹ While Francione is right to criticize breeding and domestication for the domination it involves, his call to ban their reproduction is deeply troubling and myopic inasmuch as it fails to account for the fact that controlling animals' reproductive activities is also part and parcel of domination (even if some practices such as spaying and neutering cats and dogs are very likely more preferable for *them* in the short term given the likelihood that many if not most of their offspring will end up homeless, hungry, and awaiting adoption or euthanasia in a shelter).¹⁰ Moreover, as Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka aptly point out, such a perspective reflects the "flat moral landscape, devoid of particularized relationships or obligations," which characterizes traditional animal rights theory (ART) so far.¹¹ Human beings have developed complex relationships with all sorts of domesticated animals. There is no reason to believe that we cannot transform those relationships into mutually reinforcing ones. Francione's position, in other words, fails to recognize that in preventing other animals from coming into existence we unjustifiably ignore the fact that humans' lives are indelibly shaped by our interactions with domesticated animals of all kinds, and that it is possible for us to live together harmoniously, outside the framework of domination. Despite these and other major problems with Francione's position, his proposed policy is not exterminationist as such, at least in the sense in which I am using the term. As noted above, exterminationism on my

usage refers to the blanket denial of animals' claim to subjecthood which, at least in principle, Francione is seeking to reverse with his suggested approach.

I am not the first to characterize our relationship with other animals as a war; many other animal studies theorists use the same language. Regan, for example, has argued that "There is an undeclared war being waged everyday against countless millions of nonhuman animals."¹² Jacques Derrida has also remarked that there is a "war on pity," or, more specifically, a "war . . . being waged between, on the one hand, those who violate not only animal life but even and also [the] sentiment of compassion, and, on the other hand, those who appeal for an irrefutable testimony to this pity," a war that is "probably ageless" but that is now "passing through a critical phase."¹³ Carol Adams likewise suggests that our civilization is waging a "war on compassion."¹⁴ Dinesh Wadiwel puts it most bluntly and argues that the "war against animals," is equally if not more terrifying than other political wars because of its longevity, because of the cruelties it perpetuates, and most of all, because it is not recognized as a war, but is in fact regarded as perfectly morally (and culturally) acceptable set of practices conforming to the rule of law. In his words, the war against animals

is a protracted war, a war that arguably grows in intensity, a war that has no foreseeable end. This is a war that operates under the guise of peace, constructed more often than not within the rule of law. This is a war that does not appear to be a war, yet—as the casualties demonstrate—it bears the unmistakable hallmarks of continuing warlike domination."¹⁵

Because there is no particular "enemy" to overcome, but an entire economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural infrastructure shaped expressly to at once conceal and openly facilitate and encourage the mass extermination of billions upon billions of helpless

creatures, it is a war that risks continuing in perpetuity. I would go further than Wadiwel and suggest that the war against animals bears the “unmistakable hallmarks” of continuing *genocidal*, or what we might call “*zoocidal*” domination.

As Charles Patterson and others have noted, there are numerous ideological and historical links between our war of extermination against nonhuman animals and other exterminationist campaigns, especially the Holocaust. Although a detailed examination of the overlap between these historical phenomena is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to highlight some of the key connections. The principle ideological link between animal extermination and the Nazi genocide is that in being classified and vilified as an “animal,” as “vermin,” or as “sub-human,” anyone, human or nonhuman, becomes subject to annihilation. Derrida has famously analyzed the exterminationist implications of the initial reduction of the myriad animal species that inhabit the earth to the single, homogenous category, “The Animal.” In an indirect allusion to the Biblical story in which Adam, as a mark of his dominion, is granted the right to name the animals God has created, Derrida writes,

...animal, what a word! *Animal* is a word that men have given themselves the right to give.... ‘The Animal,’ they say.... Men would be first and foremost those living creatures who have given themselves the word that enables them to speak of the animal with a single voice and designate it as the single being that remains without a response, without a word with which to respond.¹⁶

As we will discuss in more detail below, for several hundred years theologians, philosophers, and scientists have reduced animals to language-less, speech-less, reason-less automatons. As with the “culturally imperialized” in Iris Marion Young’s analysis of the “five faces of oppression,” the “species imperialized” are “stamped with an essence.” Not

the fluid essence of a self-creating being discussed earlier, but the *essentializing* essence which reduces particular animal subjects to a single set of undesirable characteristics and systematically obliterates their singularity. Animal essence is typically characterized by a “lack and negation” and “is often attached in some way to [animals’] bodies,” and therefore “cannot easily be denied.”¹⁷ As Derrida rightly points out, this “corralling” of animals into a static category is tantamount to their *erasure*.¹⁸ This erasure is as much literal or actual as it is conceptual. As Adorno, Patterson, and Marjorie Spiegel have observed, as soon as a human group is “othered” into the category “Animal,” their claim to existence, let alone their claim to a meaningful life, is revoked and they are vulnerable to *Vernichtung* (destruction, extermination). In Adorno’s words, “Auschwitz begins whenever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they’re only animals.”¹⁹ It is not without reason that Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister of the Third Reich, turned public opinion against Jews by comparing them to rats and pigs (e.g. “Jew-pigs”), and other animals.²⁰ In the Nazi genocide, and in all exterminationist regimes, being “animal” disqualifies one from subjectivity and life as such; to be defined as animal is to be defined as “life unworthy of life” (*Lebensunwerten Lebens*).²¹

Not coincidentally, there are notable historical overlaps between the industrial slaughter of animals in the Chicago stockyards, Henry Ford’s assembly-line automobile production, and Adolf Hitler’s program of mass extermination. As Patterson points out,

in his autobiography...Ford revealed that his inspiration for assembly-line production came for a visit he made as a young man to a Chicago slaughterhouse. ‘I believe that this was the first moving line ever installed,’ he wrote. ‘The idea [of the assembly line] came in a general way from the overhead trolley that the Chicago packers use in dressing beef.’²²

Ford and Hitler, Patterson explains further, were fond of each other and shared political views: Ford was an ardent anti-Semite and published a number of diatribes against Jews based on the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, while Hitler appropriated Ford's assembly-line production method to kill Jews and other "non-Aryans." To demonstrate his gratitude and devotion to his mentor, Hitler hung a life-sized portrait of Ford in his office at the Nazi headquarters in Munich.²³ Here we see not only the link between human and animal extermination, but also the intertwining of industrial capitalism and fascism.

There is also a connection between American eugenicists and agriculturalists and breeders.²⁴ Patterson reports, for example, that at meetings of the American Breeders' Association in the early twentieth century, participants began discussing the possibility of applying selective breeding techniques used on plants and animals to human beings.²⁵ In fact, poultry researcher Charles B. Davenport pioneered the American eugenics movement which eventually took hold in Germany in the form of a science known as "race hygiene," and which culminated in the Final Solution.²⁶ These historical overlaps between agriculture, automobile production, eugenics, and the extermination of the Jews are not accidental but the natural outcome of the ideological overlaps at their foundation.

Of course, there is one key difference between the Nazi genocide and animal extermination. As I will argue in chapter one, whereas the Nazi genocide typically involved the bodily *eradication* of the targeted group, animal extermination involves the bodily *integration* of nonhuman animals into the productive apparatus.²⁷ In practical terms, in the animal industrial complex animal extermination is equivalent to animals'

“production” both as unwaged labourers and as commodities. But this important difference notwithstanding, genocide and animal extermination share the fundamental goals of isolation, desubjectification, and annihilation, whatever form they take.

A Brief History of Animal Exterminationism

Animal studies scholars have long been trying to identify the key historical moments that created the conditions for what is now the systematic torture and murder of tens of billions of animals per year in the animal industrial complex today. Animal exploitation can be traced as far back as the prehistoric period. Certainly, humans have bred, hybridized, and otherwise used and exploited animals for thousands of years. As Patterson has pointed out, the subjugation and enslavement of nonhuman animals can be traced back to approximately eleven thousand years ago when hunter-gatherer communities in the Near East began to domesticate plants and animals.²⁸ Over time these early humans began to favour particular groups of animals or herds over which they learned to exert increasingly comprehensive control. They would claim ownership over a chosen herd by killing off the adults and capturing and confining the young. They developed breeding techniques that enabled them to effectively remodel animals’ bodies and behaviours—including diet, rate of growth, and reproductive activity—to more effectively exploit them for their bodies (flesh, skin, fur, milk, etc.) and labour. These early forms of exploitation involved many horrible tortures, including “castration, hobbling, branding, ear cropping,” and the use of “such devices as leather aprons, whips, prods, and eventually chains and collars,” many of which were later used to subdue, control, and brutalize human slaves.²⁹

The ideological foundations of our ruthless extermination of animals today, however, more likely took root in classical antiquity. This is because this period saw the first stirrings of binary thinking and of the view that humans' putative monopoly on reason, language, and self-consciousness conferred upon us a special metaphysical status, a presupposition which has persisted through the ages and has defined Western thought and shaped our moral landscape ever since. Paola Cavalieri suggests that the first of three pivotal moments in the history of animals' objectification can be traced to ancient Greece when there was a growing tension "between the idea of an original bond among all conscious beings and a contrasting global plan of rationalization of human and nonhuman exploitation."³⁰ Gary Steiner outlines one example of this tension. While Aristotle recognized a "continuum between human beings and animals," he nevertheless sought to "distinguish human beings on the basis of their rational capacities," which, in turn, led him to refuse them membership in the ethical and political community.³¹ Steiner explains that the Stoics eventually reconciled this conflict in Aristotle's thought (between humans' continuity with and exceptionality from other animals) "by elevating the dividing line between human beings and animals to the status of a cosmic principle," that is, to an irrefutable metaphysical truth.³² The moral implications of metaphysical dualism have been nothing short of devastating for nonhuman animals. "As nonrational beings," Steiner aptly notes, "animals are due less moral consideration than human beings, and on some accounts animals are due no moral consideration whatsoever."³³

The growing human supremacist worldview lent itself not only to animal exploitation and oppression but to extermination specifically, inasmuch as it emboldened

the human by systematically stripping nonhuman animals of any claim not only to reason, but to *subjectivity* as such. As Adorno and Horkheimer note, classical antiquity gave rise at once to instrumental rationality and the instrumentalization of nature—two sides of the same proverbial coin, which together formed the “enlightenment” project (not to be confused with the historical Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries). With the “extirpation of animism” in this period, nature and animals were purged of intentionality, will, and subjective particularity. “Nature, stripped of qualities, becomes the chaotic stuff of mere classification.”³⁴ In the process of instrumentalization all nonhuman beings are denied all “intrinsic value,” as Horkheimer terms it, and instead become a means to an end.³⁵ As nature is disenchanting thus, it is subjected to total reification—reduced to the status of a thing—a process that is compounded by the eventual emergence of capitalism. In the end, by the time we reach modernity, “The fate of animals in our world is symbolized by an item printed in newspapers of a few years ago. It reported that landing of planes in Africa were often hampered by herds of elephants and other beasts. Animals are considered simply as obstructers of traffic.”³⁶

Of course, there were a number of prominent dissenting voices on this issue in the ancient world. While, as Adorno and Horkheimer argue, Homer’s *Odyssey* is in part the story of the development of “rational man” and the “cunning of reason” as forces with which to overcome and subdue the “irrational” forces of nature (and myth), Steiner points out that both Homer and Hesiod “characterize the human-animal relation as a continuum rather than as a strict opposition.”³⁷ Meanwhile, pre-Socratic thinkers such as Pythagoras “espoused an ethic of kinship with other animals based on the doctrine of

metempsychosis or transmigration of souls,” and on this basis advocated vegetarianism, while Empedocles prohibited animal sacrifice and meat-eating.³⁸ However, all evidence points to the fact that these “holistic” perspectives were eventually displaced by dualist ones.³⁹

It goes without saying that the disenchantment of nature was compounded by the introduction of the Jewish and Christian biblical traditions. As is well known, the Jewish creation story establishes human supremacy and dominion over all creatures. Peter Singer reminds us that the creation story “allots human beings a special position in the universe, as beings that, alone of all living things, are God-like,” and also that other animals over whom they are granted dominion were created specifically for their use.⁴⁰ Consider the oft-cited passage from Genesis:

God said, ‘The earth shall bring forth particular species of living creatures, particular species of livestock, land animals, and beasts of the earth.’ It happened. God [thus] made particular species of beasts of the earth, particular species of livestock, and particular species of animals that walk the land. God saw that it was good. God said, ‘Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth—and every land animal that walks the earth.’ God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them. (Gen. 6:24-27)

Out of all the passages in Genesis, and indeed in the Pentateuch as a whole, this one has arguably had the greatest direct impact on shaping humans’ attitude towards themselves and other animals throughout history.

These ancient biblical and philosophical views were eventually reproduced and elaborated upon in the various strands of humanism that have developed since the Renaissance. Humanism very likely constitutes the chief ideological force underlying

animal exterminationism. On one hand, humanism is historically fluid and amorphous and is therefore notoriously difficult to define. As John Luik points out, “the concept of humanism suffers from an overabundance of definitions.”⁴¹ Humanism refers variously to educational reform, a movement towards secularization, the triumph of reason and science over religious faith, metaphysical assumptions concerning the nature of human subjectivity and being, and a political movement espousing universal equality and freedom for all human beings; it has been identified with a variety of historical periods, namely classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment; and it has liberal, existentialist, Marxist, socialist, and ecological articulations.⁴² While they diverge in many respects, however, these various strands of humanism are unified by “a series of interrelated concepts about the nature, defining characteristics, powers, education and values of human persons.”⁴³ The most central of these concepts is, of course, the superiority and exceptionality of human beings.

The musings of Italian Renaissance humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) encapsulate the human supremacist/exceptionalist spirit of humanism. Pico’s famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, for example, begins by pointing to the awe inspired in all of creation, even God’s minions, of human being’s unique nature. He proclaims that “man is the most fortunate of living things” and “deserving of all admiration,” admiration “which draws upon him the envy, not of the brutes alone, but of the astral beings and of the very intelligences which dwell beyond the confines of the world. A thing surpassing belief and smiting the soul with wonder.”⁴⁴ Pico goes so far as to declare that the human being rises above the “*fermenting dung-heap of the inferior world* teeming with every form of

animal life.”⁴⁵ Pico posits a clear hierarchy of beings, with plants at the bottom, animals in the middle, humans at the top, second only to God. Pico also argued that human beings had a special vantage point at “the centre of the world,” from which to view the rest of creation,”⁴⁶ a position that enables it to observe, investigate, and “contemplate the world” (and, presumably, thereby exert control over it).⁴⁷ At the same time, the human is a kind of microcosm of creation and embodies all dimensions of creaturely existence.⁴⁸ The human is made up of vegetable, animal, and intellectual/spiritual components. But the human is far from continuous with the rest of creation. Unlike all the other creatures, the human being can take on any form it wishes. If the human is beholden to the senses it will resemble other animals.⁴⁹ Human beings are exceptional, in other words, because they alone possess the capacity for self-transformation and transcendence, while other creatures are confined to perpetual immanence. If the human nourishes its rationality (by way of philosophical and theological contemplation) it will free itself from the constraints of the flesh and become one with the divine.⁵⁰ In Pico’s words,

At man’s birth the Father placed in him the seeds of every kind of life. The seeds that each man cultivates will grow and bear their fruit in him. If he cultivates the vegetable seeds, he will become a plant. If the seeds of sensation, he will grow into brute. If rational, he will come out a heavenly animal. If intellectual, he will be an angel, and a son of God. And if he is not contented with the lot of any creature but takes himself up into the centre of his own unity, then, made one spirit with God and settled in the solitary darkness of the Father, who is above all things, he will stand ahead of all things.⁵¹

The human being in this Renaissance humanist’s ontology can not only ascend to dwell amongst angels but, leaving its animal nature behind entirely, can surpass even them and unite with God as pure spirit. Of course, as Dale Jamieson points out, while

humanism technically emerged in the Italian Renaissance, “it looked back to the classical world.” After all, it was Protagoras who famously claimed that “man is the measure of all things.”⁵² Nevertheless, the Renaissance is a pivotal point in the development of exterminationism, not least because it announced human superiority with renewed zeal and vigour.

While Renaissance humanism helped lay the framework for the exterminationist worldview, other historical developments throughout modernity threatened to destabilize it. For example, the Copernican Revolution in the sixteenth century, which introduced the notion that Earth revolved around the Sun, and Galileo’s confirmation of this notion in the seventeenth century, seriously disrupted the long-standing Ptolemaic notion, re-asserted by Plato, that human beings were at the centre of the universe. As Steve Best has noted, “Not only did this fact contradict official Church dogma, the spatial decentering entailed a psychological decentering, moving the Earth and possibly humanity itself from the center of the picture to the margins.”⁵³ Troubling as this “psychological decentering” might have been, however, it was not powerful enough to irrevocably destabilize human exceptionalism. In fact, the threat it posed to humans’ status as the master species may have only added fuel to the proverbial anthropocentric fire. These tensions constitute what Best aptly describes as a “dialectics of decentering and recentering” that “would recur many times over.”⁵⁴ Most notably, Darwin’s theory of evolution in the Victorian era sparked yet another earth shattering “conceptual revolution” that undermined the claim of human uniqueness.⁵⁵ But, as another example of the dialectics of decentering and recentering, this rupture in the humanist supremacist worldview was ultimately

counterbalanced by an even more adamant commitment to the notion of human superiority. Not only did Social Darwinists corrupt Darwin's theory of natural selection to promote and justify glaring social, economic, and racial inequalities, but others also managed to undermine the powerful anti-anthropocentric streak running through Darwinian thought, in part by re-invoking Cartesianism.⁵⁶ In severing the evolutionary continuity between human and nonhuman animals that Darwin identified, the scientific humanists to which Best refers closed the gap between human beings and God and thereby re-established human supremacy.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, political humanisms, which according to James Hankins began to emerge in the sixteenth century with the political writings of Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas More, further reinforced human supremacism/exceptionalism.⁵⁸ Eighteenth century liberal humanism and its rhetoric of the "rights of man," for example, is grounded in the view that membership in the human species alone deems one worthy of rights. According to Tony Davies, it is with liberal humanism that the notion of "Man," or the human, as an abstract, universal subject is born. He attributes the birth of man to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) famous contention in *The Social Contract* (1762) that "*L'homme est ne libre, et partout il est dans les fers*" ("Man is born free, but everywhere in chains"), and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792).⁵⁹ By advancing a theory of natural law, natural rights, and natural man, contract theory helped solidify the notion of a common, essential identity between human beings to the exclusion of other animals. As Davies puts it, with the "abstract singularity and universality" of these thinkers' respective conceptions of man, "a full-blown essentialist humanism is generated."⁶⁰

Enlightenment humanism was also instrumental in confirming humans' superior status over all other animals. Though Enlightenment humanism radically departs from Renaissance humanism—not least because of its suspicion of religious authority—it perpetuates the view that rationality (or “understanding,” as it was commonly called) is the key to autonomy and freedom, and that human beings are distinguished from all other beings through their unique claim to all three qualities or capacities. For eighteenth-century Enlightenment humanist philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), for example, human freedom was inextricably bound to reason, a strictly human quality. As non-rational creatures, nonhuman animals are not only unworthy of direct duties of care, but also confined within the narrow contours of an existence devoid of the freedom potentially enjoyed by all human beings. Indeed, Kant likens unenlightened humans to animals, who must be carefully and cautiously led to their freedom by their “guardians,” much like domesticated animals on leashes—for the immediate acquisition of freedom is perilous to all.⁶¹ Nevertheless, while the *hoi poloi* resemble animals in Kant's view, they partake of humans' universal rational capacity, which set them apart from all other creatures. By the close of the nineteenth century, humanism not only advocated the powers of reason, but the power of science to uncover truth and promote the development of both the individual and society.⁶²

Three centuries earlier, the anthropocentrism engendered by humanism was compounded by the rise of the scientific revolution in the sixteenth century, the second pivotal moment Cavalieri has identified in the establishment of the regime of extermination.⁶³ The mechanistic turn in scientific thought and praxis heralded by

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and the reduction of animals to automata by René Descartes (1596-1650) paved the way for what is now virtually unchecked systemic violence against animals in the name of scientific “progress.” The mechanistic view of the animal body as lifeless mechanical materiality stands in stark contrast to the Aristotelian view that all human and nonhuman beings are comprised of a “soul,” which “is the cause and principle of the living body.”⁶⁴ According to Christopher Shields, the Aristotelian conception of the soul is primarily one of “organic” unity. For Aristotle, Shields explains, “any given body,” human and nonhuman, “is the body that it is because it is organized around a function which serves to unify the entire organism.”⁶⁵ In other words, the soul brings coherence to the body by providing it with intention, direction, and a single telos or purpose. Mechanistic science, in contrast, strips the nonhuman animal body of this internal unifying force and telos, and instead insists that all nonhuman animals are made up of a series of otherwise unrelated parts that work together efficiently to perform any number of functions. As is well known, while Descartes attributed to human beings a soul, which was “of a nature entirely independent of the body” and was therefore immortal and transcendent, he reduced nonhuman animals to machines held together by nuts and bolts, much like clocks.⁶⁶ By identifying animals with and as machines, Descartes precipitated another pivotal moment in the development of exterminationism: he not only condemned other animals to mere materiality, but he paradoxically denied them a claim to *animality*—which is to say, sensuous, embodied subjectivity. Although other animals excel at many activities in comparison to their human counterparts, Descartes maintained that this is only further proof of their mechanical nature: a machine can often perform a task more

efficiently than a human simply by virtue of it having been designed for that purpose.⁶⁷

Furthermore, while magpies, parrots, and many other animals have speech organs and all the “equipment” for creative speech, their alleged lack of reason prevents them from mobilizing these organs to actually *communicate*.

The ethical implications of Cartesian mechanism have proven disastrous for nonhuman animals. From a Cartesian or mechanistic perspective, animals’ cries at the hands of scientists are not regarded as expressions of a particular animal’s experience but rather are completely disconnected from the animal as such—they are simply sounds the machine-animal emits, which can be measured and analyzed in terms of degrees of intensity. By regarding animals as automata, Descartes and his followers were able to inflict excruciating tortures on them without anaesthetic, such as nailing dogs and other creatures to boards for circulation experiments without the slightest hesitation. Anyone who objected to the horrors of such heinously cruel experiments was mocked and derided, apparently for their inappropriate display of emotion, a tendency that has not diminished with time.⁶⁸ As Cavalieri has noted, by early modernity, the rise of the anti-vivisection movement in the Victorian period notwithstanding, “the only constraint left on [animals]’ treatment—the prohibition of cruelty” was effectively permanently lifted.⁶⁹ Moreover, by widening the metaphysical gap between humans and nonhumans that much more, Descartes laid the groundwork for the reduction of animals into extensions of the *machinery of production*, which defines their status today.

Meanwhile, in Bacon’s estimation nonhuman beings were not only devoid of soul but were ontologically and morphologically fluid—a core tenet of animal

exterminationism. In *The New Organon* Bacon lays out one of the principles of his new scientific method: “Towards the effecting of works, all that men do is to put together or put asunder natural bodies.”⁷⁰ Elsewhere he states that “on a given body to generate and superinduce a new nature or new natures, is the work and aim of human power.”⁷¹ Because of their apparent ontological indeterminacy, Bacon had no qualms calling for nonhuman animals’ unbridled manipulation and transformation—an attitude which, as we will see in chapter one, is eventually systematized in the form of animal biotechnology. To suggest that nonhuman animals have no essence or internal unity in and of themselves, to deny them ontological and species-integrity—not in the reductive sense of some pure, ahistorical type, but rather in the sense of a series of potentialities specific to a given species, the actualization of which is necessary for its members’ well-being—is to expel them once and for all from the category of subjects-of-a-meaningful life. Without a centre, or a foundation and set of species-specific boundaries within which to develop, nonhuman animals are nothing more than *functions* and *processes*. Later iterations of mechanistic thought, as propounded by Thomas Hobbes and Julien Offray de Le Mettrie in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the rising scientific ethos more generally confirmed humans’ status as masters of nature and the nonhuman.⁷²

Other scientific frameworks—especially behaviourism, one branch of comparative psychology founded in the early twentieth century by Ivan Pavlov and J.B. Watson—further perpetuated the reductive conception of animals and paved the way to their ontological erasure as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life. According to French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, behaviourism provided inadequate and flawed

frameworks for the investigation of both human and nonhuman experience and subjectivity. Like mechanistic science, behaviourism denies internal unity to nonhuman beings in favour of regarding their emotional, social, and physical responses as reflexes responding to stimuli. Merleau-Ponty is especially irked by the way behaviourism not only dismembers the embodied animal subject into a series of parts but also into *processes*. Behaviourism and reflex theory “decompos[e] the excitation and the reaction into a multitude of partial processes which are external to each other in time as well as in space.”⁷³ Behaviourism solidifies animals’ status as disjointed parts, with no internal cohesion or intentionality, both of which are integral to any recognizable form of subjectivity.

Finally, with the development of industrial capitalism in the early to mid-nineteenth century, the fate of other animals—to be forever treated as the “mere stuff of control,” to use Marcuse’s expression—was tragically sealed.⁷⁴ With the rise of capitalism, animals were hereafter not only reduced to use value but to their exchange value. The scientific method aimed to conquer nature in order to know nature and vice-versa, and in so doing it cultivated the conditions for the development of what Marcuse calls “productive operationalism,” or a “universe of self-propelling, productive control,” which facilitated the subordination of both nonhuman and human beings to the productive apparatus.⁷⁵ Adorno and Horkheimer argue that knowledge-as-power, as per Bacon’s formula, “aims to produce neither concepts nor images, nor the joy of understanding, but method, exploitation of the labor of others, capital.”⁷⁶ In other words, nature and animals’ instrumentalization in science carved out a direct path to their

instrumentalization in the capitalist mode of production. While mechanistic science and behaviourism identifies animals with automata in the scientific realm, and behaviourism reduces nonhuman animals to reflexes, industrial capitalism mechanizes their productive capacities and their life-activity in the realm of production. Industrial capitalism not only spurred massive technological development but also shifted other animals' status from objects of control to commodities subject to the laws of rationalization. While industrialization and the development of the automobile in particular led to the gradual replacement of animal labourers (oxen tilling fields, horses pulling carriages, and so on) with machines, it expanded the scope and nature of other forms of animal violence exponentially. Industrialization created the conditions for the acceleration, intensification, and massification of animal production, all of which have proven catastrophic for animals. The mid-nineteenth century saw development of industrial scale farming and slaughter, which has only gotten more mechanized, more massified, and more cruel ever since. "The great mechanical monster" of the industrial factory first described by Marx, with its "demonic power," chews up and spits out other animals with the greatest ferocity and relish of all.⁷⁷

As we will see in chapter one, the total annihilation of animal subjectivity is now at its apogee with the rise of animal biotechnology, which, by bringing together the principles of mechanistic science, informatics, and industrial capitalism, seals animals' fate as targets of productive liquidation in the form of specialized machines, infinitely mutable processes, and reified commodities.

Animal Extermination and Human Alienation

As our brief overview of the history of animals' domination indicates and my definition of animal extermination suggests, the brutal commodification of other animals in late capitalist modernity is not an isolated phenomenon from which the human subject is somehow immune. Rather, animal extermination depends on and is reproduced by the increasing alienation of human beings from their animality—which is to say, their sensuous, perceptual, and emotional attunement to the world as one type of animal among many—as well as the reification of human consciousness. While a number of animal studies scholars have pointed to the mutual estrangement of humans and animals, I am especially concerned with its *existential*, *phenomenological*, and *psychosocial* ramifications, all of which are under-explored in the literature. The Marxian conception of alienation and the Freudian theory of repression provide the foundation for my analysis of this issue. Although I will save a detailed discussion of the role of repression in perpetuating human-animal estrangement for chapter three, in what follows I provide a brief outline of the existential-phenomenological analysis of alienation as it has developed out of the Left Hegelian tradition and how my work is a continuation of it.

From G.W.F. Hegel, to Ludwig von Feuerbach, to Karl Marx, estrangement is fundamentally about the schism between what one “is” in a specific historical, economic, political, and social configuration, and what one “ought” to or could be under other conditions. Alienation also constitutes a sense of disassociation, disorientation, and radical dislocation; it is, in effect, the simultaneous loss of self and world. The German term *Entfremden* (the verb of *Entfremdung* or estrangement) means to make strange or unfamiliar

that which was once familiar.⁷⁸ The *Encyclopedia of Marxism* defines alienation as “the process whereby people become foreign to the world they are living in.”⁷⁹ This “world” can be the natural, social, political, economic world or a combination thereof. Not only does the “external” world become foreign, but the “internal” world of the subject also becomes disunified, fragmented, and discombobulated.

In *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel laid the groundwork for the existential-phenomenological analysis of alienation but abstracted human existence, essence, and the natural world into expressions of “absolute Spirit,” by which they were ultimately subsumed upon the resolution of the historical dialectic. In Hegel’s words, “Nature, the externalized Spirit, is in its existence nothing but this eternal externalization of its *continuing existence* and the movement which reinstates the *Subject*.”⁸⁰ Of course, Hegel’s conception of Nature and Spirit are complex and exceed conventional understandings. For reasons of scope, we cannot explore the vicissitudes of Hegel’s terminology here or of the Hegelian dialectic between Nature and Spirit. The main point is that regardless of the nuanced meanings of these concepts, in Hegel’s view material and sensuous existence as such was only an object of, rather than an active “subject” of, the historical and existential development and unfolding of the human individual and society as a whole.

It is only with Feuerbach and Marx that alienation begins to be directly relevant to our understanding of humans’ existential crisis as *sensuous* beings—that is, as *animals* who have simultaneously lost touch with their animality, other animals, and other human beings qua animals. At the centre of Feuerbach’s “philosophy of the future” and Marx’s natural materialism is the recognition that humans are alienated specifically from

“nature” and from themselves as “natural beings.” For example, one of Feuerbach’s principle grievances against modern (esp. Cartesian) philosophy was that “it recognized only mind, and indeed the abstract mind, as the divine and absolute being.”⁸¹ Feuerbach’s main objection to Hegel’s phenomenology in particular was that it pitted matter *against* Spirit as its antithesis.⁸² For instance, Feuerbach explains that in Hegel’s analysis “Matter is not a preceding opposite of the ego and of spirit, in a way which would be inconceivable; it is the self-alienation of spirit. Thus, matter itself receives spirit and mind; it is taken up into the absolute being as a moment in its life, growth, and development.”⁸³ But, in its subsumption into ego, reason, Spirit, and God, matter serves as their internal *negation*; it is reduced to the “irrational element in reason, the nonego in the ego—the negative in them.”⁸⁴ Moreover, though it is taken up by Spirit, matter (or Nature) is devalued, literally, “as an invalid and untrue being.”⁸⁵ Overall, in Feuerbach’s estimation, modern philosophy erroneously posits that the full coming-to-be of the human subject depends upon the subordination of being to thought and of matter to Spirit, the “self-liberation” of the human from materiality, and its corresponding “abstraction” into and unification with God.⁸⁶

Feuerbach challenges these idealist tendencies of modern philosophy by developing a “new philosophy,” a “philosophy of the future,” which restores autonomous uncontingent value to sensuous experience and sensuous beings. Whereas Hegel swallows up the real with the rational (as per his famous maxim, “the real is the rational, and the rational is the real”), Feuerbach “makes the real, that is, the sensuous, into its own subject and gives it an absolutely independent, divine, and primary meaning which is not first

derived from the idea.”⁸⁷ Shattering the very basis of idealism, Feuerbach goes on to explain that

Truth, reality, and sensation are identical. Only a sensuous being is a true and real being. Only through the sense, and not through thought for itself, is an object given in a true sense. The object that is given in thought or that is identical with thought is only an idea. . . . Only sensuous beings affect one another.⁸⁸

In other words, materiality is no longer sublated into and by ideality as its inner antithesis but is constitutive of its own truth; likewise, truth is founded not in ideas but in sensuous beings. As such, the self-liberation of the human depends not on its unification with itself as disembodied mind or spirit but rather on its reconciliation with itself as a sensuous being. Not coincidentally, Feuerbach maintained that sensuousness was also the ground of ethics, not its undoing or antithesis as Hegel implied. In Feuerbach’s words, “I am an ‘I’ for myself and simultaneously a ‘thou’ for others. This I am, however, only as a sensuous being.”⁸⁹ Being and sensuousness are the well-springs of “feeling, and of love” and the basis for recognizing the other as an object of ethical concern, an issue we will take up in chapter five.

Marx builds on elements of Feuerbach’s new “materialism” and incorporates them into his dialectical account of the historical development of the human being. However, although he is inspired by Feuerbach, in the very first of his eleven *Theses on Feuerbach* he criticizes Feuerbach for inadvertently reifying nature and the sensuous as “objects,” or failing to properly account for the *active* and *dynamic* role of sensuousness in human existence.⁹⁰ Echoing Feuerbach, but with a new sense of dynamism injected into his conception of the sensuous, Marx maintained that “Man is directly a *natural being*. As a

natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand furnished with *natural powers of life*—he is an *active* natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities—as *impulses*.”⁹¹ In other words, it is in its active relationship with nature, with other human beings, and with its own senses, that the human being is a natural being.

Marx also corrected the flaw he identified in Feuerbach’s thought by pointing to the human’s *historical* development as a natural being. As he explains, “All history is the preparation for ‘*man*’ to become the object of *sensuous* consciousness, and for the needs of ‘*man as man*’ to become [natural, sensuous] needs. History itself is a *real* part of *natural* history—of nature’s coming to be for man.”⁹² Thus historical materialism for Marx was not solely an intervention into philosophical idealism, but into political economy; as such Marx paid much closer attention than Feuerbach to the impact of shifting socio-economic conditions on the human subject. Alienation from one’s natural being was one of the central components of the four forms estrangement under capitalism (*viz.*, the subject’s alienation from the products of her labour, from the act of production, from itself as a species-being, and from other human beings).⁹³ The fetishization of the commodity concealed the social relations of production, while mechanization and industrialization distanced workers from the fruits of their labour and their own sensuous engagement with the nonhuman world.⁹⁴ Because capitalism transforms “*man’s*” productive activity into a commodity, labour power, “his human qualities exist only insofar as they exist for capital *alien* to him.”⁹⁵ Overall, the capitalist mode of production reduced the human being to a mere appendage of the machine, stripping it of its multi-dimensionality and curbing its potential to fulfill its entelechy, its “species being,” as a free willing, conscious, universal

subject with a vast range of intellectual, “erotic” (i.e. creative, aesthetic, sensuous), and productive capabilities.⁹⁶

Yet, while Marx historicized Feuerbach’s materialism, his defence of the sensuous is equally, if not more “idealist” than Feuerbach’s inasmuch as it is tainted by an unapologetic anthropocentrism that privileges “the human” (and human consciousness) at the expense of “the animal” (and animal consciousness). As natural beings, humans were not, in Marx’s analysis, to be confused with animals by any means. Like his Enlightenment forebears, Marx insisted that human beings are unique and superior to all other animals. Only humans are species-beings, which, as noted above, means that they possess free will, reason, and universal consciousness.⁹⁷ While animals may not possess universal consciousness in the way Marx understands it, his conception of species-being is problematic insofar as it has a particular value attached to it: for Marx, humans’ species-being is their primary “advantage *over* animals.” Moreover, Marx unfairly “animalizes” animals, which is to say he reduces them to instinct and base behaviours, completely ignores and disregards the phenomenological richness of their subjective experiences, and refuses to acknowledge that other animals might very well possess will, rationality, and consciousness, even if they take on a different form than they do for human beings. Thus, in Marx’s view, it is in being prevented from developing as natural beings under the capitalist mode of production that the human comes to resemble “mere” animals. All other nonhuman animals, Marx assumes, remain entirely immanent within their life activity, which is to say, they go about their lives instinctually, *unconsciously*. Alienated labour stifles the human subject’s development as a species-being and demotes it to the same mindless

and base existence to which animals are supposedly confined. For example, Marx explains that in being alienated from the product and process of his labour,

man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any but his animal functions—eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.⁹⁸

Here Marx indicates that capitalism estranges the human being from its productive engagement with nature as fuel for its sensual, creative, intellectual, and social development, and condemns it instead to a kind of passive, almost inert, animal-like existence. To be sure, capitalism does reduce human beings to a pale imitation of what they fundamentally are and ought to be as species-beings, but what is troubling here is that Marx vitiates animals and animality by suggesting they are the lowest common denominator of human existence, the negation, in fact, of human flourishing or essence.

Marx's low opinion of nonhuman animals is also evident in his vision of humans' reconciliation with nature. Marx maintained that the transformation of the human from an alienated to a fulfilled being requires the reunification of humans with nature and their natural being.⁹⁹ Marx was by no means suggesting that at some point prior to capitalism nature was pristine—an untouched Eden to which humans should aspire to return. In Marx's view, nature was always already metabolized by human beings through labour. Indeed, for Marx, nature is nothing without the human being; it is always already historical inasmuch as it means nothing (to humans) without human activity. As he puts it, "the entire *so-called history of the world* is nothing but the begetting of man through human labour, nothing but the coming-to-be of nature for man."¹⁰⁰ On one hand, this simply means that

in its self-objectifying self-consciousness, the human being regards the “world” as its creation inasmuch as it works on and in it as an extension of itself and as a means for its own development as a species-being. On the other hand this statement also implies that the nonhuman is in another sense effectively *nonexistent* without the human being—that is, that it lacks historical meaning or value outside of the meaning or value ascribed to it by human beings; that it relies on human beings to bring it to life, as it were, to give it purpose and to make it useful. On this view, the nonhuman may exist *in-itself* but not *for-itself*; rather, it is always already *for-humans*. It is in its historical “making” of nature, then, not in its being made by nature, that the human comes into its own as a natural being. In other words, it is as nature’s master that the human being achieves its telos. Thus, as ecological Marxist Ted Benton has since pointed out, Marx’s notion of reconciliation smacks largely of *domination* and must be rethought beyond Marx’s troubling anthropocentric biases if it is to have any merit for an interspecies emancipatory project.¹⁰¹

Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse began this process of rethinking Marx’s analysis beyond his anthropocentrism, in part by reframing the analysis of humans’ self-alienation within a larger critique of enlightenment and its joint degradation of the human subject and nature. The instrumentalization of nature, they argued, corresponded directly to the instrumentalization of reason and the reification of human consciousness. They also placed greater attention than Marx on the problems posed by the ever-expanding technological rationalization of society. In a refreshingly nonanthropocentric move, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse maintained that the domination of nature and the self-appointment of the human species as nature’s sovereign is one of the causes of—and

not the solution to—the subject’s increasing alienation in modern Western civilization.¹⁰² They suggested that the reduction of nature to raw material did not deliver on its promise to advance human knowledge or enrich the human subject, but rather led to the subject’s depletion. As Horkheimer put it, “The total transformation of each and every realm of being into a field of means leads to the liquidation of the subject who is supposed to use them.”¹⁰³ By teaching humans how to subjugate the nonhuman, instrumental reason—especially in its manifestation as the scientific method—taught human beings how to subjugate each other. In Marcuse’s words, “The scientific method which led to the ever-more-effective domination of nature thus came to provide the pure concepts as well as the instrumentalities for the ever-more-effective domination of man by man *through* the domination of nature.”¹⁰⁴ In other words, the reduction of nature and its constituents to the mere stuff of control set the stage for the reduction of humans to instruments, or “quantifiable qualities . . . units of abstract labor power, calculable units of time.”¹⁰⁵ As part of nature themselves, human beings did not escape the violent and destructive power of instrumental reason.

Marcuse was especially concerned by how instrumental reason was harnessed to the forces of production to create technological rationality, or what Ellul succinctly defines as “the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency . . . in every field of human activity.”¹⁰⁶ In Marcuse’s view, technological rationality had penetrated into and transformed the very consciousness of individuals, reducing them to “*one-dimensional thought and behavior*.”¹⁰⁷ As a result, all “negative” or critical thought that might oppose the dictates of the apparatus was flattened and neutralized, leaving only the

possibility of affirmative thought and action—in other words, the reproduction of the status quo. The subject’s “inner” dimension and the “ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.”¹⁰⁸ By reifying consciousness thus, technique impaled critical thought, and therefore subject itself, on the spear of domination-by-administration. Under technological rationality the subject’s “first nature”—as a sensuous, creative, peaceful being—is replaced with a “second nature,” which turns it into an “aggressive object of administration,” a mockery of the multidimensional being it could and ought to be.

In its usurpation of all aspects of human existence on one hand, and in its elimination of negative thought on the other, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Adorno argued that technological rationality is *totalitarian* in character. Technological rationality is totalitarian not only because it paved the way for the rise of *political* totalitarianism, as we will see below, but also because it exerts *total control* over all aspects of human existence, even outside of explicitly fascist or authoritarian societies. “For ‘totalitarian’ is not only a terroristic political coordination of society,” Marcuse contended, “but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests.”¹⁰⁹ Marcuse contended that technological totalitarianism had led to an even more profound form of alienation than even Marx could have anticipated. Having internalized the logic of technological rationality so completely, the modern

subject was unable to recognize its alienation for what it was and was therefore effectively “swallowed up” by it.¹¹⁰

As a result of its total subordination to the logic of technique, the aggressive object of administration, who cannot think or act outside of the logic of *procedure*, and who functions as efficiently as a machine, could and was easily swayed into turning a blind eye to, or actively participating in, the liquidation of millions of human beings.¹¹¹ According to the early Frankfurt School, the systematic annihilation of the Jews and others in the Nazi death camps was not an aberration in the narrative of progress, as so many have claimed, but the logical outcome of a technological worldview as it had developed over the centuries. Without mincing words Marcuse insisted that, “Concentration camps, mass exterminations, world wars, and atom bombs are no ‘relapse into barbarism’ but the unrepressed implementation of the achievements of modern science, technology, and domination.”¹¹² Thus, the pursuit of nature’s mastery has not civilized humanity as promised, but instead turned human beings into mass murderers and created a veritable hell on earth.

Crucially, the early Frankfurt School emphasized how violence against nonhuman animals is constitutive of this hell. In no uncertain terms, Marcuse contended, “Part of this hell is the ill-treatment of animals—the work of a human society whose rationality is still the irrational.”¹¹³ As Adorno and Horkheimer poignantly observed, not just the human world but “the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity.”¹¹⁴ Although sanctioned by the rule of reason on one hand, the instrumentalization of nature is in fact irrational in its *limitless* destructiveness on the other. In Horkheimer’s words,

“[Nature] is the object of total exploitation that has no aim set by reason, and therefore no limit. Man’s boundless imperialism is never satisfied,” and so he unleashes his violence on any vulnerable being he can lay his proverbial hands on, even though he harms himself in the process.¹¹⁵ While humans’ growing supremacy over and estrangement from nature was intended to assert their claim to an invincible rationality, it in fact engendered *irrationality* and returned human beings to a pre-rational state of “mythical” terror.¹¹⁶ Constitutive of this terrifying irrationality is not only an orgy of violence against both humans and nonhumans, but the creation of an existential schism within the subject: “With the denial of nature in human beings, not only the telos of the external mastery of nature but also the telos of one’s own life becomes confused and opaque.”¹¹⁷ In other words, the human, increasingly distanced from “external” and “internal” nature and animality, loses itself in its newfound but false power, and its primary identity becomes that of a maniacal tyrant—a role that reaps more ruin than reward.

Although Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse typically included *all* nonhuman beings—vegetable, mineral, and animal—under the heading “nature,” they occasionally highlighted the particular plight of nonhuman animals through the advance of enlightenment. We already saw evidence of this in Marcuse’s statement about the “ill-treatment of animals” above. Adorno and Horkheimer, for their part, saw a direct correlation between the increasing instrumentalization of thought throughout modernity, the growing indifference to the suffering inflicted on nonhuman animals used for scientific research, and the development of fascism in the twentieth century. In his cold indifference to the suffering of his animal victim, the vivisectionist is the ultimate example of the

“bourgeois” subject modeled on Odysseus—that is, the subject preoccupied with subduing nature with the power of his cunning, albeit not without sacrificing a part of himself in the process.¹¹⁸ He is emptied of negative thought or the capacity for critique of self and system, and therefore devoid of conscience; he is as much an automaton as the animal-machine he cuts apart. In their words, “By mistreating animals [animal experimenters] announce that they, and only they in the whole of creation, function voluntarily in the same mechanical, blind, automatic way as the twitching movements of the bound victims made use of by the expert.”¹¹⁹ The great man of science, in other words, is as internally mutilated as the defenceless creatures he tortures. He has been estranged from his own animality and therefore his own humanity, in all senses of the word, and behaves like the dumb animal-machines that populated Descartes’ fantasies.

While Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse began this pivotal discussion about animal exploitation and human alienation, they did not pursue or develop it in any great depth. My aim in this dissertation is to pick up where they left off, so to speak, in order to broaden the critical theory of society into the critical theory of *animals* and society. In addition to reframing the discussion of nature’s domination in general into an examination of animals’ extermination in particular, I will supplement the early Frankfurt School’s analysis by focusing on human alienation and animal domination within a specifically *neoliberal* context. Since neoliberalism emerged in the early 1970s, and only really took hold in the 80s and 90s, after Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse had completed their major works (and/or passed away), they were unable to account for the impact of globalization and other neoliberal trends on interspecies relations. In what

follows, I will argue that the human subject in the twenty-first century is more self-estranged than ever before. As animal production becomes increasingly intensified and industrialized, as the genetic alteration of nonhuman animals into “designer” commodities becomes increasingly naturalized, as the global culture of animal consumption continues to grow exponentially and more and more animals disappear into a veritable vortex of total abjection and unfathomable misery in the animal industrial complex, so genuine ethical concern for animals’ well-being diminishes and the human subject’s potential sense of relationality with other animals, and with itself *as an animal*, are radically diminished.

In the early twenty-first century, the commodification of animal life is so normalized that critique—at least critique that aims at the abolition rather than the reformation of the regime of violence—is often dismissed as unnecessarily “extreme,” if not altogether useless. An ever-expanding global security apparatus is firmly in place and routinely mobilized to threaten those who speak out on behalf of animals with outrageously long jail sentences on the basis of false accusations of “extremism” and “terrorism.”¹²⁰ The fear evoked by the menacing spectre of demonization, ostracism, and incarceration for expressing dissent and engaging in nonviolent direct action against animal extermination only distances people further from any fundamental sense of responsibility they may otherwise have towards other animals, and secures the triumph of the corporate, industrial, and state forces which benefit most from animals’ ruthless extermination.

From Extermination to Liberation

But the situation is not as hopeless as it may seem. The critical tradition helps us to evaluate the situation dialectically, with a view to how a crisis contains or produces the conditions of its own overcoming. Inversely, the “lowest” point a civilization may reach—arguably the point we are at now with regard to our treatment of other animals—is also its “highest.” With the death camps in mind, Marcuse mused that, ironically, “...the most effective subjugation and destruction of man by man takes place at the height of civilization, when the material and intellectual attainments of mankind now seem to allow the creation of a truly free world.”¹²¹ This could not be truer in the case of animal exterminationism and human alienation. On one hand, the objectification of animals is so extreme, the artificial metaphysical gulf imposed between humans and animals so vast, and the atrocities committed as a result so horrifying, that reconciliation and the establishment of peaceable relations between humans and other animals seems entirely out of reach. Wadiwel, for example, suggests that the seeming interminability of the war against animals undermines, if it doesn’t cancel entirely, the possibility of reunification.¹²² To be sure, all evidence points to this.

On the other hand, as other animal studies scholars have noted, just as the atrocities are greater in scope and more outrageous in nature than ever before, so the recognition of the complexity of animal subjectivity and concern for animal welfare are gaining ground.¹²³ The growing knowledge about the nuances of animal life emerging from nonmechanistic scientific fields such as ethology—or the noninvasive study of animal cognition, sociality, psychology, and emotionality—could, if taken seriously, contribute to

the development of a “humane” science, as well as to the elimination of industrialized farming practices, and even to eventually eliminating the killing and consumption of animals altogether. Simply put, if animals’ subjectivity were properly recognized, mass killing would be much harder to justify. Certainly, technological development is so advanced now that if resources were directed appropriately animal experimentation could be made obsolete in the foreseeable future. The horrors of factory farming and the deleterious impact of meat and dairy consumption on human health have also inspired many people to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet. While these tensions between the increase in violence and the increase in opposition to violence reflect the ethical and political confusion and disorientation of the political subject today, they also reflect the fact that the dialectic of human alienation and animal extermination may be approaching its bursting point.

The development of animal studies (AS) in general and critical animal studies (CAS) in particular constitutes another counterpoint to the expansion of the exterminationist regime.¹²⁴ In recent decades, perhaps because of, rather than in spite of, the increasing scale of the atrocities, animal studies has emerged as a “negative”—which is to say, critical—force that seeks to challenge both the ideological and theoretical foundations of systemic violence against animals. As Ken Shapiro and Margo DeMello have noted, “with the publication of Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975), followed by Tom Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), there has been a burgeoning interest in animals among academics, animal advocates, and the general public.” Indeed AS has “exploded” since 2002, the tenth anniversary of the journal *Society and Animals*.¹²⁵

The interdisciplinary nature of AS (which spans philosophy, political theory, English, cultural studies, science and technology studies, communications studies, visual art, and more), has led to some confusion about its aims, objectives, and parameters, and impeded its “institutional development.” There are also major divisions both within AS and between AS and CAS regarding political and ethical commitments.¹²⁶ CAS scholars’ stated aim is to dissolve the ideologies, institutions, and practices that perpetuate and thrive on animal atrocities. According to founders of CAS, including Steve Best, Anthony J. Nocella, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, and Lisa Kemmer, for example, CAS “seeks to dismantle all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.”¹²⁷ The original mandate of CAS, as laid out by the above thinkers, is to work within the categories of critique established by the early Frankfurt School, including dialectics, obstinately negative thought, and a healthy suspicion of technological. Above all, the point has been to preserve the eminently political dimension of the so-called “animal question” in order to ensure that theory is never pursued at the expense or to the exclusion of praxis, and indeed that theory is itself recognized for being a politically and ethically meaningful *form of practice*. As Best et al. state, CAS “rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research is nonpolitical,” and “eschews narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory’s sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.”¹²⁸ Most CAS scholars uphold these

principles and their scholarship remains committed to an animated critique of existing assumptions about and practices involving nonhuman animals.

AS scholars, on the other hand, are often more circumspect on ethical and political issues and are not necessarily avowedly abolitionist.¹²⁹ Even more worrying, as I argue in chapter two, posthumanist discourse appears to be colonizing AS in general and CAS in particular, and, for a variety of reasons (viz. its fetishization of boundary dissolution, hybridity, and technoscience), threatens to purge them of their political and ethical substance. As a result of AS' political tepidity and timidity, and posthumanism's affirmative tendencies, I explicitly distance my work from both and position it squarely within CAS.¹³⁰ I also turn to Marxian psychoanalytic theory, existentialism and phenomenology, and socialist humanism for guidance in thinking through possibilities for resolving the dialectic of animal extermination and human alienation.

Although there are many factors involved in resolving this conflict, the starting-point is to reconceptualize both human and animal subjectivity. Building on the existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, and the ethical phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas, I argue that rather than discard the subject as "dead" or obsolete, a stronger challenge to animal exterminationism is to radically reconceive unified, coherent, and re-animalized human and animal subjectivity beyond the constraints of *both* humanist and posthumanist thought. The early Frankfurt School, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty have sought to replace the sovereign, object-crushing, one-dimensional, "rational" subject with a non-(surplus)-repressed, non-dominating, and newly "eroticized" sensuous subject who sees itself as one among many beings-in-the-world.¹³¹ Their respective conceptions of

subjectivity and the subject/object and subject/other relation have rent asunder the companion pursuits of knowledge and possessive dominating power that have defined scientific inquiry since Bacon. Merleau-Ponty's assertion that "we must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon," together with Adorno's contention that the subject and object or other are always already "non-identical," that the object *exceeds* its concept, and Levinas' insistence that the other is non-totalizable, provide the groundwork for a radically new conception of human subjectivity as *inherently* ethical and non-dominating.¹³²

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological intervention into the Cartesian tradition and his dialectical critique of subjectivist, objectivist, empiricist, behaviourist, and positivist onto-epistemologies provides an especially helpful groundwork for radically reconceptualizing human and more-than-human subjectivity outside the framework of domination. Merleau-Ponty set out to reconstitute the subject from its fragmented state—as a series of parts and/or as the site of a bizarre and untenable confrontation between the arbitrarily bifurcated "mind" and "body"—to a coherent whole, which was at the same time seamlessly integrated with the world and intimately interconnected with other beings. Merleau-Ponty insisted that *the body* is the locus of the existential struggle, not one of its two opposing elements; that *perception* is the primary ontological mediator between essence and existence and between the body and the world; that the body is always already in and a part of the world; and that embodied perceptual experience is always steeped in *meaning* for each embodied subject. If both the human and nonhuman animal subject cannot be broken down into component parts, but must be understood as

embedded within a meaningful environment (*Umwelt*) in which it expresses its own “style of being,” and if the subject is “conscious of the world through the medium of [its] body,” the objectification of animals for their ostensible lack of cogito is no longer tenable. At the same time, the reduction of consciousness to mind or reason is revealed for its flattening of human experience.¹³³ As ecophenomenologist David Abram puts it, “To define another being as an inert or passive object is to deny its ability to actively engage us and to provoke our senses; *we thus block our perceptual reciprocity with that being.*”¹³⁴ Because, as Abram explains, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is “participatory,” the strict subject/object distinction dissolves. Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological account of the subject is also appealing for our purposes because it asserts the human and nonhuman animal subject’s internal coherence without resorting to solipsistic accounts of the subject.

Levinas’ primary contribution, meanwhile, is his injection of the ethical into the phenomenological intersubjective relation. Levinas insists that embodied intersubjectivity between the one and the other is always already ethical. At the same time, he properly insists that despite their “proximity” to each other, the one and the other are and must remain ontologically distinct and autonomous. Adorno, Horkheimer, and Levinas are mutually complementary inasmuch as they overlap in crucial areas—especially in their interventions into totalizing metaphysics and epistemology, and their vision of a nonidentical or infinite subject—and also mutually supplementary inasmuch as they compensate for each other’s deficiencies. According to Asher Horowitz, while the early Frankfurt School is “unable to lay bare the ethical dimension of its social critique” and therefore “lags behind its own ambition . . . to comprehend reification and the ambition

to understand the possibility of abolishing reification as the ethical imperative,” Levinas’ ethical phenomenology falls short of “relating the thinking of ethical to historical-critical social theory.”¹³⁵ In other words, whereas Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse gesture towards the ethical, their projects remain circumscribed within the limits of social and historical critique while, conversely, “Levinas creates an impasse in relating the thinking of ethics to historical-critical social theory.”¹³⁶ However, as Horowitz has shown, when their analyses are brought together they form a more comprehensive vision of a socially, historically, and ethically grounded intersubjective relationality.

Chapter Outlines

The first three chapters of my dissertation focus on the mutual degradation of human and animal subjects, while the final three chapters focus on their mutual rehabilitation.

In chapter one, “Animal Biotechnology as End Game: Ontological and Ethical Collapse in ‘the Biotech Century,’” I argue that biotechnology heralds the triumph of technological rationality and the war of extermination against animals. In transforming animals at the ontological level to better suit the needs of global capital, biotechnology collapses any remaining tensions between nonhuman animals and the machinery of production. By cloning, hybridizing, and otherwise genetically manipulating nonhuman animals, biotechnology exterminates other creatures, not by way of bodily elimination, but by way of homogenization, universalization, and infinite reproduction. The genetically engineered are designed to reproduce in their own bodies the compressed space and time of neoliberal capital. As a result, their lives are reduced to what can only

be described as an existential-phenomenological nightmare. Meanwhile, the technical apparatus has been granted the authority (or grants itself the authority) to determine ethical norms to suit its decidedly unethical ends. This, in turn, has resulted in what can only be described as an ethical collapse, or a total failure on the part of industry regulators and bioethicists alike to scrutinize the welfare implications of biotechnology on animals with even a hint of impartiality. Despite the horrific injuries and unfathomable suffering biotechnology causes other animals, there is almost no critique of biotechnological practices, even amongst scholars and bioethicists ostensibly committed to impartial analysis. Objections to biotechnology are often dismissed as “knee-jerk” reactions to the so-called “yuck factor” of engineering new forms of life, or as an embarrassing attachment to an anachronistic conception of “species-integrity.” Despite the *laissez-faire* attitude of most people about animal biotechnology, I suggest that the metaphysical and physical violence it necessarily involves justify rejecting the practice altogether.

In the second chapter, “The Trouble with Posthumanism: Bacteria Are People Too,” I argue that despite its best intentions, posthumanism is a flawed and dangerous discourse within which to situate CAS and examine the animal question. Its grounding in poststructuralism has meant that posthumanist theory takes for granted the misguided view that humanism is necessarily repressive and that the dissolution of the subject is a cause for celebration. Hybridity theory, which celebrates the erasure of boundaries between human and nonhuman animals and technics, is particularly nefarious. In light of the egregious cruelties that the actual hybridization of animals involves, I suggest that posthumanist hybridity theory amounts to nothing more than an apology for corporate

technoscience. In their derogation of species-integrity and essence as obsolete concepts, posthumanists echo biotechnologists who typically justify their violation of animals at the ontological level on the basis that it merely enhances what is otherwise a natural fluidity between and among species. And in their giddy embrace of technoscience, posthumanists resemble transhumanists who are not only avowed proponents of Enlightenment humanism but are also advocates of the disturbing view that human and nonhuman beings can be perfected by radical technological intervention. I conclude by arguing that because of posthumanism's "affirmative" tendencies, or tendencies that effectively reinforce rather than undermine the exterminationist status quo, CAS ought to desist from identifying itself interchangeably with posthumanism and instead restore its original critical mandate. This would involve repositioning itself outside and even in opposition to the poststructuralist legacy, and instead framing itself within the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School by which it was initially inspired.

Chapter three, "Animal Repression: The Psychopathology of Animal Exterminationism," expands on the discussion of the human subject's epistemological and ethical collapse with technique, but focuses specifically on the integration of the human being with the technical apparatus at the level of "libidinal drives" and "instincts." I work primarily with Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Erich Fromm's adaptation and historicization of Freudian metapsychology to explore the human cost of animal extermination. I argue that animal extermination is fuelled by and reinforces the repression of human animality, which involves displacing our natural empathic tendencies towards other animals and replacing them with indifference and/or aggression, de-

animalizing the human body, and internalizing the technological worldview. While on the surface most people are comfortably ensconced within a fortress of rationalizations to justify animals' ongoing abuse, there is ample evidence to suggest they are fundamentally uncomfortable with it. As a result of this internal conflict, individuals and the society more generally are prone to a number of neuroses and pathologies including melancholia, ambivalence and guilt, sado-masochistic tendencies, a fascistic inclination towards the mimesis and ridicule of the victims of extermination, an experience of the uncanny, and desperate but empty compensatory gestures of reconciliation such as vacuous attempts to revive mutilated animals in the fullness and beauty of their subjectivity in film, storybooks, and other media. I also point out that those who actively participate in violence against animals are often subject to debilitating mental and emotional ailments such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Perpetration-induced Traumatic Stress (PITS). The obvious implication of this analysis is that a healthy society cannot be formed as long as it continues to sanction unbridled violence against animals. With this in mind, I end with a brief exploration of Marcuse's vision of reconciliation between humans and nonhumans as outlined in his innovative reading of the Greek myths of Orpheus and Narcissus.

The fourth chapter, "The Ecstasy of Being Animal: Reconstituting, Re-enchanting, and Reconciling the Human and Nonhuman Animal Subject," sets out to reconfigure the human and nonhuman animal subject outside the constraints of both humanism and posthumanism. I suggest that existential phenomenology coupled with ethology offer an ideal conceptual framework for positing embodied subjects, both human and more-than-human, who are always

already ontologically and existentially autonomous, while at the same time insisting on their inevitable intimate entanglement with other embodied beings and their phenomenal worlds. The two schools of thought articulate their critiques in different terms, and sometimes direct their critiques at different targets (though both appropriately take a proverbial swing at behaviourism), but they arrive at surprisingly similar, or at least mutually reinforcing, conclusions about why the prevailing views of consciousness are inadequate. One of phenomenology and ethology's most important joint interventions into the human supremacist worldview is their wholesale rejection of prevailing philosophical and/or scientific accounts of consciousness and subjectivity as defined by and limited to a very anthropocentric conception of mind and reason. Ethologists focus on the myriad forms of intelligence, emotionality, and sociality animals exhibit, while phenomenologists reposition subjectivity and consciousness in the perceptual body. A phenomenological conception of the human and animal subject properly accounts for fundamental similarities between and among species, while never losing sight of important differences. The former is integral to closing the metaphysical abyss between humans and nonhumans, while the latter ensures that the autonomy, uniqueness, and species-integrity of each being are never undermined. I suggest that these novel definitions and descriptions of human and animal subjectivity and consciousness are mutually liberating in the sense that they "re-animalize" human beings and restore meaning and profundity to nonhuman animal life. Finally, building on phenomenologists' call for the re-enchantment of nature, and Adorno and Levinas' respective discussions of the "non-identity" and "exteriority" of the subject and other, I point to the importance of developing a sense of humility towards other animals. Human and animals' reconciliation depends both on increasing our knowledge about the

profundity of animals' subjective lives, and cultivating a sense of wonder and awe at the impenetrable mystery of animal being.

In chapter five, “‘The End of Powers’: Towards an Interspecies Ethics of Empathic Being,” I bring together the ethical phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas, feminist ethics of care, and Arthur Schopenhauer’s “metaphysical” ethics, to construct an alternative model to the prevailing consequentialist and deontological approaches to animal ethics. Specifically, after pointing out the limitations of some leading approaches to animal ethics as articulated by Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Martha Nussbaum—not least of which is their lingering anthropocentrism—I suggested that we ground ethics in existential and ethical phenomenology, especially as outlined by Emmanuel Levinas. The appeal of Levinas’ ethics is that it does not enumerate a specific list of criteria required to gain membership in the ethical community, but instead, at least in theory, includes any corporeal being subject to the vicissitudes of mortality. Another attractive feature of Levinasian ethics is that, although it avoids the superficiality of a strictly deontological approach, it is nevertheless founded on a clear and unambiguous principle: Thou Shall not Kill (or harm) the other. I go on to discuss the importance of “feminizing” ethics—that is, of challenging the repudiation of emotion in patriarchal conceptions of ethics, and creating in its stead what I call a “critical emotional rationality,” or a reason reunited with emotion from which it had been arbitrarily severed, as the ground of ethics. Next, I elaborate on Schopenhauer, Buber, and Levinas’ respective arguments for a metaphysical ethics of absolute responsibility for the other. Following Feuerbach, I underline the important role a certain conception of “love” can play in the ethical

relation. Finally, I borrow Marcuse's concept of the potential "biological" transformation of the subject, to argue that veganism is a crucial component of ethical (and political) theory and practice. Humans continue to ingest and otherwise use animals' mutilated bodies at the expense of the crucial and revolutionary historical task at hand, which is to unlearn centuries of violent domination over other animals, and to expand the purview of empathy and nonviolent relationality beyond the human.

The sixth and final chapter, "Reinventing Left Humanism: Animals as a Class and the New Subjects of History," looks towards developing a political theory of animal liberation by recuperating the Left humanist project. The call to restore the Left humanist project is admittedly counterintuitive given the central role humanism has played in perpetuating the ideological framework of human supremacism. However, while an uncompromising critique and condemnation of the human supremacism/exceptionalism is absolutely vital, to dispense with the humanist project altogether is to do a great disservice to the struggle to overcome exterminationism. Renaissance, Enlightenment, Liberal, and especially Marxist, socialist, and existential humanisms all have something to offer to a new emancipatory vision, including a defence of the subject against its alienation, a belief in the capacity for human beings to self-create and self-transform, a call to balance autonomy with social and ethical responsibility, an emphasis on dialectical rationality as a means of overcoming the instrumentalization of reason, and a belief in historical transformation. I argue that the new interspecies humanism is explicitly and avowedly pacifist and therefore averse to all forms of violence, both against humans and nonhumans. Finally, I invert the Hegelian master/slave dialectic and suggest that, as the

most objectified and abject group in existence today, animals emerge as the new subjects of history around which historical transformation revolves.

¹ See Barbara Noske, *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals* (Montreal; New York: Black Rose Books, 1997), 22. For reasons of scope, I have limited my analysis to domesticated animals in the animal industrial complex, and only mention so-called wild animals once or twice in passing. Also please note that apart from a brief discussion of animals' potential political agency in chapter six, I do not otherwise engage the recent debates on animal agency in this dissertation. Although some animals may engage in isolated acts of "resistance," such as biting an experimenter's hand, and as such demonstrate a certain degree of agency, I am wary of placing too much emphasis on these acts for fear of detracting focus from the ways in which they have been systematically *denied* agency. That said, it is important to acknowledge that all animals *ought* to be ascribed agency, and that other animals have the *capability* to be agents. (For this notion of agent capability, I am indebted to animal studies scholar and feminist philosopher Lori Gruen, who discussed this idea with me over the course of the Human-Animal Studies Fellowship at Wesleyan University in the summer of 2013). It is our historical task to create the conditions for animals to transform from victims to agents. In the meantime, however, and indeed in order to achieve this goal, we must focus on their victimization and understand how and why they are victimized. The aim, then, is to strike a balance between acknowledging the *reality* of universal animal victimization and the *potentiality* of universal animal agency.

² Other authors such as John Sanbonmatsu and Steve Best have referred to the systemic torture and abuse of animals as "extermination." See John Sanbonmatsu, "The Subject of Freedom at the End of History: Socialism beyond Humanism," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 66, no. 1 (January, 2007), 245; Steve Best, "Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, 5, no. 2 (Spring 2009), accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_best_minding_animals.htm

³ Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged, 2nd ed., s.v. "exterminate."

⁴ Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged, 2nd ed., s.v. "oppress."

⁵ Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged, 2nd ed., s.v. "exploit."

⁶ Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), xvi.

⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 125.

⁸ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet. Posthumanities*, vol. 3, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 80.

⁹ Gary Francione cited in Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press), 7. See also Gary Francione, "Animal Rights and Domesticated Nonhumans," last modified 2007, accessed June 4, 2013, <http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/animal-rights-and-domesticated-nonhumans/#.Ua4yUq7V0RY>.

¹⁰ Although Haraway states unequivocally, “I am not a posthumanist,” she also tells us, during her discussion of laboratory experimentation, that she pays heed to what she calls “the posthumanist whisperings in [her] ear.” (Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 19; 73). Upon closer examination of Haraway’s work, it is fair to say that although she may not explicitly identify as a posthumanist, her thought is not only informed by posthumanism, but has been instrumental in defining its parameters, a point I will take up in chapter two.

¹¹ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 6.

¹² Tom Regan “The Philosophy of Animal Rights” (1989), *Animal Voices*, accessed March 26, 2013, <http://www.animalvoices.com/regan/?p=192>, para. 9.

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Willis, *Perspectives in Continental Philosophy*, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 28f.

¹⁴ Adams, “The War on Compassion,” 21-38.

¹⁵ Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, “The War against Animals: Domination, Law, and Sovereignty,” *Griffith Law Review* 18 (2009): 285.

¹⁶ Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 32.

¹⁷ Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 59.

¹⁸ Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 33.

¹⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, cited in Charles Patterson, “The Great Divide: Animals and the Holocaust,” *Tikkun* 18, no. 3 (May/June 2003): 79.

²⁰ See Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002), 46-47.

²¹ Charles Patterson makes this connection between Jews and animals as *Lebensunwerten Lebens* in the context of his discussion of the historical and ideological links between the Nazi genocide and the systemic torture and killing of nonhuman animals in the animal industrial complex (Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 89). More recently John Sanbonmatsu has developed this insight by focusing on the wider applicability of the concept to the “locavore” and “humane killing” movements. Although Sanbonmatsu has not yet used this term in a published work, he shared his insights with me during a telephone conversation in September 2013, and I am indebted to him for my use of it in this discussion.

²² Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 72.

²³ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 73-75.

²⁴ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 81.

²⁵ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 83.

²⁶ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 83-89.

²⁷ I am indebted to AK Thompson for reminding me of this distinction and encouraging me to bring it to the fore.

²⁸ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 12.

²⁹ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 7-10; Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (New York: Mirror Books, 1996), 37; 39; 42.

³⁰ Paola Cavalieri, “The Animal Debate: A Re-examination,” in *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 54.

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- ³¹ Gary Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 76; 62.
- ³² Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 77.
- ³³ Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 2.
- ³⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 6.
- ³⁵ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 69.
- ³⁶ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 71.
- ³⁷ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 36-62, esp. 53.
- ³⁸ Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 45.
- ³⁹ Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and its Discontents*, 39; 45-50; 55.
- ⁴⁰ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, new revised edition (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 187.
- ⁴¹ John C. Luik, "Humanism," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig (London: Routledge, 2008), accessed April 9, 2013, <http://www.rep.routledge.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/article/N025SECT4>.
- ⁴² Luik, "Humanism." The term "humanism" itself was only coined in the early 19th century by a German educational reformer Immanuel Niethammer. Niethammer introduced the term *Humanismus* (humanism) to retroactively describe the educational mandate of the Italian Renaissance teachers and scholars or *umanisti*—which was inspired by the ancient *Studia Humanitatis* ("study of humanity") and its emphasis on Greek and Latin, rhetoric, poetry, history, and philosophy—and the similar educational program he and other reformers such as Wilhelm von Humboldt were advocating at the time. See also Tony Davies, *Humanism, The New Critical Idiom*, ed. John Drakakis (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 9f.
- ⁴³ Luik, "Humanism."
- ⁴⁴ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, trans. A. Robert Gaponigri (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1956), 4.
- ⁴⁵ Pico, *Oration*, 5. Italics added.
- ⁴⁶ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*, trans. Charles Glenn Wallis (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 5.
- ⁴⁷ Pico, *Oration*, 7.
- ⁴⁸ Pico, *Oration*, 5.
- ⁴⁹ Pico, *Oration*, 7.
- ⁵⁰ Pico, *Oration*, 10.
- ⁵¹ Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 5.
- ⁵² Dale Jamieson, *Morality's Progress: Essays on Humans, Other Animals, and the Rest of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 87-88.
- ⁵³ Steven Best, "Minding Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2009).
- ⁵⁴ Best, "Minding Animals."
- ⁵⁵ Best, "Minding Animals."
- ⁵⁶ Best, "Minding Animals."
- ⁵⁷ Jamieson, *Morality's Progress*, 50.

⁵⁸ James Hankins, "Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1996), 118.

⁵⁹ Tony Davies, *Humanism: The New Critical Idiom*, ed. John Drakakis (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 25. Obviously, the term "man" or "mankind" had been in circulation long before Rousseau or Paine. Certainly both Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), who preceded both thinkers by a century or more, also presented a universal pre-political "man" with certain essential traits. However, as Davies, Carol Pateman and Charles Mills, and before them, Frantz Fanon, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others, have pointed out, classical contract theorists' respective conceptions of universal man were hardly universal since women, slaves, people of colour, and the working classes were excepted (Davies, *Humanism*, 26; Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988]; Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999]. See also, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley [New York: Vintage Books, 1989]; Aimée Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham [New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000]; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington [New York: Grove Press, 1963]; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann [New York: Grove Press, 1967]; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker [New York: Schocken Books, 1965]; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface," in *The Wretched of the Earth*.) The distinctly exclusive, racist, sexist, and classist conception of the human it upheld notwithstanding, contract theory in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries is pivotal in the development of human exceptionalism.

⁶⁰ Davies, *Humanism*, 26. Of course, classical contract theorists disagreed on what the essential attributes of both the natural and political or social subject were. For Hobbes, the human was defined by its natural competitiveness and aggression, and its corresponding need for authoritative rule; for Locke, the human was defined by its claim to various forms of liberty: “natural” (to be ruled only by the laws of nature); political (to choose its own government and self-legislate); and economic (i.e. to hold property). Whereas Hobbes and Rousseau focused mainly on the universal subject, Locke attempted to carve out the contours of the *individual* (chiefly as “master of himself” and “proprietor of his own person” and property) (Locke, *Second Treatise*, 27). Reproducing the more commonly accepted conception of the human as defined by *Logos*, Hobbes insisted that “beasts” be exempted from the “covenant” or contract binding humans together because of their inability to understand human “speech” or language and therefore to consent to the contractual agreement (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 85). Locke suggested that “the freedom . . . of man, and liberty of acting according to his own will, is *grounded* on his having *reason*, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will” (Locke, *Second Treatise*, 35. Author’s italics). While the contract theorists admitted of a “natural” dimension to human existence, then, and did not necessarily emphasize human’s superiority to other creatures per se, they certainly confirmed the *uniqueness* of human beings among all other species as the only *political* species. As such, they reaffirmed the ancient (proto-humanist) Aristotelian claim that human beings were *zoon politikon*. It should also be noted that while Rousseau participated to some extent in the development of humanist conception of “man,” his views of human nature are, Asher Horowitz notes, markedly different from those of his counterparts (Asher Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature, and History* [Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987], 52). Rousseau’s humanism was much more of a historical naturalism than that of the other thinkers in question. As such, Paine’s analysis is wanting in its failure to recognize that Rousseau’s conception of the human was much more fluid and admitted of human’s historical development. Rousseau also bridged the gap between humans and nonhumans on some level by suggesting that human beings were naturally inclined and should aspire towards kinship with nonhuman animals, one manifestation of which was a commitment to vegetarianism (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men [Second Discourse],” in *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith Masters [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1964], 108). Rousseau, did of course concede that *once* corrupted by life in society, humans were in need of quasi-authoritative governance dictated, paradoxically, by the General Will, but he fundamentally regarded the human being in much less supremacist terms than other contract theorists (See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley [Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett, 1994], 76-78; 5; 79-88; John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980], 17-18; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston [London; New York: Penguin, 1968], 49; 70-77. See also Rousseau, “Second Discourse,” 102). While Rousseau joined Hobbes, Locke, and other philosophical and political humanists more generally in suggesting that the human subject was differentiated from all other animals by virtue of a particular trait, which was *not* reason or “understanding,” as usually

assumed, but the fact that the human was a “free agent” (Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin,” 114). Rousseau’s ambivalence regarding the human-animal divide notwithstanding, the human supremacist and exceptionalist thrust of Renaissance, Enlightenment, and liberal humanisms clearly helped create the ideological groundwork for animals’ brutal subjugation today.

⁶¹ Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’” in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, second enlarged edition, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, eds., Raymond Geuss and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54.

⁶² Luik, “Humanism.”

⁶³ Cavalieri, “The Animal Debate,” 54.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1986), ii415b8.

⁶⁵ Christopher Shields, “Aristotle,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed May 3, 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/aristotle/>.

⁶⁶ René Descartes, ““Discourse on the Method of Properly Conducting One’s Reason and of Seeking the Truth of the Sciences,” [hereafter “Discourse on Method”] in *Discourse on Method and Other Writings*, trans. F. E. Sutcliffe (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 73; 76.

⁶⁷ Descartes, “Discourse on Method,” 74-75.

⁶⁸ Cited in Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 201f.

⁶⁹ Cavalieri, “The Animal Debate,” 54.

⁷⁰ Francis Bacon, “The New Organon,” Book one, in *Francis Bacon: Selected Philosophical Works*, ed. Rose-Mary Sargent (Indianapolis; Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), aphorism 4.

⁷¹ Bacon, “The New Organon,” Book two, aphorism 1.

⁷² Best, “Minding Animals.”

⁷³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behaviour*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011), 8.

⁷⁴ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 156.

⁷⁵ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 158.

⁷⁶ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 2.

⁷⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 503.

⁷⁸ Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch, s.v. “Entfremden.”

⁷⁹ "Alienation," *Encyclopedia of Marxism: Glossary of Terms*, accessed November 20, 2011, <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/a/1.htm#alienation>. According to the *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language* the term "estrangement" derives from "estrange" which, in turn, is from the Latin *extraneus*, foreign, and *extra*, beyond, without, and means "to keep at a distance; to withdraw or remove, as from usual surroundings or associates; to cease to frequent or be familiar with; to divert from its original use or possessor; to apply to a purpose foreign to its original or customary one; to alienate the affections of; to turn (a person) from an affectionate or friendly attitude to an indifferent, unfriendly, or hostile one; to separate" (*Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged*, 2nd ed., s.v. "estrange.").

⁸⁰ G. W. F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 492.

⁸¹ Ludwig von Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Manfred Vogel (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), 30.

⁸² Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 30.

⁸³ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 32.

⁸⁴ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 33.

⁸⁵ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 32f.

⁸⁶ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 32.

⁸⁷ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 51. Italics added.

⁸⁸ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 51. Italics added.

⁸⁹ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 52.

⁹⁰ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York; London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 143.

⁹¹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 115.

⁹² Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 90f. Author's italics.

⁹³ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 74-75.

⁹⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 170.

⁹⁵ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 81. Author's italics. I refer to this translation only once.

⁹⁶ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 70-77.

⁹⁷ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 76f. Italics added.

⁹⁸ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 74.

⁹⁹ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 73ff.

¹⁰⁰ Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," 92.

¹⁰¹ Ted Benton, "Humanism = Speciesism?: Marx on Humans and Animals," in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu, *Nature's Meaning*, series ed. Roger Gottlieb (Lanham; Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 99f.

¹⁰² Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1; 2.

¹⁰³ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London: Continuum, 2004), 64.

¹⁰⁴ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 158.

¹⁰⁵ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 157.

¹⁰⁶ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (Toronto: Vintage Books, 1967),

xxv.

¹⁰⁷ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 3; 158f.

¹¹⁰ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 11. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss this further, but it should be pointed out in passing that the digital turn has dramatically expanded and deepened the totalitarian reach of technological rationality. Digital technologies and devices have arguably completed the colonization and homogenization of human consciousness. The Internet has replaced most forms of communication, reading, writing, and learning, and is precipitating the conflation of knowledge with information. Online courses are replacing classroom-based learning. Computers, in short, are replacing teachers. And interaction with technologies is replacing interaction with other human and nonhuman beings. Although the Internet facilitates the spread of ideas, including critical ethical and political ideas, the sheer amount of time spent on any variety of gadgets on any given day radically reduces the time and space people have to think by and with themselves—that is, to engage in critical reflection. Meanwhile, as recent revelations in the press have shown, the National Security Agency (NSA) has been granted full and unbridled access without cause for investigation to the data and content of users of all the major telecommunication giants including Google, Facebook, AT&T, Verizon, and more. See Glen Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, “NSA PRISM Program Taps in to User Data of Apple, Google and Others,” *The Guardian*, June 6, 2013, accessed June 9, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data>.

¹¹¹ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 18.

¹¹² Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 4.

¹¹³ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 237.

¹¹⁴ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* 1.

¹¹⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 42.

¹¹⁷ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 42.

¹¹⁸ See note 37.

¹¹⁹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 204.

¹²⁰ See for example, “Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act,” Centre for Constitutional Rights, 2006, accessed March 29, 2013, [https://ccrjustice.org/learn-more/faqs/factsheet%3A-animal-enterprise-terrorism-act-\(aeta\)](https://ccrjustice.org/learn-more/faqs/factsheet%3A-animal-enterprise-terrorism-act-(aeta)); <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-109s3880enr/pdf/BILLS-109s3880enr.pdf>. See also note 104.

¹²¹ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 4.

¹²² Wadiwel, “The War against Animals,” 285.

¹²³ See, for example, Gary L. Francione, *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 26.

¹²⁴ In the interest of clarity and simplicity, I am placing both human-animal studies (HAS) and animal studies (AS) under the banner of AS.

¹²⁵ Ken Shapiro and Margo DeMello, "The State of Human-Animal Studies," *Society and Animals* 18 (2010): 307.

¹²⁶ Shapiro and DeMello, "The State of Human-Animal Studies," 310.

¹²⁷ Steve Best, Anthony J. Nocella, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, and Lisa Kemmerer, "Introducing Critical Animal Studies," Institute for Critical Animal Studies, 2007, accessed September 8, 2012, <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Introducing-Critical-Animal-Studies-2007.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Best, et al. "Introducing Critical Animal Studies."

¹²⁹ Best, et al. "Introducing Critical Animal Studies."

¹³⁰ Best, et al. "Introducing Critical Animal Studies."

¹³¹ See the discussion of Marcuse's distinction between "basic" (i.e. necessary and non-oppressive) and "surplus" (i.e. ideologically motivated and oppressive) repression in chapter three.

¹³² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 7.

¹³³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 94f.

¹³⁴ David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 56, 57. Author's italics.

¹³⁵ Asher Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill: History and Subjectivity in Levinas and the Frankfurt School* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), xii-xiii.

¹³⁶ Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill*, xiii.

Chapter One

Animal Biotechnology as End Game: Ontological and Ethical Collapse in 'the Biotech Century'

Being is not a general notion that can be separated from objects. It is one with that which exists. . . . Being is the positing of essence. That which is my essence is my being. The fish exists in water; you cannot, however, separate its essence from this being.

Ludwig von Feuerbach¹

There are 1.7 million known species of life on earth. Two years ago scientists introduced the first one ever designed by a computer. And in the last ten years there have been over 3000 patents issued for genetically modified organisms and other transgenic innovations. Within 50 years we could have more life forms invented in the lab than we've ever identified in nature. We now have goats whose milk can be spun into spider silk that's stronger than steel, jumbo salmon that grow twice as fast as their natural cousins, bacteria that produce anti-malarial drugs once available only from plants. Innovations like these can increase the supply of essential products, inspire new investing ideas, and launch or up end entire industries. It's all part of the new science called synthetic biology, using nature as a manufacturing platform and DNA as the raw material. Pharmaceutical companies see it as a pipeline for extraordinary new drugs and treatments. Energy companies see a route to cleaner more sustainable fuels like algae that produce biofuels and eat carbon dioxide. Someday computers may run a DNA based circuit, and biological paint could help heat and cool your home. Around the world and across borders, academics, entrepreneurs, and even students are working with over 5000 DNA sequences called Biobricks™ to explore ideas and invent new organisms. The DNA is available online in an open source data base, and a collaborative, crowd-sourced approach means experiments that used to take years now take weeks, constantly redefining what's possible. Although synthetic biology is still in the very early experimental phase, it could become the defining technology of the 21st century, bringing with it radical new thinking, new questions, and new opportunities—because nothing has the power to change how we live more than changing life itself. Think about it. We do.

Robert Chan, Fidelity Investments²

Tens of thousands of transgenic animals are now being developed in biotechnology laboratories in Canada and around the world to better meet the demands of the global agricultural, pharmaceutical, and biomedical industries. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States is likely to approve the mass production and distribution of AquAdvantage®, a genetically modified salmon which grows at half its

normal rate.³ Other animals are being genetically engineered for use in research so that they and their offspring are predisposed to develop diseases such as cancer, the most well-known example of which is probably OncoMouse®, which was produced by two Harvard scientists at Charles River Labs in 1984 and eventually patented by DuPont Corporation.⁴ There is now growing demand for so called “pharm animals,” or animals who have been genetically manipulated, usually by way of interspecies genetic splicing to produce drugs and vaccines to treat and prevent human disease. Plans are underway to mass-produce so-called “knockout” pigs as “harvest-machines” for xenotransplantation.⁵ In 2000, Gerald Schatten and his colleagues from the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center cloned the first primate ever, a rhesus macaque they called Tetra, by splitting and multiplying the cells of an embryo.⁶ But biotechnology extends beyond the biomedical and agricultural sciences and reaches into the arts. Also in 2000, visual artist Eduardo Kae commissioned the production of “GFP Bunny,” a glow-in-the-dark rabbit which a scientist created by injecting the zygote of a rabbit with a fluorescent protein from a Pacific jelly fish.⁷ The pet industry is also cashing in on biotechnology. A firm called “Transgenic Pets LLC,” for example, is seeking to engineer allergen-free transgenic cats, while another company called GloFish® advertises fish that have been genetically engineered to glow in fluorescent colours. They are given “flashy” names such as “Starfire Red®, Electric Green®, Sunburst Orange®, Cosmic Blue®, Galactic Purple®, and Moonrise Pink™ and are described as “wonderful fish that add brilliant color and excitement to any home, office, or classroom aquarium.”⁸ Other biotech companies such

as RNL Bio in South Korea specialize in cloning dogs and cats and other companion animals.⁹

As I argue in this chapter, while biotechnological “innovations” are typically heralded as great scientific achievements that promise to enhance human life and health, protect the environment, and even repopulate the earth with formerly extinct animals in so-called “de-extinction” cloning programs, the genetic manipulation of animals amounts to nothing less than a *total ontological and ethical calamity*.¹⁰ In its capacity to manipulate animal life at the genetic and morphological levels, biotechnology fulfills the mandate of technological rationality, or the total subordination of every dimension of human and nonhuman subjective experience to the principles of scientific, technological, and economic rationalization. Biotechnology brings Francis Bacon’s “utopia,” in which nature is one giant laboratory for “scientist-priests” to tamper with as they please, to terrifying fruition, in what Jeremy Rifkin properly describes as a “dystopian nightmare.”¹¹ In collapsing all remaining ontological distinctions between nonhuman animals, technics, and the machinery of production, in hybridizing animals with different species and/or computer technologies, in homogenizing, universalizing, codifying, replicating, and radically commodifying nonhuman animals as “innovations” and “inventions,” biotechnology effectively eliminates any last vestiges of animal subjectivity, or at least the recognition thereof, and so triumphantly brings the war of extermination to completion.

I am not alone in regarding biotechnology as metaphysically and ethically disastrous. Carol Gigliotti, for example, maintains that the biotechnological turn marks “*the catastrophic moment in the centuries-long shift from our understanding of our*

communion and solidarity with the non-human, ensouled world, to a world in which we see ourselves as the creators of all life.”¹² Rifkin properly characterized what he calls “the Biotech Century” as “the final articulation of the mechanistic, industrial frame of mind,” which “needs to be opposed by every caring and compassionate human being who believes in the intrinsic value of life.”¹³ Likewise, Steve Best observes that the rise of biotechnology, which seamlessly intertwines science, technology, and global capital, heralds the most cataclysmic phase in the human supremacist campaign thus far. In Best’s words,

As we move into a new millennium fraught with terror and danger, a global postmodern condition is unfolding in the midst of rapid evolutionary and social changes co-constructed by science, technology, and the restructuring of global capital. We are quickly morphing into a new biological and social existence that is evermore mediated and shaped by computers, mass media, and biotechnology, all driven by the logic of capital and a powerful emergent technoscience. *In this global context, science is no longer merely an interpretation of the natural and social worlds; rather it has become and active force in changing them and the very nature of life.*¹⁴

Best’s fears are well founded when we revisit the Fidelity Investment ad cited above. As stated in the ad, this emergent technoscience regards nature as nothing more than a giant “manufacturing platform,” and indeed proclaims as its primary goal the accumulation of hefty profits by “changing life itself.”

As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, nonhuman animals bear the brunt of this technoscientific hubris. After exploring the historical and ideological foundations of biotechnology, I demonstrate how biotechnology fulfills the project of extermination by disregarding species-specific behaviours, needs, and wants, by deliberately eliminating animals’ particularity and individuality, by changing their bodily shapes, sizes, rates of

growth and so on to meet the demands of production, by creating types that can be reproduced indefinitely, and by dissolving animals into information, data, and code. Not only do nonhuman animals suffer horrific injuries as a result of egregious violations of their ontological and bodily integrity, but in being forced to reproduce in their bodies the compressed time and space of neoliberal capitalism they are subject to a total existential-phenomenological distortion, wherein their species-specific, if historically contingent, and subject-specific spatio-temporal relations are violently distorted. I go on to explore the ethical vacuum, or the unacceptable dearth of serious systematic ethical scrutiny of biotechnological practices, both within and beyond the biotech industry.¹⁵

Biotechnology as Big Business: Origins, Definitions, and Aims

For reasons of scope I cannot conduct a detailed analysis of the complicated trajectory of biotechnology's development. However, in order to provide context for my analysis it is important to highlight, if only crudely and superficially, some of the pivotal moments in and key figures that contributed to its growth. The precise origins of biotechnology are disputed by historians of science. Martina Newell-McGloughlin and Edward Re trace the foundations of biotechnology to 1590 when, as the result of the invention of the compound microscope, it became possible to investigate the cellular structure of life.¹⁶ They maintain that the introduction of this instrument paved the way for numerous important discoveries in animal and plant anatomy over the next three hundred odd years, including Swiss chemist Frederick Miescher's eventual identification of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA in 1869.¹⁷

According to other historians, however, biotechnology is rooted much further back in the brewing methods of ancient Egypt and Babylonia.¹⁸ In Robert Bud's view, for example, the modernization of ancient fermentation techniques, and the development of "zymotechnology" in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, ought to be considered the foundational moment in biotechnology's development.

Zymotechnology refers to "industrial fermentation" with "a wide range of applications from curing of leather to the manufacture of citric acid." Its development, Bud argues, "constitutes a vital stage in the bridging the gap between biotechnology's ancient heritage and its modernist associations."¹⁹ Chicago and Copenhagen were two important epicentres in what Bud sees as a pivotal shift "from brewing to a great emphasis on science" more generally.²⁰ Bud also insists, however, contrary to many standard accounts, that while Louis Pasteur's investigations into microbiology provided the foundation for the elaboration of ancient brewing techniques, among other things, other scientific disciplines, such as chemistry, biochemistry, bacteriology, and immunology, among others, played an equally if not more important role than microbiology.²¹

Animal biotechnology in particular is often presented as a natural continuation of early breeding practices. There is certainly truth to this claim. For example, in 1919 Karl Ereky, a Hungarian agricultural engineer and pig breeder, coined the term "*Biotechnologie*."²² Between 1917 and 1919 Ereky wrote a number of books on the subject, one of which was titled, *Biotechnologie der Fleisch-, Fett- und Milcherzeugung im landwirtschaftlichen Grossbetriebe* (Biotechnology of Meat, Fat, and Milk Production in Large-scale Agricultural Industry).²³ As Bud notes, in the nineteenth century "the intensive

fattening of pigs was a Hungarian speciality” and Ereky clearly wanted to maintain Hungary’s status as a leader in agricultural science.²⁴ Perhaps helping to lead the way to what is now an intimate and interdependent relationship between agribusiness and biotechnology, Ereky secured the funding of two Hungarian banks for a massive industrial farming operation, which included an abattoir with the slaughter capacity of one thousand pigs per day and a “fattening farm” for up to fifty thousand pigs.²⁵ Ereky’s was one of the most expansive and most profitable of Europe’s postwar animal farming enterprises.²⁶

While there is an important historical link between breeding and biotechnology, it is important to qualify the connection between these practices. As Gigliotti has pointed out, there is a marked difference between traditional forms of breeding and genetic engineering. “Unlike traditional breeding,” she reminds us, “genetic technology methods disrupt the sequence of the genetic code of the host, disturbing the functioning of neighbouring genes.”²⁷ In a similar vein, Rifkin insists that “transgenic animals are a radical departure from both evolutionary history and classical breeding practices.”²⁸ Though undeniably exploitative, traditional breeding has a comparatively more mild impact on physical well-being of the animals in question than biotechnology. This is in part because unlike biotechnology, which imposes radical genetic alterations of animals within a condensed period of time, breeding introduces more subtle and more gradual changes into the genetic structure of animals.²⁹

“Biological engineering” eventually emerged as a new discipline in the interbellum period, which was marked in part by a growing eugenics movement and an increasing

interest in “social biology” and social welfare issues, such as population control and nutrition.³⁰ In the mid-1930s biological engineering took hold in the United States and was embraced by such illustrious institutions as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In the 1940s, Oswald Theodore Avery discovered, among other things, that “DNA serves as genetic material.”³¹ In 1941, during a lecture on the sexual reproduction of yeast, Danish microbiologist A. Jost introduced the term “genetic engineering.”³² Jumping a few decades ahead, the discovery of recombinant DNA technology and the creation of the first synthetic gene (yeast) in June 1970 marked the so-called “dawning of the age of biotechnology” in earnest.³³ Another massive breakthrough followed close on the heels of this first one. In 1973 Stanley Cohen of Stanford University and Herbert Boyer of the University of California San Francisco managed to splice a foreign gene between different strands of bacterial DNA, which they then recombined.³⁴ The development of technologies that enabled scientists to transfer genes into animal cells by way of mammalian viruses was soon to follow, an innovation claimed by Stanford biochemist Paul Berg.³⁵

Finally, the invention of computers, cybernetics, and information and digital technologies added a new element of sophistication to biotechnological procedures, closing the circle between the biological, engineering, and computer sciences, and introducing a whole new field of science now known as “synthetic biology.”³⁶ Rifkin suggests that the computerization of DNA is the sixth of seven features of the “the operational matrix of the Biotech Century.” In his words, “more than anything else, the computer is the communication tool and software, the language and text, for deciding and

utilizing the vast genetic resources of the Earth in the coming era.”³⁷ As Eugene Thacker has pointed out, in the twenty-first century biotechnology is increasingly defined by “bioinformatics” and computer technology. In his words,

one of the main things that characterizes biotech currently is an intersection of bioscience and computer science or, to put it another way, an intersection between genetic and computer ‘codes.’ Within biotech research, this is known as the field of bioinformatics, which is simply the application of computer technology to life science research. Its products include on-line genome databases, automated gene-sequencing computers, DNA diagnostic tools, and advanced data-mining and gene-discovery software applications.³⁸

As we will see below, the development of bioinformatics has proven particularly devastating for nonhuman animals.

The historical foundations of animal biotechnology can also be traced to Baconian science. Bacon insisted that nonhuman beings were ontologically malleable, raw material for unbridled manipulation and transformation. In the following passage from Bacon’s utopian novel “The New Atlantis,” the scientist-priest, also known as the “Father of Solomon’s House” (or the “College of the Six Days Works,” a giant laboratory), describes the experiments that take place there thus:

We discover many strange effects, as continuing life in [animals and birds], through diverse parts, which you account vital, be perished and removed, resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance; and the like. We try also poisons and other medicines upon them, as well of surgery as physic. By art likewise we make them greater or taller than their kind is, and contrariwise, dwarf them, and stop their growth. We make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is, and contrariwise barren and not generative. Also we make them differ in colour, shape, activity, many ways. We find means to make commixtures and copulations of different kinds, which have produced many new kinds... We make a number of kinds of serpents, worm, flies, fishes, by putrefaction, whereof some are advanced (in effect) to be perfect creatures, like beasts or birds, and have sexes, and do propagate. Neither do we do this by chance, but we know beforehand of what matter and commixture what kind of those creatures will arise.³⁹

As we can see, for Bacon nature and nonhuman beings are not tied to any rigid ontological rules but are infinitely alterable by human beings. It was up to humans to create “perfect creatures” from imperfect ones. These feats were not achieved through aimless fumbling and groping, in Bacon’s account, but with forethought, deliberateness, and precision. For, to restate the last line of the passage above, the scientist-priests always “know beforehand of what matter and commixture what kind of those creatures will arise.” Granted this is a fictional character speaking, and not Bacon himself, it is clear that the “dissections and trials” Bacon describes here conform to his own vision of scientists’ omnipotence over the life-world—a power which claims the right to destroy life, not by terminating it, but by radically altering and reproducing it—the hallmark of exterminationism. Bacon’s scientist-priests are today’s biotechnologists, who are doubly motivated by massive financial incentives and the availability of highly sophisticated technologies.

Baconian science also helped paved the way for biotechnology because it was explicitly instrumentalist. While for Bacon experiments that simply “illuminate” must precede those that “bear fruit,” the truth of a theory is ultimately demonstrated by its implementation *in practice*. In Bacon’s words, “Truth, therefore, and utility are here the very same things. And works themselves are of greater value as pledges of truth than as contributing to the comforts of life.”⁴⁰ As Adorno and Horkheimer have pointed out, Baconian science was not only instrumentalist, but also “technological” in essence because it is geared specifically towards utility, exploitation, and efficient operation.⁴¹ Indeed, among the most troubling features of biotechnology’s development is that it is inextricably

bound up with corporate technoscience and the productive apparatus. While the scientists who made the major discoveries that eventually led to biotechnology's maturation may not have had the profit motive in mind, at least not exclusively, biotechnology is not a disinterested science but is by and large a profit-seeking enterprise. As the formal definitions of biotechnology reveal, biotechnology is primarily interested in the development of animal, plant, and other biological commodities. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines biotechnology as "the application of scientific and engineering principles to the processing of materials by biological agents to provide goods and services."⁴² Likewise, The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) defines biotechnology as "The use or development of techniques using organisms or parts of organisms to provide or improve goods or services."⁴³ Echoing these definitions, the Canadian Biotechnology Strategy (CBS) states that biotechnology "involves the use of living organisms, or parts of living organisms, to provide new methods of production, make new products and find new ways to improve our quality of life."⁴⁴

The genetic engineering of *animals* in particular is especially motivated by the pursuit of profit. For example, Endang Tri Margawati points out that in addition to serving as ideal "disease models" the main reason to produce transgenic animals is "for specific *economic* traits."⁴⁵ He notes that among the principal agricultural and medical applications of transgenics are: replacing traditional breeding practices with a more faster, more efficient and cost-effective procedure, and modifying farm animals to produce more of any given product more quickly, such as engineering "pigs and cattle that have more

meat on them.”⁴⁶ As the CCAC explains further, “Transgenic animals are used . . . *in agriculture and aquaculture to improve yields of meat and other animal products.*” Nodding to the ever-expanding industrial and commercial applications of animal biotechnology, the CCAC goes on to exclaim enthusiastically that, “This list is not inclusive; the use of transgenic animals is likely to expand in the future.”⁴⁷ Clearly, biotechnology in general and animal biotechnology in particular are motivated primarily by the great financial rewards they promise to reap.

Biotechnology is indeed big business around the world. As David Harvey has noted, alongside Information Technology (IT), biotechnology has created “fast fortunes” and thereby helped to produce a global financial elite, one of the key features of neoliberalism.⁴⁸ Biotechnology is without question a booming industry in Canada. According to the CBS, “Biotechnology . . . plays an increasingly important role in agriculture and agri-food, with global sales of ag-biotech products now estimated at \$5 billion.”⁴⁹ It also notes that “biotechnology-related industrial activities in Canada now generate revenues of nearly \$2 billion and exports of more than \$750 million global sales of ag-biotech products,” and that Canada “ranks third after the United States and the United Kingdom in the global biotechnology market.” Boasting over 500 biotech companies, Canada has the most biotech companies per capita in the world.⁵⁰ Charles River Labs, a major international producer of genetically engineered animals based in the US, announced annual revenue of \$1.13 billion in the 2012 fiscal year.⁵¹ Among the “products” advertised on its website is the “CVN mouse model,” described as “a new tool for the study of Alzheimer’s disease” that has been genetically engineered to develop

“behavioral and biochemical deficits” specific to Alzheimer’s at the age of nine months.⁵² Charles Rivers Labs’ unabashed production and sale of living creatures to custom-designed commodities for highly profitable purchase around the globe epitomizes the aggressively capitalistic spirit of animal biotechnology.

Extermination-by-Integration: The Final Solution to the ‘Animal Question’

The Nazi’s answer to the “Jewish Question”—or the problem of the “parasitical” presence of the Jews who were supposedly sucking the life-blood out of and contaminating European civilization—was to purge society of their existence, to wipe them off the face of the earth by way of a campaign of total physical obliteration. Technique’s solution to the “animal question”—or the problem of animals’ particularity and physical, emotional, and social idiosyncrasies in the context of a system of mass production—is the inverse: not to cast them out and destroy any last traces of their physical bodies, but to *fully integrate them with* the machinery of production and machinations of technique more generally. By definition, Ellul explains, “technique is opposed to nature.”⁵³ While technique is pure artifice and is organized along the principles of rationalization, the natural world is replete with spontaneity and disorder. But technique’s ingenious solution to this conflict is simply to alter natural organic, biological, and animal being so that it enhances rather than undermines technique. As Ellul explains further “whenever technique collides with a natural obstacle, it tends to get around it either by replacing the living organism by a machine, or by modifying the organism so that it no longer presents any specifically organic reaction.”⁵⁴

Technique is so devoid of ethical foundation, so ruthless in its pursuit of total control, and so intolerant of deviation, that it mutilates, literally burns or hacks off any physical part of an animal that proves to be incompatible with efficient mass production. In poultry operations, for example, newly hatched chicks are sent along an assembly-line to be “debeaked”—a process which involves burning the tips of their beaks off with a laser. This procedure is conducted without providing the chicks with anesthetic and results in chronic pain and discomfort. Other external mutilations include detoeing, dubbing, desnooding, debeaking, castration, tail docking, de-horning, ear-notching, and teeth grinding, and are also conducted without anesthetic on creatures who are only a few days or weeks old.⁵⁵ The fact that a chicken’s feet or beak may be *meaningful* to the chicken—an embodied creature whose personality is expressed through its body—is absolutely irrelevant, if not laughable, to the technical apparatus. Its sole concern is increasing the speed and volume of production.

Karen Davis describes this literal and figurative obliteration of the animal subject by way of mutilation as “the Procrustean solutio[n] to animal identity.” As Davis explains, Procrustes was a Greek mythological figure,

a bandit who keeps an iron bed to which he forces people to conform. Watching his victims approach from his stronghold, Procrustes stretches or shrinks the bed in advance to predetermine their failure to fit into it so that he may torturously reshape them to suit his will. If the victims are too tall, he amputates their excess length; if they are too short, he stretches them to size.⁵⁶

Like Procrustes’ victims, Davis continues, “animals are physically altered, rhetorically disfigured, and ontologically obliterated to mirror and model the goals of their exploiters.”⁵⁷ Factory-farmed chickens are arguably the most victimized in this way

according to Davis, for they “are not only *in* factories, they are regarded by the chicken industry *as* factories that allow for a continually manipulated adjustment of their bodies to fit the iron conditions of commerce.”⁵⁸

Biotechnology takes this Procrustean solution to the next level by altering animals at the genetic level so that they no longer present a conflict with, but also in a sense become the *living embodiments of*, the productive apparatus. Biotechnologists achieve this feat by treating organic life, animal life, as machinery and by applying the principles of engineering to them. By definition, synthetic biology aims to synthesize biology and engineering on one hand, and to create synthetic life out of biological life on the other. Ron Weiss, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and pioneer of synthetic biology, summarizes this approach when he describes his own early explorations in the field: “I decided to take what we understand in computing and apply that to *programming biology*. To me, that’s really the essence of synthetic biology.”⁵⁹ For Weiss, anything that falls outside of the highly regimented order of technological artifice is a threat to the latter’s very survival, cannot continue to exist on its own terms, and must, in effect, be reprogrammed so it can carry out its designated functions most efficiently.

All transgenic animals (which are in the most basic of terms, animals whose genome has been modified) embody the collapse of ontological contradiction between organics and technics Ellul outlined.⁶⁰ Their existence is not only technologically mediated but, as a result of artificially induced genetic alterations and disruptions, it is, in fact, technologically *determined*. They are nothing more and nothing less than artefacts of technique. As if to accentuate animals’ total subordination to the dictates of technique, the

mainstream scientific community refer to them variously as “bioreactors,” “ideal protein manufacturing plants,” “drug factories,” and “avian systems.”⁶¹

A brief overview of the different types of transgenic animals illustrates how biotechnology achieves the goal of extermination-by-integration. Chimeric animals, especially those produced by transferring genetic or cellular material from one species of animal to another, embody the collapse of contradiction endemic to technological rationality explicitly.⁶² One such example is the development of so-called “Enviro-pig™” by Cecil Forsberg at the University of Guelph in 1999. Rather than calling for an end to the intensive production of pigs as a result of the devastating environmental degradation and ethical travesty pig production entails, Forsberg simply found a way to engineer pigs so that they no longer posed an environmental threat and could go on being mass produced and consumed. Forsberg spliced pig genes with mouse genes and in so doing developed a pig that was able to digest phosphorous more efficiently and therefore produce less waste and less water pollution than its non-genetically modified counterparts.⁶³ Echoing the human arrogance that emanates from the Fidelity Investments ad cited earlier, the slogan on the Guelph University webpage that describes and promotes Enviro-pig reads: “Changing lives. Improving Life.”⁶⁴ Chimeric animals are also produced for biomedical research. For example, in 2009, a group of researchers led by Erika Sasaki at the Central Institute for Experimental Animals in Kawasaki, Japan, created “designer monkeys” who glowed green under ultraviolet light. Sasaki claims that the ultimate goal of her project is to mass-produce GM marmosets with various genetic faults inscribed in their genetic makeup to serve as ideal disease models, though it appears

that for the time being, she is satisfied with tampering with monkeys simply to see what sorts of bizarre and sensational admixtures she can produce.⁶⁵ The ontological discord between mice and pigs and marmosets and jellyfish could not be more extreme. Yet, when animals are regarded as sheer material for highly profitable economic enterprises, this discord is enthusiastically forced into false *accord* by biotechnologists, such as Forsberg and Sasaki.

So-called “pharm animals,” or animals who are hybridized with other species in order to produce pharmaceuticals and other products, are doubly ontologically violated and doubly self-alienated: they are alienated from themselves as particular species, and are alienated from themselves by being engineered to produce alien products. Their “punny” name already suggests their dual metaphysical obliteration (into commodities for both the agricultural and pharmaceutical industries). So-called spider-goats are perhaps the most well-known example of pharm animals. Spider goats were created by introducing the dragline silk gene from an orb-weaver spider into the DNA responsible for milk production in goats’ udders. The modified gene was then implanted in a “surrogate” goat.⁶⁶ Apparently the silky fibre contained in the spider goats’ milk can be used to repair ligaments and to produce other medical supplies. Spider goats’ milk is also being used in the production of “Biosteel,” a material used in the manufacturing of bullet-proof vests, and in aerospace and engineering projects. As if to confirm the spider goats’ status as mere extensions of the machinery of warfare, plans are underway to house them in thousands of small holding pens in former weapons storage buildings.⁶⁷

Machine-animal hybrids, such as the “remote-control pigeon” (also known as “robo-pigeon”), embody the collapse of contradiction between the technological and the biological most explicitly of all. In 2007 scientists at the Robot Engineering Technology Research Centre at Shandong University of Science and Technology in China implanted microchip receivers into pigeons’ brains. With electronic impulses generated from a computer they were then able to control the direction of the pigeons’ flight and prevent them from flying in a circular route, as per their natural tendency.⁶⁸ The remote-control-pigeon is an outrageous example of Baconian-Cartesian mechanism taken to its logical conclusion: in this case, not only are animals’ physiology and anatomy *likened* to machines, but the animals are *literally* transformed *into* machines.⁶⁹ The scientist in charge of the mechanical pigeon experiment boasts, “Via a computer, we forced the bird to comply with our commands. . . . We hope the technology could be put into practical use in future.”⁷⁰ Su’s second comment reveals that he has not yet determined to which “practical use” he will put the remote-control-pigeons, and has therefore, like Sasaki, toyed with and altered their very natures simply for the sake of satisfying his curiosity.

In yet another horrifying example of ontological collapse, in March 2013 it was announced that transhumanist researchers at Duke University and scientists at the Edmond and Lily Safra International Institute for Neuroscience created a so-called “superbrain” by linking the brains of two rats in a “telepathy” experiment. One rat, dubbed the “encoder,” was responsible for producing thoughts or electrical brain activity, while the other rat, the “decoder,” acted in response to the encoder’s brain waves as though they were its own. Remarkably, one rat was located in the Safra Institute in Brazil

while the other was in Miguel Nicolelis' lab at Duke campus in North Carolina. Brain signals were exchanged through the Internet.⁷¹ Like spider-goats and robo-pigeons, these rats were also subjected to a dual ontological collapse. In this case, each one was merged both with computer technology and with another animal in an involuntary co-colonization and expropriation of each other's selfhood. In a similar kind of experiment, Seung-Schik Yoo of Harvard Medical School recently led an experiment that enabled human beings to control the movements of rats "telepathically." According to New Science reporter Sara Reardon, "By linking the technologies of two brain/computer interfaces, human volunteers were able to trigger movement in a rat's tail using their minds."⁷² Reardon explains further, Yoo and his team "have created a system that connects a human to a rat via a computer, without the need for the human or the rat to have brain implants."⁷³ Apparently, this total ontological violation of the rats in question is considered a great scientific achievement.

The "genetic standardization" of animals, and cloning in particular, which involves replicating biological and genetic material, signals the ultimate erasure of animals as a subjects-of-a-meaningful-life.⁷⁴ Cloning is perhaps the most controversial of biotechnologies, but only inasmuch as it is, quite rightly, still considered taboo by the majority of the public to clone human beings.⁷⁵ But the cloning of animals is met with little opposition. So far sheep, goats, cows, mice, pigs, cats, rabbits, guars, and even primates have been cloned, all using nuclear transfer technology.⁷⁶ Among the main reasons for cloning animals listed by The Human Genome Project are: developing "drug-producing" (pharm) animals for mass production, cloning animals for organ harvesting,

and ironically enough, replenishing populations of endangered and possibly even extinct animals.⁷⁷ Cloned animals such as Tetra, mentioned earlier, are intended for use as “genetically invariable” models for diseases, such as diabetes and Parkinson’s.

Whatever its putatively lofty goals, cloning is a form of what Derrida refers to as extermination-by-overproduction or overgeneration. In Derrida’s words,

The annihilation of certain species is indeed in process, but it is occurring through the organization and exploitation of artificial, infernal, virtually *interminable survival*, in conditions that previous generations would have judged monstrous, outside of every presumed norm of a life proper to animals that are thus *exterminated by means of their continued existence or even overpopulation*. As if, for example, instead of throwing a people into ovens and gas chambers (let’s say Nazi) doctors and geneticists decided to organize the overproduction and overgeneration of Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals by means of artificial insemination, so that, being continually more numerous and better fed, they could be destined in always increasing numbers for the same hell, that of the imposition of genetic experimentation, or extermination by gas or by fire.⁷⁸

Cloning adds another dimension to this process of extermination-by-overgeneration by introducing the possibility of infinite *replication*.

Replication constitutes the deliberate and systematic erasure of the singularity, individuality, uniqueness, and variation among and between species and individual animals, which is another central feature of exterminationism. As Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse have noted, the elimination of particularity is part and parcel of every exterminationist program. It can occur both epistemically and literally, and more often than not occurs both ways simultaneously. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno refers to the epistemic universalizing and generalizing tendency as “identity-thinking” or the collapse of difference and multiplicity into a forced unity, identity, and adequacy. In his view, “identity is the primal form of ideology” and that “adequacy has always been subjection

to dominant purposes.”⁷⁹ Marcuse explains that a concept is “universalized” by being abstracted from its “particular ‘substance.’”⁸⁰ In the process of universalization and abstraction all particularity is levelled out into broad, repeatable, and homogenous generalities or universal categories.⁸¹ The universalized and abstracted concept is so detached from its object that both the concept and the object are stripped of meaning.⁸² By homogenizing both concepts and their objects (which include living beings) mass murder is more easily carried out and justified, whether against the Jews or others in the Holocaust or animals in the animal industrial complex. Putting it another way, the universalization of singular beings into infinitely reproducible types delegitimizes any claim they might have to subjecthood and thereby gives license to the commission of systemic atrocities against them. As Adorno and Horkheimer observe, “Abstraction, the instrument of enlightenment stands in the same relationship to its objects as fate, whose concept it eradicates: as liquidation.”⁸³

We have already seen how this process works when we lump all nonhuman animals into the single category, Animal. At least the category animal still somehow acknowledges or nods to animals’ animality. But biotechnology effectively removes any lingering trace of the *actual* animal in the *concept* of the Animal by synthesizing animals with technics. Genetic engineering in general is expressly committed to universalizing and abstracting particular animals into mass-reproducible commodities and thereby cancelling their individuality and animality. But genetically engineered animals are still at least potentially distinguishable one from the other given that their genetic code is not *entirely* replicated, as it is in the case of cloned animals. Cloning, on the other hand, cancels all

remaining existing and potential ontological tensions between and among beings: it constitutes the mass proliferation of the same model.⁸⁴

With the above examples of the ontological implosions that animal biotechnology thrives on in mind, Derrida's claim that we are headed to a postanimal world is especially apt. Derrida envisages with great trepidation and concern, "a tableau of a world after animality, after a sort of holocaust, a world from which animality, at first present to man, would have one day disappeared: destroyed or annihilated by man." This world after animals would be the result of a systematic "denaturing of animality, the production of figures of animality that are so new that they appear monstrous enough to call for a change of name."⁸⁵ This terrible holocaust is well underway and we are indeed propelling ourselves headlong into a world bereft of animals as we know them, and of all the joy, comfort, beauty, and depth they bring to our lives when they are allowed to exist as, by, and for themselves. As we will see in chapter four, a world without animal subjects is, at least in phenomenological terms, no world at all.

An Ontological Paradox: Animals as Materiality and Immateriality

Biotechnological animals are suspended in an ontological paradox. They are reduced at once to sheer materiality (viz., raw material for production) *and* immateriality in the form of processes, functions, information/feedback systems, data, and code. On one hand, transgenic animals, like all other animal victims of extermination, are the mere stuff of control, just masses of malleable flesh. On the other hand, in the biotechnological universe, "nature is cast in the image of a computer and the language of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and information sciences."⁸⁶ That is, it is dematerialized. N.

Katherine Hayles notes that the rise of informatics and cybernetics corresponds directly with the radical dematerialization of organic life. Somewhere along the line, she muses, “*information lost its body*” and “it came to be conceptualized as an entity separate from the material forms in which it is thought to be embedded.”⁸⁷ Gigliotti observes that animals are now regarded as “data warehouses of information.”⁸⁸ She points out the irony that just as ethologists are producing reams of indisputable evidence of animals’ rich and complex subjective lives, “much of the work in genetic technologies is reinforcing an understanding of animals as suited to act as a *material language*, a *symbolic technique*.”⁸⁹ There is a clear economic advantage to vaporizing animals into data and code. As computer code, genetic elements are not bound to traditional time or space barriers, but can be accessed anywhere, anytime. Therefore, as Judith Roof has pointed out, in the neoliberal globalized economy, DNA is “perfect commodity.”⁹⁰ Because of the central role the objectification of animals plays in the advancement of the global agricultural and pharmaceutical industries, animal DNA is an especially perfect commodity.

Yet, as Thacker points out, while it transforms organic or biological life into information and thereby *dematerializes* it, biotechnology also *rematerializes* biological life, albeit not before “reprogramming” it. Its goal, Thacker suggests, and as we have glimpsed, is to produce synthetic biological materiality, or immaterial materiality, not to do away with materiality altogether. “The trajectory of biotech’s informatics essentialism,” he argues, “completes a loop, from an interest in encoding the body into data to an interest in programming and reprogramming that genetic-informatic body and finally to an investment in the capabilities of informatics to help synthesize and generate

biological materiality.”⁹¹ Regrettably Thacker ignores the impact of this process of de- and re-materialization on animals who stand the most to lose as result. Thacker mentions uncritically and only in passing the fact that numerous biotechnological experiments on animals are underway.⁹² But his analysis of biological organisms’ relegation to the material (and mechanical) on the one hand, and their vaporization into the immaterial on the other, sheds light on how technique works on animals in the twenty-first century. This paradoxical reduction of animals to materiality and immateriality is epitomized in the following remark by a synthetic biologist working for the BioBricks Foundation. In describing the aim of his work, he explains, we “*want to strip out all the noise in biology and turn it into pure engineering, where organisms can be treated like machines and their inner workings are component parts. . . .* By standardising these genetic elements in an online registry, anyone can piece them together in any order to create biological circuits with entirely designed purpose.”⁹³ In other words, the dematerialization of animals opens the proverbial door to “anyone” to redesign them as they see fit. While biotechnology is the epitome of Baconian-Cartesian mechanism, then, it also signals a departure from this early modern/modern scientific framework in its relegation of animals to a kind of virtual ideality. As Marcuse has observed, with the rise of technological rationality, the stark Cartesian division between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* gave way to the usurpation of former by the latter.⁹⁴ In his words, “modern scientific philosophy may well begin with the notion of two substances, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*—but as the extended matter becomes comprehensible in mathematical equations which, translated into technology, ‘remake’ this matter, the *res extensa* loses its character as independent substance.”⁹⁵ In other words,

as per the idealist conceit, matter (i.e. sensuous animal life) is no longer autonomous but is in fact a projection of mind (i.e. the principles of rationalization).

As I have noted elsewhere, Donna Haraway refers to this process of objectification-by-projection as the “god-trick” and points out that it is one of the hallmarks of humanism. In the traditional humanist outlook “man” claims an Archimedian vantage point over the universe, nay, a divine vantage point and, like God, is ultimately capable of “seeing everything from nowhere.”⁹⁶ Yet, despite “his” self-appointed omniscience and omnipotence, man does not actually see the world as such, but rather *sees himself projected onto the world*. Thus, man imitates God, not just by claiming absolute power and knowledge, but also by claiming ultimate *creative* power—even if this power is, in one sense, ultimately delusional. As self-proclaimed all-seer and all-knower, man is also all-maker. Like God, man produces the world and its constituents *in or as* his own image. Humanism is therefore a form of productionism:

...productionism is about man the tool-maker and -user, whose highest technical production is himself. . . . Blinded by the sun, in thrall to the father, reproduced in the sacred image of the same, his reward is that he is self-born, an autotelic copy. That is the mythos of enlightenment and transcendence.⁹⁷

To the humanist, in other words, the world of the nonhuman is both a cosmic mirror for self-reflection and the raw material for self-reproduction. This tendency reaches its apotheosis in biotechnology labs where nonhuman animals are at once divided from human beings by a massive metaphysical gulf, and at the same time are transformed into the distinctly human ideality of computer code.

Patenting and the New Divinity

The patenting of animals reinforces biotechnologists' self-proclaimed role as divine creators. In quasi-religious and patriarchal language, Ian Wilmut is often referred to as the "father" of Dolly, the first cloned sheep.⁹⁸ In 2010 American biologist Craig Venter claimed similar god-like status when he declared that (ten years and forty-million dollars later) he had actually created "the world's first synthetic life form" called Synthia, a synthetic genome "constructed using chemicals in a laboratory," whose genetic code, which includes literary quotations and URLs, was built by a computer.⁹⁹ Synthia is a discovery, which according to *Guardian* science correspondent Ian Sample, "paves the way for *designer organisms* that are built rather than evolved."¹⁰⁰ Julian Savulescu, an Oxford University professor of practical ethics, is quoted in Sample's article as saying, "Venter is creaking open the most profound door in humanity's history, potentially peeking into its destiny. He is not merely copying life artificially...or modifying it radically by genetic engineering. He is going towards the role of a god: creating artificial life that could never have existed naturally."¹⁰¹ With this connection in mind Best, borrowing Rifkin's term, appropriately suggests that biotechnology is heralding a "commodified 'Second Genesis'"¹⁰²

Patenting completes the process of creation and commodification. The patented animal is not only the producer's creation but also its property. As such, the patented animal is always already a commodity without any prior or potential existence as a subject. The producer capitalizes not only on the sale of the physical animal, but on its *essence*, the vicissitudes of which are predetermined in the laboratory. The owner of a

patented animal thus makes not only an economic claim over it, nor merely a physical claim over its biological existence, but also a *metaphysical* one, such as has never been asserted before in human-animal history.

While patenting animal and other organic life was originally frowned upon, it is now standard industry practice. This suggests a radical decline in ethical concern for nonhuman beings over the decades and a larger shift in the way scientists, industry regulators, and the general public regard the natural world—a shift propelled by the normalization of biotechnology itself. Early attempts in the 1970s to patent biological life such as bacteria were rejected on the grounds that, even if tampered with, microorganisms are natural, living beings and so could not be hailed as inventions. However, there was a quick turn-around, and in 1980 the Supreme Court of the United States determined that any human-altered microorganism or biological entity could be regarded under the law as any other human invention, and therefore could be subject to patenting.¹⁰³ Susan K. Sell has pointed out that the expansion of intellectual property rights over anything from software algorithms to genes to plant and animal species, combined with weakened antitrust policies, which were first introduced in 1996 with the implementation of World Trade Organization's (WTO) agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS), "has promoted economic concentration in high technology sectors and particularly in the life sciences industries."¹⁰⁴ Fiona Murray from the MIT Sloan School of Management observes that beginning in the 1980s, the decade that saw DuPont Corporation's patenting of oncomouse,

academics in [the life sciences] were quick to recognize that their discoveries were also the foundation of commercial products that, following the Bayh-Dole Act,

could easily be published and patented. . . . A critical 1980 Supreme Court decision expanded the scope of patent law, confirming that discoveries such as simple modified organisms and later mammals (including the oncomouse) could be patented.¹⁰⁵

The reduction of animals to patentable inventions is yet further confirmation that we have reached a calamitous stage in the history of human-animal relations. According to Oxford theologian Andrew Linzey, when animals are regarded as inventions, any remaining duties of care towards them we may have held onto are effectively eliminated. As such, Linzey is entirely justified in suggesting that the patenting of animals “mark[s] the lowest status granted to animals in the history of European ethics.”¹⁰⁶

Time-Space Compression: An Existential-Phenomenological Nightmare

Biotechnology is nothing short of an ethical and existential-phenomenological nightmare. In being ontologically integrated with other animals, machines, and computers, with alien bodies and objects, with data and code, the biotechnological animal is existentially and phenomenologically *disintegrated*. It is subjected to multiple temporalities and spacialities that do not, to use Merleau-Ponty’s expression, “belong” to it. Because of its violent subordination to the principles of economic rationalization, which are otherwise foreign to it, the genetically manipulated animal is the ultimate example of a being which “exists in distortion, limitation, and denial of its nature (essence),” to recall Marcuse’s phrase.¹⁰⁷ The genetic alignment of animals’ with the apparatus of production, impedes and cancels their claim to being what they *are*, or at least, *could* and *ought* to be, outside the domain of technical control. Animal production in a neoliberal context has particularly devastating existential-phenomenological implications. For, in this context,

animals are not only subject to the tortures of mass production but also to the especially brutal tortures of *time-space compressed* mass production.

From a phenomenological standpoint, appropriate temporal and spatial organization are central to a being's flourishing. The subject literally embodies the space and time of the world of which it is a part. Phenomenologically speaking, time is not objective but wholly subjective. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, "I am not *in* space and time, nor do I *conceive* space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them."¹⁰⁸ The embodied subject is similarly entwined in, with, and as time. Time is not "an object of our knowledge, but [a] dimension of our being. . . . We must understand time as the subject and the subject as time."¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty does not offer an analysis of the existential temporality of animal subjectivity, and perhaps such an analysis is impossible given the inevitable limitations of our knowledge about the nuances of other animals' subjective experiences. But it is undeniable that *other animals do have a particular relationship to and inhabit different temporal dimensions depending on their species and individual personality, a relationship that is imbued with meaning for them.*

The relation of the body to space is especially important in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analysis. Merleau-Ponty approvingly cites a Dutch scientist, F. Buytendijk, who states that "space is bound up with the animal's own body as part of its flesh."¹¹⁰ He explains further that every body, human and nonhuman, is accustomed to a particular "spatial level"—that is, it is oriented towards a specific spatial and directional relation between itself and other objects. The floor is under the feet and the ceiling is above the head, furniture is placed on its feet, mirrors are hung straight either vertically or

horizontally. Every body also has a “preferential plane,” or a spatial and directional configuration which is most conducive to its flourishing.¹¹¹

To be sure, like temporal organization, spatial organization is culturally and historically determined to some extent. However, it goes without saying that irrespective of cultural differences, human beings have universally evolved as a species which is best suited to bipedal movement—which is to say, they prefer to walk forward using their legs and feet, with their bodies upright, preferably on flat surfaces. They can, of course, adapt to walking sideways or backwards on narrow, inclined, and/or suspended surfaces, but the universal preferential plane for human beings is on a flat surface. At the same time, despite the natural expression of a particular spatial preference, a body comes to habituate to whatever “habitat” it finds itself ensconced in. For example, if someone is put into a room with a mirror where everything appears to be at a 45° angle, she will at first feel disoriented but will slowly begin to “inhabit the spectacle.”¹¹² The important point is that this occurs *phenomenologically*, not cognitively—that is, the body adapts not through some kind of rational analysis or calculation that enables her to orient herself with her “mind,” but rather through much more gradual and subtle perceptual adjustments. The upshot of this is that the body is so intimately entwined with any given spatial configuration, the phenomenological body is so spatially bound, that if you change the space you change the body. And if you change the body, you change the subject—not always for the worse but certainly not always for the better. Depending on the context, the “ousting” of the “real body,” or the body as it is before it has transformed, with the

“virtual body,” or the body as it is after it has adapted to the new spatial arrangement, can be a neutral, enriching, or literally crippling experience.

As we have already acknowledged, we can never entirely capture the subjective experience of other animals. However, we can safely assume that even after millennia of breeding to become a more efficient “producer,” the “natural” space and time of an animal such as a cow, for example, is undoubtedly much slower and much more expansive than that of its genetically modified counterpart. We might hazard an educated guess that, in phenomenological terms, the cow “belongs” to wide, verdant spaces, populated with some but not too many other cow companions, a lived space that is transformed by the appearance of a wobbly-kneed calf who attaches himself to his mother for months to come as an extension of her own body. We can safely assume that a cow’s “natural” space rings with and is enriched by layers of sound—buzzing insects, trilling birds, whistling wind—and is yet further embellished by the scent of wild roses, dandelions, hay, and rotting leaves. Though we don’t know for sure, we can safely posit, based on observation, that a cow’s “time” is very likely rather leisurely, somnolent, restful, a little drowsy even.

Neoliberal capitalism has no patience for wide, verdant fields or languorous time, but as noted above, thrives on compressed time and space. Time-space-compression, on David Harvey’s definition, refers to the collapse of traditional geographical space and time barriers.¹¹³ As Harvey explains, not only have the speed of market contracts, global trade, as well as production and labour increased since the rise of neoliberalism, but so have the speed of trade and consumption. As a result, “in the realm of commodity

production, the primary effect has been to emphasize the values and virtues of instantaneity (instant and fast food, meals, and other satisfactions) and of disposability (cups, plates, cutlery, packaging, napkins, clothing, etc.).”¹¹⁴

Not coincidentally, fascist ideologues and regimes are often worshippers of speed. In his famous “Futurist Manifesto” (1909), for example, F. T. Marinetti glorifies and aestheticizes the violence and destruction made possible by fast vehicles and machines:

We affirm that the world’s magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath – a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*.¹¹⁵

For Marinetti, speed propels us into the future and vanquishes memory and history along the way. “Time and Space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed.”¹¹⁶ Paul Virilio reminds us that speed holds people in thrall to its power and sends out a note of caution that, just as Marinetti had hoped, speed is the time of the fascist future: “The violence of speed has become both the location and the law, the world’s destiny and its destination.”¹¹⁷ As Harvey points out, neoliberal temporality boasts of a future with no grounding in the past, a future without referent. In the age of neoliberalism, “the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic).”¹¹⁸ Swift movement “forward” on the backs of those destined to serve as slaves is the temporal structure, is the meaning of “progress” in this new world order. But the future regarded thus is inhuman and inhumane and has devastating consequences for animals. “Eternal, omnipresent speed” is the time of machines, not embodied subjects. To subordinate the latter to the former is nothing short of torture.

Indeed, for animals trapped in the animal industrial complex, acceleration is paradoxically a deceleration of time into one eternal moment of agony. Animals who are entrapped in the neoliberal regime of production are uprooted from any natural temporal context and are instead condemned to sheer immanence and infinite repetition, to a ceaseless present characterized by relentless and profound anguish. “Progress” today not only translates into the “annihilation of space through time,” but, as we have seen, also dangerously prioritizes becoming, or limitless transformation and manipulation, over being and ontological integrity. This conception of progress as metaphysically regressive could not be truer for other animals who are reduced to instances or means in a process that has no end, no telos, save its own infinite perpetuation.¹¹⁹ The genetically modified animal languishing helplessly in a stall, crate, or cage, immobilized as barely-living-flesh, the animal who is made to be what it is *not*, is in perpetual conflict with itself. It knows, consciously or not, that it wants to do things it cannot, and is forced to do things it does not want to or is unfit to do; *it knows its very own body is the limit of the freedom of which it has been stripped.*

Overall, genetic modifications undermine each animal’s phenomenological “style of being,” or its species-specific trajectory of behaviours, its perceptual nuances, and its particular way of expressing itself in and engaging with the world—as such, genetic modifications undermine the very *being* of each animal. As Adorno and Horkheimer argue, “In their transformation the essence of things is revealed as always the same, a substrate of domination.”¹²⁰ By “things” they do not only mean inanimate objects, but animate beings who are treated like inanimate objects. But this essence as the substrate of

domination is false. It is imposed on beings who have an entirely different essence. The genetic engineer may think that the essence of the mouse that he is genetically manipulating is to-be-genetically-manipulated, but in truth, its essence is *to-be-mouse*—to fulfill its natural behaviours and to live amongst its own kind in an environment of its choosing. Likewise, if we accept our depiction of a cow's natural embodied time and space above, we can conclude that the cow is no longer *herself* when she is confined inside the cold, dark, dank, cacophonous, over-crowded death-world of the factory farm where she is often permanently chained by the neck, forced to stand for hours on end on dirty iron grates smeared with manure; where she is segregated from her young who are taken away at birth; where her nostrils and lungs fill with ammonia and methane gas; where her udders are full to bursting and covered in mastitis-ridden lesions. In this context, her perceptual apparatus is dismantled, her particularity is universalized and she is reduced to a homogenous unit of endless production, a living embodiment of compressed space and time. She is physically, metaphysically, and phenomenologically disfigured.

It is precisely in this conflict between what it is (expected to be as a flesh-machine-commodity) and what it is or could be (an embodied subject-of-a-life in an organic spatial-temporal context to which it is naturally suited), that the profound and unimaginable physical and psychological suffering of the genetically engineered animal lies. In the ultimate instance of self-alienation, it is not one with its transformation into a commodity but wholly alien to itself. As Barbara Noske points out, the objectification of the animal's body is among the greatest causes of radical self-alienation. As she explains, "The body which makes up an important part of the animal 'self' used to be steered largely by the

animal itself but has now become like a machine in the hands of management and is actually working against the animal's own interests."¹²¹ I would go even further than this and say that the body of the biotechnologically altered animal is not merely working against its own "interests" but against its entire existential-phenomenological basis of subjective experience.

Leaving biotechnology aside for a moment, the increasingly sophisticated forms of acceleration and intensification, and the prevailing logic of instantaneity and disposability, have led to greater suffering for animals in agricultural dimension of the animal industrial complex than ever before. For example, free trade and the loosening of regulatory constraints on corporate enterprise have had a particularly catastrophic impact on animals. Any potential ethical limitations on their treatment have all but vanished, and those that remain cannot withstand the paralegal powers of the WTO to exempt corporations from corporate responsibility (corporate responsibility already being a dubious prospect at the best of times). Under free trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) animals such as cows are born in Mexico, shipped to Alberta for fattening, and carted off to eastern Canada for slaughter. Not only does this result in massive fossil fuel emissions but it also involves excruciating suffering for already sick and injured animals who are forced to endure long journeys in cramped transport vehicles, without protection from inclement weather, and without food, water, or rest for days on end. Global Action Network (GAN), a Montreal-based animal protection organization, reports that "sows live a life of continual impregnation and delivery. During their lifespan of 8-10 pregnancies, they will spend their entire lives in

gestation stalls or farrowing crates, cages that are barely bigger than their body. There is no bedding, so the mother must endure pregnancy and birthing on a dirty concrete floor.”¹²² Sows are pinned down by bars onto iron grates in so-called “farrowing crates” during suckling.¹²³ That is the extent of contact they will ever have with their young. Meanwhile, dairy cows are subjected to the same endless cycle of impregnation and delivery, in their case for 4-5 years until they are too “spent” to be of any further use as milking machines. As in the case of sows and all other factory farmed animals, because it would be a waste of time and money for the producer, these creatures have virtually no contact with their offspring from the moment of birth onward. As People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) explains, cows’ “female calves are slaughtered immediately or used to replace their mothers in the dairy herd, and many male calves end up in veal crates—a fate characterized by confinement, darkness, malnutrition, and slaughter.”¹²⁴ In order for those products to be sold as commodities at all, the animals must be estranged from natural life-processes—which means, for example, that a cow’s milk is packaged and sold to humans rather than provided to her own young. As Noske has shown, milk and meat production are extreme examples of a subject’s alienation from the products of her labour.¹²⁵ Once dairy cows can no longer yield a profit, they are sent to slaughter to be turned into hamburger meat.¹²⁶

The culture of disposability reduces living animal subjects to *waste* if a profit cannot be made off of their body parts. Animals who are unwanted at birth, such as male chicks, are immediately discarded. In a section entitled “Euthanasia and Disposal of Nonsaleable Chicks” in the Canadian Agri-food Research Council’s “Recommended

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals,” it is stated that “high speed maceration of chicks is a practical and humane form of euthanasia.”¹²⁷ The same document also recommends killing baby chicks in gas chambers, exactly the same method used to kill Jews and other detested human beings in the Third Reich.¹²⁸ (In laboratories, it is standard operating procedure to kill laboratory animals upon completion of the experiment, even if the animals are perfectly healthy or healthy enough to lead a decent life in the safety of a loving home or sanctuary.¹²⁹) If they do manage to survive the factory farm, many animals are gravely injured during transport due to rough handling during loading and/or the lack of protection from extreme weather. The conditions in factory farms and in transport vehicles are so dire that *several hundred thousand* animals are *expected* to be severely injured or dead on arrival (DOA) at the slaughterhouse. According to Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Farm Animals (CEFTA), approximately 250,000 hens are DOA at the slaughterhouse every year.¹³⁰ “In Ontario alone,” GAN notes, “approximately 7,000 dairy cows arrive annually at provincial slaughterhouses crippled from their trip.”¹³¹ These animals are not worth enough money to rescue so they are simply thrown outside of factory farms or slaughterhouses onto “dead piles,” literally heaps of dead and dying animals left to die slowly, fully exposed to the elements, in excruciating pain. Their deaths are so normalized that they are factored into the cost of production. If, on the off chance, a few dollars or cents can still be salvaged from an injured calf or pig, however, she may be taken to auction. This is, of course, a terrifying ordeal for the animal in question. Not only must she endure the humiliation and violence

typically involved in the auction process itself, she must do so when already in great pain and distress as a result of her existing injuries and trauma from years or months of abuse.

Biotechnological interventions compound this suffering further, for they not only impose an alien spatio-temporal configuration onto the animal externally (in the form of the animal's environment), as it were, but also internally (in the genetic structure of the animal). Harvey points out how biotechnology has been instrumental in reducing traditional temporal and spatial barriers—in adapting life itself to better meet the demands of flexible accumulation and batch-production. In his words, “there is a whole history of technical and organizational innovation applied to the reduction [of traditional temporal and spatial] barriers—everything from assembly-line production (of cars or battery hens), acceleration of physical processes (fermentation, genetic engineering), to planned obsolescence in consumption (the mobilization of fashion and advertising to accelerate change).”¹³² We have already mentioned jumbo salmon “that grow twice as fast as their natural cousins.”¹³³ As a result of genetic manipulation, so-called battery hens are forced to produce about ten times as many eggs as they would naturally (from thirty per to three hundred per year), which results in prolapsed uteruses.¹³⁴ The eggs drop from the cages into moving assembly-lines and are led either to artificial incubators to be hatched into future broiler chickens or battery hens, or to egg cartons for consumer consumption. The same goes for goats, pigs, cows, and other so-called food animals. Most of the animals killed for consumption are, in fact, still babies. According to PETA, “To keep up with demand and reduce production costs, genetic selection and a steady dose of growth-promoting drugs are used to ensure large, fast-growing birds. Today, most chicks

take only six to seven weeks to reach 'processing' weight, and chickens raised for meat weigh an average of one-fifth more than those raised in the 1950s."¹³⁵ Broiler chickens, or chickens raised for meat, are made to grow so fast, and heavy, so quickly that *they cannot bear the weight of their own bodies*. They have no choice but to drag themselves around by their wings on concrete, feces-smearred floors, which results not only in crippling and lameness but also severe ammonia burns. All of this takes place inside giant, over-crowded sheds, sometimes packed to the brim with tens of thousands of other chickens.

Biotechnological animals also experience brutal injuries as a result of the dramatic alteration of their genetic makeup. Biotechnologists conveniently ignore the fact that genetic alterations are not isolated, that the genetically manipulated animal is a whole being whose pre-existing genetic make-up may, and more often than not does, conflict with the alien genetic structure imposed onto it. As Niall Shanks and Ray Greek suggest, biotechnology mistakenly adopts an "atomistic view of genetics," one that disregards the genetic history of the being with which it tampers and the potentially hostile relationship between the newly introduced genes and existing genes that may ensue.¹³⁶ It is well known that Dolly died prematurely (i.e. was euthanized) at the age of six, half the normal life expectancy for a sheep, after developing lung disease, an ailment which typically afflicts older animals, not young, ostensibly healthy ones like her.¹³⁷ As Best explains, "transgenic animals are often born deformed and suffer from fatal bleeding disorders, arthritis, tumors, stomach ailments, kidney disease, diabetes, inability to nurse and reproduce, behavioral and metabolic disturbances, high mortality rates and large offspring syndrome."¹³⁸ The wretched Beltway pig, which was genetically engineered to grow

larger more quickly to increase profits, was “afflicted with arthritis, deformities, and respiratory disease.”¹³⁹ The pigs’ muscles degenerated to the point where they became crippled and could no longer walk.¹⁴⁰ Genetically altered animals such as the Beltway pig give a whole new meaning to Marx’s characterization of exploited workers as “crippled monstrosities.”¹⁴¹ Predictably, rather than take the horrific suffering inflicted on the pigs as an opportunity to reflect on the ethical soundness of their ghastly experiments, the scientists responsible for the Beltway Pig research simply pursued another experiment wherein they inserted chicken genes into pig embryos to produce pigs with large shoulders, which they jokingly referred to as “Arnie Schwarzenegger Pigs.”¹⁴² As we will discuss in chapter three, such jocularly in the face of extreme suffering is a form of what Adorno and Horkheimer call “wrong laughter,” the diabolical laughter of the persecutor at the humiliation and abjection of the persecuted.¹⁴³

Ethical Collapse

As these examples of transgenic animals’ suffering evinces, animal biotechnology exists in a kind of ethical vacuum. Genetically engineered animals are the victims of the total evasion of ethical responsibility resulting from what Marcuse calls the “purge of the negative,” or the elimination of the critical standpoint; they are the products of a society in which ethical limitations on our treatment of animals have been almost completely eliminated.¹⁴⁴ This ethical collapse is constitutive of the introjection of the principles of technological rationalization into human consciousness and the corresponding transformation of conscience into an instrument of violence rather than resistance. In the technologically totalitarian universe technique is its own ethical arbiter. As Asher

Horowitz notes, for Marcuse, “who supplies probably the most multilayered single account of the standstill of the break up of totality” (i.e. the social, political, and ethical impotence of the contemporary subject held in thrall to the technical apparatus), “...the apparatus assumes the role of moral agent.”¹⁴⁵ Although it plays the part of moral agent, determining what is good and what is evil, the apparatus is in fact beyond good and evil in the worst sense. As Ellul points out, technique is concerned only with technical matters.¹⁴⁶ In fact, one of technique’s defining characteristics is “its refusal to tolerate moral judgments.”¹⁴⁷ By excluding moral judgments from its purview, technique “create[s] a completely independent technical morality.”¹⁴⁸ It is its own ethical arbiter. Therefore, “technique, in sitting in judgment on itself, is clearly freed from this principal obstacle to human action,” which is to say it gives itself license to do whatever is necessary to reproduce itself.¹⁴⁹ If ethical or moral considerations interfere with efficiency they are dispensed with.¹⁵⁰ “Technical automatism” reduces ethics to “flourishes,” a kind of sentimental excess.¹⁵¹ Marcuse makes a similar point and argues that because all technological developments, regardless of their purpose, are considered to be both inevitable and rational, “the intellectual and emotional refusal ‘to go along’ appears neurotic and impotent.”¹⁵²

Not surprisingly, this dismissiveness of ethical concern for biotechnological animals’ well-being is widespread among biotechnologists. The scientific community barely finds it incumbent upon itself to go through the motions of a genuine ethical evaluation of its treatment of animals, let alone to halt its most egregiously cruel practices. The refusal to tolerate critique is rampant within the biotechnology industry and has only

worsened since its growth over the past four decades. In the early stages of biotechnology's development, some concern for the catastrophic implications of genetic manipulation was still expressed. Ironically, a number of the pioneers of biotechnology were the most vociferous opponents of its expansion. For example, in 1974 Paul Berg, the scientist responsible for developing gene transfer technology, penned a paper that called for an immediate halt of all genetic engineering research.¹⁵³ Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen, the pioneers of recombinant DNA technology mentioned above, were co-signatories. In 1975, these and other scientists held a conference devoted to discussing the ethical implications of DNA research and genetic engineering. Among their fears was the potential use of genetic research for biological warfare. They also worried about the spread of epidemics as a potential consequence of transferring viruses into bacteria. They lifted the moratorium, but they produced a set of guidelines that, according to Newell-McLaughlin and Re, "involved levels of physical and biological containment [such as] the requirement to use an organism that would not survive outside the laboratory environment."¹⁵⁴ It is unclear whether mammals would meet this requirement, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse these guidelines in any detail. Nevertheless, it is clear that in its nascent stages, biotechnology was still recognized for the grave risks and hazards it posed. There was still, in Marcusian and Ellulian terms, some degree of "negativity" or critical distance vis-à-vis biotechnology (and patenting, as we saw above). It was new enough that people could still regard it with suspicion and concern. That said, according to Rifkin, the temporary moratorium cited above was less a product of these scientists' ethical concerns than their concern for "personal and institutional liability." But

the fact that a moratorium existed at all does indicate, in my view, that the scientists involved were conscious of the potential risks their own work posed.¹⁵⁵

Today, however, such concern for the ethical implications of biotechnology appears to have all but vanished. When confronted with opposition to their work, biotechnologists are defensive at best and downright hostile at worst. For example, Mark Westhusin, the scientist discussed above who has developed the anti-malaria vaccine using transgenic goats, refers to those who question the ethicality of his use of animals with undisguised contempt. As if even considering for a moment the fact that there might be something ethically problematic about genetically manipulating animals and otherwise exploiting them is offensive to all modern sensibilities, Westhusin exclaims, “One of the first [obstacles to pursuing pharm animal projects] are the animal welfare groups who jump on top of this, and say we shouldn’t be using animals for anything. You know, blah, blah, blah.”¹⁵⁶ Ethics, for Westhusin, are literally sheer nonsense.

Even those bodies and organizations expressly assigned to examine the ethics of biotechnology do so only superficially and disingenuously. As one would expect, they typically promote the interests of industry, while only paying lip service to the interests of animals, which are at best an afterthought, if of any concern at all. The CBS, for example, outlines as one of its principles “Respect for Animals: a commitment to the ethical use of animals in research,” but offers nothing in the way of an explanation as to what such “ethical use” consists.¹⁵⁷ Ethical concern for the suffering of animals is similarly conspicuously absent in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), which is almost exclusively concerned with the *containment* of “animate products of

biotechnology.”¹⁵⁸ The CCAC, which is responsible for approving and overseeing biotechnological research, teaching, and testing in Canada, provides a paltry four-page document outlining guidelines (which are not, of course, binding as regulations would be) for the development and use of transgenic animals. The document only refers once in passing to concerns about “animal suffering caused by the expression of transgenes inducing tumo[u]rs or neurodegenerative diseases, etc.,” but does not address these concerns in any further detail.¹⁵⁹ In fact, experiments involving transgenic animals are automatically classed as Category D experiments, the second most invasive category of all allowable experiments. This means that it is permissible to inflict all manner of suffering on animals used in biotechnological experiments, including such torments as:

Prolonged (several hours or more) period of physical restraint; induction of behavioural stresses such as maternal deprivation, aggression, predator-prey interactions; procedures which cause severe, persistent or irreversible disruption of sensorimotor organization; the induction of anatomical or physiological abnormalities that will result in pain or distress; the exposure of an animal to noxious stimuli from which escape is impossible; the production of radiation sickness; the exposure to drugs or chemicals that may impair the physiological system.¹⁶⁰

It is more than ironic that the very mechanism that is in place to protect animals from the most egregious of harms in the laboratory is the same mechanism that gives the proverbial green light to researchers to subject animals to the horrors of Category D experiments.¹⁶¹ In a manner chillingly reminiscent of the Nazis’ meticulous cataloguing of the Jews sent to the ghettos and gas chambers, the remainder of the CCAC guidelines are concerned with “accounting” (i.e. keeping track of the numbers of animals used) and, as in the CEPA guidelines, “containment.” One research protocol requirement is that

“endpoints for survival are clearly defined.”¹⁶² On the whole, the CCAC guidelines evoke the Nazi characterization of Jews and others as constituting “life unworthy of life” (*Lebensunwerten Lebens*). As Charles Patterson has noted, this concept was introduced in 1920 by two highly reputed Germans: the well-known legal scholar Karl Binding, and psychiatrist and neuropathologist Alfred Hoche. Patterson explains that, in their book entitled *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens* (1920) (Authorization for the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life), Binding and Hoche advocated the “mercy killing of patients who were *lebensunwert* (“unworthy of life”), that is, people who suffered from ‘incurable feeble-mindedness’ and whose lives were ‘without purpose’ and a burden to their relatives and society.”¹⁶³ Their vision eventually came to fruition as “Operation T4,” in which an estimated seventy-nine thousand Germans were killed at “special killing centres outfitted with gas chambers,” until the eventual dissolution of the program in 1941.¹⁶⁴ The extermination program, of course, was extended to the Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and other classes of “sub-humans” whose lives were considered worthless. But, Derrida has pointed out that today, animals used for food, experimentation, and so on are not only deemed life unworthy of life, but also *life unworthy of death*; animals in factory farms are not even *murdered*, but simply *killed* in what amounts to “a noncriminal putting to death.”¹⁶⁵ I would add that biotechnological animals are not even worthy of being “put to death”; their survival is simply “terminated” and the date of termination is already effectively programmed into their genetic code.

Biotechnology, which causes so much animal suffering, is often perversely presented as a kind of panacea for animal suffering, not to mention as the magic solution

to human suffering too. In a recent opinion piece in the New York Times Emily Anthes, author of the forthcoming book *Frankenstein's Cat: Cuddling Up to Biotech's Brave New Beasts*, warns that if we block approval of products like AquaAdvantage® salmon, “we’ll be closing the door on innovations that could help us face the public health and environmental threats of the future, saving countless animals — and perhaps ourselves.”¹⁶⁶ The following abstract from the scientific journal *Animal Biotechnology* reveals the lie at the heart of such claims. In the same breath, it hails biotechnology as the means for reducing the numbers of animals used in experiments, and boasts of its capacity to create “uniform” commodities: “The potential applications of producing genetically identical individuals range from reducing the number of animals needed for experimentation to providing a more uniform product in the freezer at the grocery store.”¹⁶⁷ The claim that biotechnology will reduce the numbers of animals needed for experimentation is not only misleading, it is downright false given how many tens thousands of animals will have to suffer in laboratories in order to accomplish such a feat. Even if it did manage to reduce the number of lab animals, what about the fate of all the animals it turns into “a more uniform product in the freezer at the grocery store”?

To be sure, some biotechnological developments may be advantageous in some ways for both humans and animals. One concrete example of a potential benefit for animals is the development of so-called “test-tube meat,” or meat produced *in vitro* for human consumption through the development of organisms that lack a nervous system or consciousness. The endeavour is supported by PETA, and by enabling the production of meat, such as beef, without the cow, it could spell the end of factory farming.¹⁶⁸ But test-

tube meat is a mixed blessing at best. As with other biotechnological projects, the research and development for test-tube meat invariably involves experiments on thousands of animals. Secondly, while mass produced test-tube meat may potentially meet the growing global demand for meat, it re-objectifies animals into fragmented parts and commodities. Third, it does nothing to challenge the highly dubious, but widely accepted, assumption that humans *need* meat, or are entitled to eating it simply because they *want* it.¹⁶⁹

Of course, biotechnology is not without its critics. But the chief concern is not the impact on animals, who are the most victimized by biotechnology, but the potential impact on human beings. Liberal political theorist Francis Fukuyama, for example, contends that biotechnology is a threat because it jeopardizes the integrity of ‘human nature,’ which, he rather outrageously claims, is effectively encoded to embrace liberalism over other political configurations such as communism (!).¹⁷⁰ If we tamper with human nature—which, in Fukuyama’s quasi-Aristotelianism is naturally inclined towards a particular (liberal) conception of the good and of right and wrong—by way of biotechnological interference, we tamper with the social, political, and economic framework it “naturally” and “inevitably” developed.¹⁷¹ With this in mind, Fukuyama warns that “a technology powerful enough to reshape what we are will have possibly malign consequences for liberal democracy.”¹⁷² Indeed, as a result of the power wielded by biotechnology, Fukuyama finally admits that history is not quite yet over, as he originally (and infamously) surmised. In his words, “There can be no end of history without an end of modern natural science and technology.”¹⁷³ Overall, in Fukuyama’s

opinion, the reason to tightly control biotechnology is to return the human species to its natural course towards the universalization of liberal democracy and capitalism.

Although they avoid making such preposterous claims about human nature, other critics of biotechnology, such as environmental activists, are also typically unconcerned with its impact on animals. They are usually preoccupied with the environmental and health concerns surrounding the consumption of genetically engineered food and animal products, as well as the implications of cloning human embryos. There is especially intense controversy about so-called “therapeutic cloning,” which involves cloning human embryos, not to be transferred in utero (to create human beings), but to provide cellular material for medical application. The public and the scientific community alike are understandably anxious about a kind of Frankenstein scenario in which mutants are released into society and wreak havoc, and/or about the possibility of reintroducing and institutionalizing fascistic eugenics programs geared towards eliminating unfavourable traits in people on one hand, and generating designer human beings who are custom-made to meet certain physical, racial, and aesthetic norms on the other. These are without question vital concerns that demand urgent attention. Genetic screening for diseases is commonplace, and it will soon be possible to custom-design babies to meet particular aesthetic, cognitive, and other criteria, which indicates that we are indeed headed towards the potential institutionalization of eugenics.¹⁷⁴ Despite the horrific pain and degradation it involves, the cloning of animals, however, is apparently taken for granted as an acceptable practice. Vandana Shiva is unusual in voicing concern not only for the impact of biotechnology and patenting on human beings and the environment, but

also on other animal species. For example, in addition to arguing that the genetic modification of seeds combined with the growth of the intellectual property rights regime and the neoliberalization of trade have been ruinous for indigenous and local farmers, especially in the global south, she laments the way in which “patents on life...remove us further from our ecological kinship with other species, and convert life forms and living systems into human ‘inventions’ and ‘property.’”¹⁷⁵ But even Shiva’s focus on animals is only tangential to her main analysis.

One of the most troubling manifestations of the neutralization of ethics is the internalization of the biotechnological (and, by extension, exterminationist) attitude towards species-integrity. Critics of animal biotechnology are typically accused of a misguided attachment to the outmoded idea that species have a certain set of species-specific ontological limitations. Even esteemed philosopher and bioethicist Bernard E. Rollin, who is ostensibly committed to expanding the ethical arena to include animals, derides the notion of species-integrity. He claims that concern for preserving species-integrity is the product of a “common but scientifically unsophisticated and rather muddled understanding by a virtually scientifically illiterate public of species as being...the building blocks or atoms of the biological world...”¹⁷⁶ He goes so far as to blame the environmental movement for conflating “concern that species not be allowed to become extinct to the idea that we ought not to change them.”¹⁷⁷ While Rollin is opposed to subjecting animals to conditions that prevent them from realizing their telos or entelechy, he does not oppose radically altering their telos so that there is no further conflict—the very basis of exterminationism. As he puts it, “Given a burrowing animal, it

is wrong to cage it so that it can't burrow. But I have never asserted that there is anything wrong with changing the telos of a burrowing animal so that burrowing no longer matters to it."¹⁷⁸ In the following passage he elaborates more detail on the nuances of his position, so it is worth quoting in full:

In my view, it would be grossly immoral (as has actually been suggested) to use genetic engineering to change chickens into wingless, legless, and featherless creatures who could be hooked up to food pumps and not waste energy. Similarly (as has also been suggested), it would be wrong to manipulate the genome of pigs to produce leglessness, with the animals after all still having all the psychological urges to move. On the other hand *if genetic engineering is used to genuinely suit the animal to its stipulated environment and therefore eliminate the friction between telos and environment which clearly results in suffering, boredom, pain, stress, and disease, and this conduces to the animal's happiness, it does not appear morally problematic.*¹⁷⁹

In other words, in Rollin's view, manipulating animals genetically is not ethically problematic as such. Rather than work to end intensive agriculture and the horrors it is responsible for and thereby create the conditions for animals' fulfillment, he clearly feels, along with other welfarists, that it is preferable to transform animals ontologically so that they are more intricately interwoven with the machinery of their destruction. In so arguing, Rollin promotes the mandate of technological rationality and exterminationism, which is, as we have seen, to manipulate and transform life so that it does not conflict with, but rather supports, the efficient functioning of the productive apparatus. Rollin's rejection of the notion of species-integrity and his appeal to tens of thousands of years of evolution and breeding as evidence of the apparent fallacy of the concept of species is, as we have seen, typical of apologists for animal biotechnology. To recap our earlier discussion, proponents of animal biotechnology often presuppose a direct historical lineage between more innocuous procedures, such as fermentation or earlier forms of

animal breeding, and what we have come to call biotechnology and the invasive and dramatic genetic modifications it involves. They do this in part to confirm the supposed inevitability of contemporary biotechnological practices.¹⁸⁰ Of course Rollin is right to suggest that “species are dynamic rather than static.”¹⁸¹ It goes without saying that animal species have evolved and transformed over the millennia, both as a result of evolution and through various forms of human manipulation. But, the claim of *inevitability* is symptomatic of the technolitarian mentality inasmuch as it is a thinly veiled attempt to quash resistance before it even has a chance to develop.

The aversion to species-integrity has apparently contaminated a large part of bioethical literature. Echoing Rollins, Jason Scott Robert (Franca Orefice Dean’s Distinguished Professor in the Life Sciences, and the Lincoln Associate Professor of Ethics in Biotechnology and Medicine at Arizona State University) and Françoise Baylis (Canada Research Chair in Bioethics and Philosophy) suggest that the primary reason people might oppose the creation of human-animal chimeric creatures is because the latter challenge what are widespread assumptions about fixed “species identity.” Echoing Rollin, they claim that despite scientific evidence to the contrary, “notions of ‘species essences’ and ‘universal properties’ persist,” notions which must be dispelled.¹⁸² Research in evolutionary biology and genomics, they maintain, indicates that “there would appear to be no such thing as fixed species identities.”¹⁸³ This might be true in the terms of evolutionary biology, inasmuch as species obviously evolve or develop and lose certain traits over millions of years, and even share large amounts of DNA with other species, as in the case of chimpanzees and humans. But the recognition of evolutionary

transformation does not necessarily permit active, invasive, near-instantaneous genetic alteration in the laboratory.

Nor should objections to such manipulations be conflated with “essentialism,” an issue I will take up in more detail in the proceeding chapter. Suffice it to say in the meantime, while essentialism reduces particular beings to a set of stock characteristics, usually in order to denigrate them, the call to the preservation of species integrity, identity, and essence is simply a call to respecting the fundamental ontological boundaries and perceptual nuances species have (indeed) *evolved* to rely upon for survival. The call to preserve species integrity, identity, and essence, in other words, is simply the call to respect the fact that spiders and goats, or rabbits and jellyfish, are different creatures, with different needs and wants, and different perceptual words. While each jellyfish is different from the next, there is something essential to being a jellyfish—such as floating in the ocean within its subjective own spatio-temporal context—just as there is something essential to being a cow or a pig or a chicken, such as growing slowly over time, nursing their young, dust-bathing, grazing, or cooling off in the mud. In fact, if anything is essentialist, it is biotechnology itself inasmuch as it casts nonhuman animals into a given mould from which any deviation is impossible.

Nevertheless, like Rollin, Robert and Baylis claim that that opposition to the production of transgenic animals, or what they call “novel beings,” is symptomatic of “folk essentialism.” In fact, any claim that there is anything specific to human being is, in their estimation, “always already an essentialist idea.”¹⁸⁴ This stubborn essentialism, they go on to argue, has generated “the inexorable threat of moral confusion.”¹⁸⁵ Human-

animal hybrids and chimeras “represent a metaphysical threat to our self-image.”¹⁸⁶ How are we to respond to, to view, to treat creatures that are neither human nor animal, but both? Another reason hybrid or chimeric animals may arouse horror in the public, they suggest, is simply “the intuitive ‘yuck’ response” or the fear that “the creation of interspecies creatures from human materials evokes the idea of bestiality.”¹⁸⁷ They posit that “the creation of part human and part nonhuman animal is sufficiently threatening to the social order that for many this is sufficient reason to prohibit any crossing of species boundaries involving human beings.”¹⁸⁸ They do have a point here: no doubt human-animal chimeras problematize the fixed moral boundaries we have established between humans and animals. And it is obviously a good thing that our narrow ethical sphere may be potentially broadened as a result, or at least that we are being forced to question the validity of our “*moral* demarcation line between human and nonhuman animals.”¹⁸⁹

But Robert and Baylis’ analysis is ultimately disingenuous in its reductiveness. The concern of some critics of biotechnology may very well lie partly with the moral confusion human-animal chimeras are likely to generate, but this is not the *whole* story. The suggestion that critics of biotechnology are repelled by the “yuck factor” alone (or by an attachment to essentialist notions about species) is clearly an attempt to trivialize and derail the critique. The two arguably most important and urgent grievances against biotechnology, and the ones that any serious opponents ought to take into account, are conspicuously absent from Robert and Baylis’ analysis: 1) the egregious cruelty against animals it involves, and 2) the profit-motive underlying most biotechnology projects. In ignoring or dismissing these concerns, their analysis of the ethics of biotechnology

represents the failure to adopt a properly and genuinely critical stance. Granted, the authors cannot cover everything in one article. However, without properly acknowledging the above concerns, and in fact implying that biotechnology is leading the way in troubling falsely established boundaries and therefore potentially liberating us from these ontological, metaphysical, and moral constraints, their analysis, which they claim is impartial, is exposed for its utter partiality. Moreover, while it is important to destabilize the narcissistic and obsession with human beings' supposedly occupying a special and unique metaphysical status (as if other species were not also unique *by definition*, as Best aptly points out), biotechnology provides the wrong catalyst for this paradigm shift.¹⁹⁰ Rather, noninvasive forms of science, such as ethology, which are based on observation rather than manipulation, should serve as the model for this ever-so urgent re-examination of what it means to be "human."¹⁹¹

What Is To Be Done?

Our analysis has shown that unless we wish to live in a postanimal world—a bleak prospect indeed—animal biotechnology cannot continue to proceed as it is unimpeded, but must be re-evaluated and subjected to serious scrutiny and changes in policy. To this end, Best posits the implementation of a Habermasian “framework of ‘communicative competency’ informed by sound value thinking, skills in reasoning, and democratic sensibilities.”¹⁹² There is merit to this suggestion: open dialogue between experts and the wider public is an important and integral feature of any properly democratic society. However, in the face of wholesale extermination, Habermasian debate would only be meaningful if it were conducted as part of a well-organized, nonviolent campaign to bring

animal biotechnology to an end. A total ban on all animal biotechnology may seem unnecessarily drastic, but for the animals languishing in the agony of their deformities and injuries in the infernal pits of their sealed containers and barren cages in the animal industrial complex, yesterday was already too late for the mobilization of a resistance movement on their behalf. Of course, a radical overhaul or cessation of animal biotechnology is very unlikely to occur in the near future. In the meantime, then, a more realistic goal would be to push for a moratorium on all biotechnological practices involving animals, and short of that, a massive reduction of the amount of biotechnological procedures permitted and of the number of animals used. But such measures would only be helpful as steps leading towards the ultimate goal of a complete ban of animal biotechnology. As Linzey aptly states: “*Nothing less than the dismantling of this science as an institution can satisfy those who advocate moral justice for animals.* We reach here the absolute limits of what any reputable creation theology can tolerate.”¹⁹³ We have also reached the absolute limits of what any supposedly civilized society can tolerate.

¹ Ludwig von Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Manfred Vogel (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), 42.

² Robert Chan, “Thinking Big: Synthetic Biology,” Fidelity Investments, accessed June 24, 2012, <http://thinkingbig.fidelity.com/bio>.

³ Emily Anthes, “Don’t Be Afraid of Genetic Modification,” *The New York Times*, March 9, 2013, accessed March 17, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/opinion/sunday/dont-be-afraid-of-genetic-modification.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&.

⁴ “About Us,” Charles River Labs, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.criver.com/en-US/AboutUs/CRGlance/Pages/home.aspx>. Charles River Labs is now announcing that it has recently developed a “fully validated preclinical *in vivo* schizophrenia model,” which is to say a custom-designed mouse for schizophrenia research. “News and Events,” Charles River Labs, accessed March 17, 2013, http://www.criver.com/en-US/NewsEvents/WhatsNew/Pages/Preclinical_In_Vivo_Schizophrenia_Model.aspx?source=RIA. They also invite visitors to go on “The Journey of the Mouse,” a kind of choose-your-own-adventure story, illustrated with cheerful cartoonish images obviously meant to conceal the brutality actually involved in genetically modifying animals. To begin the “journey,” the visitor chooses a particular role such as “LAR Manager,” the primary goal of which is to secure “high-quality animal models” or “Researcher,” among whose chief responsibilities involves contributing to the International Genetic Standardization (IGS) program. “Journey of the Mouse,” Charles River Labs, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.journeyofthemouse.com/>.

⁵ Steven Best, “Genetic Science, Animal Exploitation, and the Challenge for Democracy,” in *Leonardo’s Choice: Genetic Technologies and Animals*, ed. Carol Gigliotti (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 7.

⁶ David Whitehouse, “Scientists ‘Clone’ Monkey,” *BBC News Online*, January 14, 2000, accessed May 28, 2012, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/602027.stm>. In 2001 researchers from the same primate research centre in Oregon announced the creation of ANDi (“DNA inserted” spelled backwards), a rhesus monkey/jellyfish chimera, who, like the marmoset discussed above, glows green under fluorescent light. The researchers implanted a virus carrying a jellyfish gene into 224 monkey eggs. Next, they wrote the gene into one of the monkey’s chromosomes, after which the eggs were fertilized with monkey sperm. Finally, the eggs were implanted in surrogate monkey mothers. See also James Meek, “ANDi, First GM Primate Will humans be Next?: Scientists Plant Alien Gene in Monkey for First Time,” *The Guardian*, January 12, 2001, accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2001/jan/12/genetics.internationalnews>. More recently, Chinese scientists cloned transgenic sheep by combining ovaries (from an unspecified animal), which they harvested from a local slaughterhouse, with the somatic cells from a Chinese marina sheep to produce the essential fatty acid Omega-3, which can otherwise not be synthesized in mammals. According to the author of the article, Xuyang Jingjing, the scientists’ research “could provide a solution to the country’s food security by providing better and safer animal products.” The geneticists used a cheaper and easier method than the traditional ones cited above called “handmade cloning.” Specifically, they “use[d] a scalpel to cut off a portion of an unfertilized receptor cell in order to get rid of the nucleus” and combined it with another genetically altered nucleus from a donor cell. This project was of course “driven by huge funds allocated by the government” (i.e., the Ministry of Agriculture) and is clearly commercial in nature. Xuyang Jingjing, “Man Makes Lamb, Man Eats Lamb,” *Global Times*, May 14, 2012, accessed May 28, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/709391/Man-makes-lamb-man-eats-lamb.aspx>.

⁷ Carol Gigliotti, “Introduction,” in *Leonardo’s Choice*, xii.

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- ⁸ Best, "Genetic Science," 9. "GloFish® FAQ," GloFish®, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.glofish.com/about/faq/>.
- ⁹ "Firm Hails Dog Clone Breakthrough," *BBC News*, Jan. 29, 2009, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7858566.stm>.
- ¹⁰ See, for example, "Expiration Fate: Can 'De-Extinction' Bring Back Lost Species?" *Scientific American*, March 31, 2013, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=what-is-the-de-extinction-movement-all-about>.
- ¹¹ Cited in Best, "Genetic Science," 12.
- ¹² Gigliotti, "Introduction," xiv. Italics added.
- ¹³ Cited in Best, "Genetic Science," 12.
- ¹⁴ Best, "Genetic Science," 3. Italics added.
- ¹⁵ It should be noted that while animal extermination extends far beyond biotechnology, I choose to focus on it here because 1) so far it has received little attention within critical animal studies, 2) it enables other forms of animal extermination—namely factory farming and animal experimentation—to take place, and, most importantly, 3) it epitomizes the prevailing view of animals as desubjectified objects of control.
- ¹⁶ Martina Newell-McGloughlin and Edward Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology: From Natufians to Nanotechnology* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 21f.
- ¹⁷ Newell-McGloughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 23.
- ¹⁸ Gigliotti, "Introduction," xv.
- ¹⁹ Robert Bud, *The Uses of Life: A History of Biotechnology* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6-7.
- ²⁰ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 29.
- ²¹ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 7.
- ²² Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 32. See also Gigliotti, "Introduction," xv.
- ²³ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 32.
- ²⁴ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 32.
- ²⁵ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 33.
- ²⁶ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 33.
- ²⁷ Gigliotti, "Introduction," xv-xvi.
- ²⁸ Jeremy Rifkin, *The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1998), 101.

²⁹ Some animals are bred to be impaired. Some chickens are bred to be blind to reduce feather pecking and cannibalization and other destructive behaviours caused by the trauma of intensive confinement. Blind chickens are not yet commercially available but were developed as early as 1985. Without even a hint of irony, they were ostensibly developed to *improve* the welfare intensively reared chickens who would otherwise peck and cannibalize each other as a result of their traumatic confinement in factory farms. In typically behaviourist language, one proponent of the commercialization of blind chickens suggests that because their cortisol levels are the same as sighted strains of chickens, and because they appear to have adapted well to their impairment inasmuch as they continue to eat and drink and no longer peck each other, they are not otherwise disadvantaged from a welfare/ethical perspective. A phenomenological and ethological analysis, in contrast, would recognize that sight is an important part of every chicken's subjective and perceptual life. And, of course, anyone *genuinely* committed to improving the welfare of intensively reared chickens, rather than to preserving the bottom line, would recognize the glaringly obvious fact that disabling these helpless creatures to prevent behaviours caused by their subjection to our cruel system of production is a mockery and perversion of ethics at its very core. Gary E. Varner, *Personhood, Ethics, and Animal Cognition: Situating Animals in Hare's Two-Level Utilitarianism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 277.

³⁰ Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 72-79.

³¹ "The Oswarld T. Avery Collection," Profiles in Science, National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/CC/>.

³² Newell-McGloughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 47.

³³ Newell-McGloughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 46.

³⁴ Newell-McGloughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 45.

³⁵ Newell-McGloughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 47.

³⁶ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 175.

³⁷ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 175.

³⁸ Eugene Thacker, "Data Made Flesh: Biotechnology and the Discourse of the Posthuman," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 72.

³⁹ Bacon, "New Atlantis," in *Francis Bacon*, 263f.

⁴⁰ Rose-Mary Sargent, "Introduction," in *Francis Bacon: Selected Philosophical Works*, ed. Rose-Mary Sargent (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), xvi. (Sargent sites Bacon "The New Organon," Book one, aphorism 124.)

⁴¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 2.

⁴² Cited in Bud, *The Uses of Life*, 1.

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- ⁴³ “CCAC Guidelines: On Procurement of Animals Used in Science,” 2007, The Canadian Council on Animal Care, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Procurement.pdf>. In a similar vein, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity defines biotechnology as “any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms, or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for specific use” (Article 2). “UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992),” United Nations, accessed February 22, 2012, <http://www.cbd.int/convention/text/default.shtml>. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) describes biotechnology as the “the application of science and engineering in the direct or indirect use of living organisms or parts or products of living organisms in their natural or modified forms.” “What is Biotechnology,” “Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999,” Environment Canada, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/default.asp?lang=En&n=24374285-1&offset=1&toc=show>.
- ⁴⁴ “The 1998 Canadian Biotechnology Strategy: An Ongoing Renewal Process,” 1998, Government of Canada: Biostrategy, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.biostrategy.gc.ca/english/View.asp?pmiid=520&x=535>.
- ⁴⁵ Endang Tri Margawati, “Transgenic Animals: Their Benefits to Human Welfare,” *ActionBioscience*, January 2003, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.actionbioscience.org/biotech/margawati.html>. Italics added.
- ⁴⁶ Margawati, “Transgenic Animals,” Italics added.
- ⁴⁷ “CCAC Guidelines: On Transgenic Animals,” 1997, The Canadian Council on Animal Care, accessed May 7, 2013, http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Transgenic_Animals.pdf
- ⁴⁸ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.
- ⁴⁹ “What is Biotechnology,” Biostrategy, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.biostrategy.gc.ca/english/View.asp?pmiid=520&x=535>.
- ⁵⁰ “The 1998 Canadian Biotechnonology Strategy.”
- ⁵¹ “Financial Reports, Annual Reports,” Charles River Labs, accessed May 7, 2013, <http://ir.criver.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=121668&p=irol-reportsannual>.
- ⁵² “Home,” Charles River Labs, accessed May 7, 2013, <http://www.criver.com/en-US/Pages/home.aspx>.
- ⁵³ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 79-78.
- ⁵⁴ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 135.
- ⁵⁵ “General Information on Factory Farms,” Global Action Network, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.gan.ca/campaigns/factory+farms/factsheets/general+information+on+factory+farms.en.html>.
- ⁵⁶ Karen Davis, “Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems,” in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu, *Nature’s Meaning*, series editor, Roger Gottlieb (Lanham; Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), 35.
- ⁵⁷ Davis, “Procrustean Solutions,” 35.

⁵⁸ Davis, "Procrustean Solutions" 37.

⁵⁹ Adam Rutherford, "Synthetic Biology and the Rise of 'Spider-Goats,'" *The Guardian*, January 14, 2012, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/jan/14/synthetic-biology-spider-goat-genetics>.

⁶⁰ Margawati, "Transgenic Animals." According to the CCAC, "Transgenic animals are used: in the basic biological study of regulatory gene elements; in medical research, to identify the functions of specific factors in complex homeostatic systems through over- or under-expression, as models of human disease; in toxicology as responsive test animals; in biotechnology as producers of specific proteins; and in agriculture and aquaculture to improve yields of meat and other animal products" ("CCAC Guidelines: On Transgenic Animals"). According to the Encyclopedia of Animal Science, a transgenic animal is an animal that contains "transgenes" or genes from the same or other species that have been isolated, copied inserted in any of the existing methods of so-called "gene transfer." Verno G. Pursell and Robert J. Wall, "Transgenic Animals," in *Encyclopedia of Animal Science*, ed. Wilson G. Pond and Allan W. Bell (New York: Marcel Dekker, 2005), 149.

⁶¹ Gary Stix, "The Land of Milk and Money," *Scientific American*, September 2006, accessed May 7, 2013, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=atryn-the-land-of-milk-and-mone>.

⁶² There are human-to-animal embryonic chimeras (as in the case of the bonnet monkeys into whose brains human neural stem cells were grafted by Harvard scientists); human-to-animal fetal or adult chimeras, which are produced when human cellular material is grafted onto nonhuman fetuses or to postnatal nonhuman creatures; and animal-to-human embryonic, fetal, and adult chimeras, wherein nonhuman cellular material is implanted into human embryos, fetuses, or adults; animal-to-animal chimeras (embryonic, fetal, or adult) resulting from the interchange of nonhuman cellular material. A human-to-human chimera is also created when external cellular material is grafted into a human at the embryonic, fetal, or adult stage. See Jason Scott Robert and Françoise Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 3, no. 3 (Summer 2003), 20f.

⁶³ Andrew Pollack, "Move to Market Gene-Altered Pigs in Canada is Halted," *The New York Times*, April 2, 2012, accessed May 27, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/04/science/gene-altered-pig-project-in-canada-is-halted.html>. Italics added. In 2010 the Canadian government approved the reproduction of EnviroPig, though, it should be noted, not its sale and consumption, the latter of which led Ontario Pork to pull its funding from the project. Another reason the industry backed out was because it turns out that farmers can simply provide their pigs with a supplement to aid digestion of phosphorous at very low cost, which obviates the need for genetic modifications. When the project was abandoned the pigs were not rehoused in a sanctuary to live out the rest of their lives in relative peace, but were slaughtered and disposed of like so much trash. They were no longer of any scientific or economic value, and therefore of no value at all.

⁶⁴ "EnviroPig™," University of Guelph, accessed Oct. 3, 2013, <http://www.uoguelph.ca/enviropig/>.

⁶⁵ Ian Sample, "Genetically Modified Monkeys Give Birth to Designer Babies," *The Guardian*, May 27, 2009, accessed May 28, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/may/27/genetically-modified-gm-monkeys-germline>.

⁶⁶ Adam Rutherford, "Synthetic Biology." Lewis and his colleagues gave his animal victims nicknames such as "Freckles," "Pudding," and "Sweetie," in what is unmistakably an effort to mollify the otherwise potentially horrified public. The nicknames suggest that the scientists have an affectionate relationship with the animals, and falsely restore to the wholly commodified animals an air of subjectivity.

⁶⁷ Best, "Genetic Science," 8.

⁶⁸ "Robo-pigeon: The Pigeon that Flies wherever you Fancy," *Daily Mail*, February 28, 2007, accessed May 29, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-439025/Robo-pigeon-pigeon-flies-fancy.html#ixzz1wHd6SaR6>.

⁶⁹ As is so often the case, the media reporting on animal atrocities resorts to puns, which trivializes the issue under discussion and undermines the dignity of the animals in question. For example, this article states, "In tests likely to ruffle feathers among pigeon fanciers, scientists implanted microchip receivers into the pigeons' brains." And also, "They will be certain to cause a flap among members of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association, which boasts the Queen as patron." This kind of silly humour is especially tasteless in the context of a discussion of violence against animals. In chapter three, I will explore how this mockery of victimized animals is a decidedly fascist tendency, whereby the oppressor asserts its power on the one hand and the ostensible worthlessness of its victim on the other, by reducing the latter to an object not only of contempt but also of derision. "Robo-pigeon."

⁷⁰ "Robo-pigeon."

⁷¹ Douglas Heaven, "First Mind-reading Implant Gives Rats Telepathic Power," *NewScientist*, 28 February, 2013, accessed May 8, 2013, <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn23221-first-mindreading-implant-gives-rats-telepathic-power.html>.

⁷² Sara Reardon, "Interspecies Telepathy: Human Thoughts Make Rats Move," *NewScientist*, April 3, 2013, accessed May 8, 2013, <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn23343-interspecies-telepathy-human-thoughts-make-rat-move.html>.

⁷³ Reardon, "Interspecies Telepathy."

⁷⁴ "Genetic Standardization," Charles River Labs, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.journeyofthemouse.com/researcher.html>.

⁷⁵ There are three cloning technologies: 1) recombinant DNA technology or DNA cloning, a technology developed in the 1970s, 2) reproductive cloning, and 3) therapeutic cloning. The first type involves “the transfer of DNA fragment of interest from one organism to a self-replicating genetic element such as a bacterial plasmid.” The second type involves “somatic cell nuclear transfer” in which “scientists transfer genetic material from the nucleus of a donor adult cell to an egg whose nucleus, and thus [whose] genetic material, has been removed.” The third type, also known as “embryo cloning,” clones human embryos for research purposes. The embryos are not (yet) produced as material for cloned human beings, but to harvest stem cells to study and treat disease. “Cloning Fact Sheet,” Human Genome Project Information, accessed 28 May, 2012, http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/elsi/cloning.shtml.

⁷⁶ “Cloning Fact Sheet.”

⁷⁷ “Cloning Fact Sheet.”

⁷⁸ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 26. Italics added.

⁷⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1983), 148.

⁸⁰ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 137.

⁸¹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 4.

⁸² Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 87; 94.

⁸³ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 9.

⁸⁴ Paradoxically, while cloning annihilates animal subjects by abstracting individual animals into homogenous generality, it simultaneously annihilates them by reducing them impenetrable *specificity*. Only the animal scientist, the lab technician, or the biotechnologist can decode the genetic formula to which it has reduced the animals in question.

⁸⁵ Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 80.

⁸⁶ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 211.

⁸⁷ Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 2. Italics added.

⁸⁸ Gigliotti, “Introduction,” xvii.

⁸⁹ Gigliotti, “Introduction,” xvii. Italics added.

⁹⁰ Judith Roof, *The Poetics of DNA, Posthumanities*, vol. 2, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 198.

⁹¹ Thacker, “Data Made Flesh,” 94f.

⁹² Thacker, “Data Made Flesh,” 90.

⁹³ Rutherford, “Synthetic Biology.” Italics added.

⁹⁴ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 152.

⁹⁵ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 152.

⁹⁶ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 189.

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- ⁹⁷ Donna Harway, *The Haraway Reader* (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), 67. See also ZipporahWeisberg, "The Broken Promises of Monsters: Haraway, Animals, and the Humanist Legacy," *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 7 (2009), accessed October 10, 2012, www.criticalanimalstudies.org/.../Zipporah-Weisberg-pg.-22-62.pdf, 24-26.
- ⁹⁸ Eunice K. Y. Or, "Britain Pro-lifers Row over Cloning License to Dolly's Father," *Christian Today*, February 10, 2005, accessed May 28, 2012. <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/britain.prolifers.row.over.cloning.license.to.dollys.father/2109.htm>.
- ⁹⁹ Ian Sample, "Craig Venter Creates Synthetic Life Form," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/may/20/craig-venter-synthetic-life-form>, accessed May 29, 2012. See also Adam Rutherford, "Synthetic Biology and the Rise of the 'Spider-Goats,'" January 14, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/jan/14/synthetic-biology-spider-goat-genetics/print>, accessed May 29, 2012.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ian Sample, "Craig Venter." Italics added.
- ¹⁰¹ Sample, "Craig Venter."
- ¹⁰² Best, "Genetic Science," 4. The phenomenon of creating and patenting animal life adds another dimension to the struggle championed by Gary Francione to curb animal exploitation by removing animals from the legal category of "property." Now the category of property extends to animals' genetic material and codes.
- ¹⁰³ Newell-McLaughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 52.
- ¹⁰⁴ Susan K. Sell "International Institutions, Intellectual Property, and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic," in *HIV/AIDS and the Threat to National and International Security*, ed. Robert L. Ostergard Jr. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 151.
- ¹⁰⁵ Fiona Murray, "The Oncomouse that Roared: Resistance and Accommodation to Patenting in Academic Science," *American Journal of Sociology*, 116 (September 2010): 351, accessed May 28, 2012, doi: 10.1086/653599.
- ¹⁰⁶ Andrew Linzey, "Genetic Engineering," in *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, edited by Richard Sherlock and John D. Morrey (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 330. Linzey's italics.
- ¹⁰⁷ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 125.
- ¹⁰⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith. London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002. Italics added.
- ¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 483; 490.
- ¹¹⁰ Cited in Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 30.
- ¹¹¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 292.
- ¹¹² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 291.
- ¹¹³ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 240.
- ¹¹⁴ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 286.
- ¹¹⁵ Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio, trans. Robert Brain, R. W. Flint, J. C. Higgitt, and Caroline Tisdall (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 21. Author's italics.
- ¹¹⁶ Marinetti, "Futurist Manifesto," 22.

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- ¹¹⁷ Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 167.
- ¹¹⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 240.
- ¹¹⁹ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 205.
- ¹²⁰ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6. Portions of this paragraph are taken from Weisberg, "The Broken Promises of Monsters," 54f.
- ¹²¹ Barbara Noske, *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals* (Montreal; New York: Black Rose Books, 1997), 18.
- ¹²² "General Information on Factory Farms."
- ¹²³ "Pigs: Intelligent Animals Suffering in Factory Farms and Slaughterhouses," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.peta.org/issues/Animals-Used-for-Food/pigs-intelligent-animals-suffering-in-factory-farms-and-slaughterhouses.aspx>.
- ¹²⁴ "Veal: A By-product of the Cruel Dairy Industry," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.peta.org/issues/Animals-Used-for-Food/veal-a-byproduct-of-the-cruel-dairy-industry.aspx>.
- ¹²⁵ Noske, *Beyond Boundaries*, 18.
- ¹²⁶ "General Information on Factory Farms."
- ¹²⁷ "Euthanasia and Disposal of Nonsaleable Chicks," 2003, Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals, section 1.7.3, Canadian Agri-food Research Council, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/Chicken%20Turkeys%20Breeders%20Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>.
- ¹²⁸ "Euthanasia and Disposal of Nonsaleable Chicks."
- ¹²⁹ "CCAC Guidelines: On Euthanasia of Animals Used in Science," 2010, section 5.1-7, The Canadian Council on Animal Care in Science, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Euthanasia.pdf>.
- ¹³⁰ "Broken Wings: The Breakdown of Animal Protection in the Transportation and Slaughter of Meat Poultry in Canada," Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals, 2009, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.cetfa.com/documents/Broken%20Wings.pdf>.
- ¹³¹ "General Information on Animal Transport," Global Action Network, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.gan.ca/campaigns/transport/factsheets/general+information+on+animal+transport.en.html>.
- ¹³² Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 229.
- ¹³³ Chan, "Thinking Big."
- ¹³⁴ "Battery Hens," Act Now, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.actnowforanimals.com/batteryhens.aspx>.
- ¹³⁵ "Poultry and Eggs: Industries that Abuse Chickens," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, accessed June 25, 2012, <http://www.peta.org/issues/Animals-Used-for-Food/poultry-and-eggs-industries-that-abuse-chickens.aspx>.
- ¹³⁶ Niall Shanks and C. Ray Greek, *Animal Models in Light of Evolution* (Boca Raton: BrownWalker Press, 2009), 310.

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- ¹³⁷ Will Knight, "Dolly the Sheep Dies Young," *New Scientist*, February 14, 2003, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn3393-dolly-the-sheep-dies-young.html>.
- ¹³⁸ Best, "Genetic Science," 10.
- ¹³⁹ Best, "Genetic Science," 10.
- ¹⁴⁰ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 98.
- ¹⁴¹ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 481.
- ¹⁴² Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 98.
- ¹⁴³ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 112.
- ¹⁴⁴ Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 137.
- ¹⁴⁵ Asher Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill: History and Subjectivity in Levinas and the Frankfurt School* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), 122-123.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 134.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 97.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 97.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 134.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 74.
- ¹⁵¹ Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 74.
- ¹⁵² Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 9.
- ¹⁵³ Newell-McLaughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 47.
- ¹⁵⁴ Newell-McLaughlin and Re, *The Evolution of Biotechnology*, 48.
- ¹⁵⁵ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, x.
- ¹⁵⁶ Cited in Hannah Rubenstein, "Goats."
- ¹⁵⁷ "Annex C: Federal Regulatory Framework for Biotechnology," *The 1998 Canadian Biotechnology Strategy: An Ongoing Renewal Process*, 1998, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.biostrategy.gc.ca/english/View.asp?pmiid=520&x=535>.
- ¹⁵⁸ "Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999," *Environment Canada*, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/default.asp?lang=En&n=24374285-1&offset=1&toc=show>.
- ¹⁵⁹ "What is Biotechnology," *The 1998 Canadian Biotechnology Strategy: An Ongoing Renewal Process*, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.biostrategy.gc.ca/english/View.asp?pmiid=520&x=535>.
- ¹⁶⁰ "CCAC Guidelines on Transgenic Animals."
- ¹⁶⁰ "Research Ethics (2011)" Animal Care Committee Protocol Form, Animal Care Committee, York University, accessed December 10, 2011, <http://www.yorku.ca/research/support/ethics/animals.html>.

¹⁶¹ If Category D experiments do not constitute torture, I do not know what does. The UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment defines torture in part as “*any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession.*” “The UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,” United Nations, accessed, Jan. 27, 2012, <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html>. Certainly the CCAC procedures defined above as well as pain experiments on animals qualify as torture under this definition. This conception of torture bears a chilling resemblance to Bacon’s experimental method of “vexing” nature to reveal its “secrets.” As he put it, “the secrets of nature reveal themselves more readily under the vexations of art than when they go their own way.” Italics added. “The New Organon,” Book One, aphorism 98.

¹⁶² “CCAC Guidelines on Transgenic Animals.”

¹⁶³ Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka*, 89.

¹⁶⁴ Charles Patterson, “The Great Divide: Animals and the Holocaust,” *Tikkun* 18.3

(May/June 2003): 79, accessed March 18, 2013, doi:

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docview/212332505?accountid=15182>.

¹⁶⁵ Derrida also points out that although both Levinas and Heidegger “disrupt . . . a certain traditional humanism,” they preserve the humanist logic of “sacrifice” which “where it is not forbidden to make an attempt on life in general, but only on the life of man.” Jacques Derrida (with Jean-Luc Nancy), “Eating Well,” or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in *Who Comes after the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112-113.

¹⁶⁶ Emily Anthes, “Don’t be Afraid of Genetic Modification,” *The New York Times*, March 9, 2013, accessed May 10, 2013,

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/opinion/sunday/dont-be-afraid-of-genetic-modification.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&.

¹⁶⁷ R. S. Prather, T. T. Stumpf and L. F. Rickords, “Nuclear Transplantation as a Method of Producing Genetically Identical Livestock,” *Animal Biotechnology* 3, no. 1 (1992): 67, accessed 22 February, 2012, doi: 10.1080/10495399209525763.

¹⁶⁸ “PETA offers \$1 Million to First to Make Test Tube Meat,” People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, accessed June 26, 2012, <http://www.peta.org/features/in-vitro-meat-contest.aspx>.

¹⁶⁹ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore this further, but it is important to mention in passing that the exponential growth of global demand for animal flesh it is another form of cultural colonization and hegemony.

¹⁷⁰ In Fukuyama's words, "One important reason for this worldwide convergence on liberal democracy had to do with the tenacity of human nature. For while human behavior is plastic and variable, it is not infinitely so; at a certain point deeply rooted natural instincts and patterns of behavior reassert themselves to undermine the social engineer's best-laid plans. Many socialist regimes abolished private property, weakened the family, and demanded that people be altruistic to mankind in general rather than to a narrower circle of friends and family. *But evolution did not shape human beings in this fashion. Individuals in socialist societies resisted the new institutions at every turn, and when socialism collapsed after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, older, more familiar patterns of behavior re-asserted themselves everywhere.*" "Kin selection," he goes on to tell us, "indicates that a political system that respects the right of people to follow their own individual self-interests and attend to family and close friends before they attend to strangers halfway around the world will be more stable." He explains further that, "Human nature also serves to provide us with guidance as to what political orders won't work. Proper understanding of the contemporary evolutionary theory of kind selection, or inclusive fitness, for example, would have led us to predict the bankruptcy and ultimate failure of communism, due to the latter's failure to respect the natural inclination to favor kin and private property." Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002), 7; 14;127. Italics added.

¹⁷¹ Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future*, 12.

¹⁷² Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future*, 7.

¹⁷³ Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future*, 15.

¹⁷⁴ Rifkin, *The Biotech Century*, 128-144.

¹⁷⁵ Vandana Shiva, "Food Rights, Free Trade, and Fascism," in *Globalizing Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1999*, ed. Matthew J. Gibney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87-108, esp. 92. It is also widely acknowledged that the genetic manipulation of animals poses a massive threat to biodiversity. See, for example, Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (London: Zed Books, 1993).

¹⁷⁶ Bernard E. Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing,'" in *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, ed. Richard Sherlock and John D. Morrey (Landham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 275.

¹⁷⁷ Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing,'" 276.

¹⁷⁸ Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing,'" 284.

¹⁷⁹ Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing,'" 284. Italics added.

¹⁸⁰ Gigliotti, "Introduction," xv-xvi

¹⁸¹ Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing,'" 284.

¹⁸² Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 4.

¹⁸³ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 6.

¹⁸⁴ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 5.

¹⁸⁵ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 5.

¹⁸⁶ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 8.

¹⁸⁷ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 7.

¹⁸⁸ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 10.

¹⁸⁹ Robert and Baylis, "Crossing Species Boundaries," 9.

¹⁹⁰ Best, "Minding the Animals."

¹⁹¹ Cited in Best, "Minding Animals." See also Jane Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man*, First Mariner Books edition (New York: Mariner Books, 2000), 137.

¹⁹² Best, "Genetic Science," 16.

¹⁹³ Andrew Linzey, "Genetic Engineering," in *Ethical Issues*, 325.

Chapter Two

The Trouble with Posthumanism: Bacteria Are People Too

Thought is faithful to itself largely through being ready to contradict itself, while preserving, as inherent elements of truth, the memory of the processes by which it is reached.

...

The sole way of assisting nature is to unshackle its seeming opposite, independent thought.¹

This chapter warns against the growing trend to conflate animal studies (AS) in general and critical animal studies (CAS) in particular with posthumanism. There has been a veritable explosion of posthumanist theory within AS and CAS in the past two and a half decades.² Cary Wolfe's ongoing Posthumanities Series with University of Minnesota Press—which so far boasts twenty-seven titles from well-known theorists including Donna Haraway, Judith Roof, and Michel Serres—is but one example. Other leading posthumanist theorists such as N. Katherine Hayles and Rosi Braidotti are widely read in AS, CAS, and beyond. As Ken Shapiro and Margo DeMello point out, from the 1990s onwards, after humanities and social sciences disciplines, such as philosophy “joined the crowd” of AS scholars, the bulk of AS “scholarship occurred under the rubric of the ‘posts’—posthumanism and postmodernism.”³ This trend continues to this day. Indeed, regardless of their ethical and political commitments (i.e. whether they are abolitionist or welfarist), and irrespective of their home discipline, the majority of AS and CAS scholars tend to identify themselves as posthumanists.

In this chapter, I suggest that while posthumanism is not without its merits, it ultimately leads AS and CAS scholars astray in their otherwise well-intentioned attempt

to uproot human supremacism and reconceptualize human-animal relations within a novel nonoppressive framework. To be sure, posthumanists make an important contribution to the wider effort underway to irrevocably rupture the anthropocentric biases around which humanist thought has revolved for centuries.

However, following from my critique of the ontological and ethical collapse engendered by biotechnology in the preceding chapter, I suggest that, like its poststructuralist forbear, posthumanism takes the challenge of humanist dualist metaphysics too far by celebrating the death of the subject as such and concomitantly fetishizing the dissolution of boundaries between and the hybridization of humans, nonhuman animals, and technics.⁴ Using Donna Haraway's work as a case study, I argue that posthumanist hybridity theorists inadvertently reproduce the logic of technological rationality, which, as we have seen, seeks to disunify and destabilize human and nonhuman animal subjects in order to better enlist them to its service.⁵ Haraway's whimsical and "ironic" theorizing about the radical potentiality of boundary dissolution between animals and machines effectively amounts to an apology for animals' merciless objectification in the animal industrial complex. Haraway and her fellow hybridity theorists tend to divorce the theory of hybridity from the actual material conditions in which hybridization occurs and so inadvertently reproduce the logic of commodity fetishism. At the same time, the concept of hybridity itself has become a fetish concept, referred to *ad nauseum* posthumanist literature with little critical attention paid to the horrors hybridization entails. I suggest that the preoccupation with hybridity is based on a problematic dismissal of species-integrity as obsolete, and a misguided conflation of

essence with essentialism. Drawing on Adorno and Emmanuel Levinas, I argue further that the concept of hybridity, though meant to disrupt and obviate totalizing metaphysics, is in fact another thinly disguised form of totalization. In their enthusiasm for hybridity and their related fascination with technoscience more generally, posthumanists bear a striking and disturbing resemblance to transhumanists and as such remain much more closely aligned with the most problematic elements of humanism than they might like to admit. A related problem is that posthumanists typically glorify technoscience as an instrument of social and political emancipation. In the current political and economic configuration, technoscience is an instrument of technique and ought to be regarded with suspicion, not enthusiasm. It is also concerning that posthumanists paradoxically disavow the human subject as a coherent political agent, while attributing false agency to victimized animals, objects, and even bacteria. Finally, I suggest that posthumanism has gone the way of critical theory more generally, which is towards the production of depoliticized and ethically impotent theory-for-theory's sake. With this proverbial laundry list of problems in mind, I conclude by urging AS and especially CAS scholars to disassociate themselves from posthumanism and instead re-align themselves with the pre-poststructuralist critical tradition, especially as represented by the early Frankfurt School.

Merits of Posthumanism: The Critique of 'Sado-humanism' and the Disembodied Subject

It goes without saying that posthumanist scholarship is diverse and not reducible to a single set of claims. Nevertheless, three major assumptions clearly underlie the bulk of at least so-called *critical* posthumanist thought: 1) that humanism, which perpetuates a

phantasmagorical conception of a disembodied rational human subject—who is wholly disconnected from yet at the same time “lords it over” the material world and its nonhuman inhabitants—can no longer serve as the basis of critical philosophical inquiries into human and nonhuman subjectivities, 2) that the arbitrary opposition between the historically embedded and essentialist categories of “the Human” and “the Animal” are no longer tenable, and 3) that we are at a critical historical juncture which is characterized by the destabilization of the subject by the increasing incursion of technics and informatics on and in human and nonhuman life.⁶

These core assumptions partially stem from posthumanism’s grounding in poststructuralism. As Neil Badmington explains, “posthumanism inherits something of its ‘post-’ from poststructuralism.”⁷ Wolfe tells us that although posthumanism has several lineages, it can be traced, at least “in one genealogy,” to the antihumanist bent of poststructuralism, which is epitomized most famously by Michel Foucault’s claim in the 1960s that “man” was only a recent invention and was rapidly spiralling towards obsolescence.⁸ Posthumanists have developed this Foucauldian line of thinking but, within the context of animal studies at least, focus especially on the implications of the “death of man” for the configuration of (post)human and (post)animal (post)subjects.⁹

Relatedly, there is universal consensus among critical posthumanists that what they variously refer to as “traditional,” “conventional,” “metaphysical,”¹⁰ and “ontotheological”¹¹ humanism has provided one of the central ideological foundations for the perpetuation of systemic violence against animals for centuries, and ought to be rejected. Whereas humanism has traditionally been seen as the fountain of moral

advancement, Neil Badmington explains that in the eyes of critical posthumanists “humanism is viewed not as progressive but as reactionary.”¹²

Posthumanists rightly point out that the philosophical glue that binds all otherwise historically distinct forms of humanism together is the notion that human beings are unique and superior to other animals because of their supposed monopoly on reason and language and/or their possession of a soul. As Richard Twin explains, “common to the overlapping fields of critical posthumanism and animal studies, is of humanism as a reduction of value and agency to the ‘human’, a curiously centred and bounded category that has elevated itself by contrast to the ‘animal’ and drawn upon ideas of animality to essentialize human difference.”¹³ In even more uncompromising terms, and with a decidedly acerbic tone, Steve Best insists that “‘humanity’ is a social construct involving the identity and conception humans have of themselves as members of a species. In its arrogant, alienated, and domineering Western form, human identity reflects a host of problematic assumptions, biases, prejudices and myths derived from religion, philosophy, science, and culture as a whole.”¹⁴ As I have noted elsewhere, Haraway goes so far as to identify humanism with *sadism*—a claim that may at first glance seem farfetched but in fact not unconvincing.¹⁵ According to Haraway, “Sadism produces the self as a fetish, an endlessly repetitive project.”¹⁶ Modern humanism, in her view, does the same thing by projecting the image of Man onto nature and reshaping the latter in his image—a phenomenon, which as we noted above, she cleverly dubs the “god trick.”¹⁷ Thus, she concludes, “Sadism is a shadow twin to modern humanism.”¹⁸ In her earlier work on primatology, Haraway aptly notes that the impact of sado-humanism on animals has been

especially horrific. As a case in point, Haraway points to Harry F. Harlow's outrageously cruel "maternal deprivation" experiments, which he conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from the late 1950s through the early 1960s. In these experiments, Harlow psychologically tortured infant rhesus monkeys by, for example, wrenching them from their mothers and condemning them to prolonged periods of solitary confinement in a deep cone-like pit he nicknamed the "well of despair."¹⁹

Posthumanists' revulsion towards the humanist belief in human supremacy over all other beings, towards the notion that reason is the defining feature of the human, and towards the dualist metaphysics that accompanies these assumptions, is clearly crucial to any substantive critique of animal exterminationism. As we saw in the general introduction, humanism has without question been a key player in laying the ideological foundations for nonhuman animals' brutal subjugation for centuries. It is only a small step from Pico's *Oration*, to Descartes' nails, to Harlow's wells of despair, and to today's hellholes of the animal industrial complex.²⁰ As we also discussed, Enlightenment and liberal humanisms further perpetuated human-animal dualism and human exceptionalism by defining progress as scientific domination of the nonhuman and also by setting human beings apart as the sole subject of "rights."

To be sure, although posthumanists condemn humanism for the violence it has brought about, the prefix "post" indicates that posthumanism stands in an ambiguous and tenuous relationship with humanism. Posthumanists acknowledge that, despite their best efforts, they cannot necessarily disabuse themselves of humanism entirely. For example, pointing to Derrida's contention that a total break with humanism is impossible, in large

part because Western philosophy is so informed by humanist thought, Badmington explains that “all systems are self-contradictory, forever deconstructing themselves from within” and that every attempt to escape humanism will be at least partially orchestrated by humanism itself.²¹ In a similar vein, Wolfe openly admits that there are certain ideological affinities between humanism and posthumanism. He contends, for example, that while it opposes the human supremacism espoused by humanism, posthumanism upholds certain fundamental humanist “values,” especially its delegitimization of revealed truth and its deep suspicion of religious hierarchy and authority.²² According to Twine, many critical posthumanists are inspired by the progressive and emancipatory elements of traditional philosophical humanism, while they otherwise reject its repressive metaphysics. Twine, citing Tony Davies—who notes that humanism is at once regarded as the “philosophical champion of human freedom and dignity” and as “an ideological smokescreen for the oppressive mystifications of modern society,”—rightly insists that “it is misleading to posit posthumanism simplistically as a radical break from humanism.”²³ Badmington adds that not only must we be careful not to characterize posthumanism as wholly *antihumanist* but, again echoing Derrida (contra Foucault), argues that we must also be cautious about premature jubilation about the alleged death of ‘Man.’ Not only celebratory, but also “apocalyptic accounts of the end of ‘Man,’” he points out, “ignore humanism’s regeneration and, quite literally, recapitulation.”²⁴ As he pithily puts it, “If ‘Man’ is present at ‘his’ own funeral, how can ‘he’ possibly be dead? What looks on lives on.”²⁵

Even though it is critical of the limitations of classical antihumanist analyses, and also recognizes the impossibility of escaping humanism entirely, critical posthumanism clearly appropriates the fundamental antihumanist disavowal of humanism in general and its concept of the subject in particular. Badmington's caveat about "Man's" lingering existence betrays less a recognition of humanism's virtues than it does a frustration with late modernity's stubborn persistence to cling onto humanist ideology. Badmington openly admits that while humanism is always lurking, he is "not for one moment interested in preserving humanism."²⁶ To add fuel to the anti-humanist fire, posthumanists rightly note that not only has humanism enabled systemic violence against animals, but it has also been mobilized to justify the marginalization of human beings (viz., indigenous peoples, colonized peoples, women, people of colour) too. As Anat Pick has pointed out, for example, the humanist belief in the perfectibility of the human subject, very likely provided some inspiration for the Nazis' genocidal program to perfect the German race. She therefore expresses incredulity at the call for the "restitution and rehabilitation of humanism" as a response to the outrages of the Nazi genocide.²⁷ By and large, then, despite pointing to the difficulty in affecting a total break with humanism, and despite their frustration with traditional antihumanists' perpetuation of an all-too-humanist anthropocentrism, then, posthumanist theorists consistently seek to disassociate themselves from humanism as much as possible, and are in fact adamantly and vociferously *antihumanist* most of the time.

If the link between humanism and sadism is not enough to delegitimize dualist metaphysics as a valid ground for an account of human and nonhuman animal

subjectivity, posthumanists properly insist, alongside ethologists and other AS and CAS scholars, that the growing knowledge about the perceptual, cognitive, psychological, emotional, social, and cultural complexity of other animal species that is emerging from a variety of disciplines confirms that it is not only untenable but downright ridiculous to uphold the centuries-old rigid bifurcation between humans and the millions of other species that populate our earth. Renowned primatologist Jane Goodall, for example, points out that since the rise of ethology in the mid-20th century, there has been

increasingly compelling evidence that we are not...the only creatures capable of love and hate, joy and sorrow, fear and despair.... In other words, [that] there is no sharp line between the human animal and the rest of the animal kingdom. It is a blurred line, and becoming more so all the time.²⁸

Other ethologists and scientists, such as Marc Bekoff, Jonathan Balcombe, Jeffery Moussaieff Masson, and Susan McCarthy among others, have been hard at work to demonstrate the multidimensionality of animal subjectivity and thereby shatter the artificial barrier that has been erected between humans and all other species. They aim to restore, or perhaps for the first time since classical antiquity explicitly *affirm*, nonhuman animals' *co*-subjectivity with humans.²⁹ With abundant and indisputable evidence of other animals' subjecthood in mind, Wolfe asks us to

rethink our taken-for-granted modes of human experience [which he characterizes as the 'closed domain of consciousness, reason, reflection']...by recontextualizing them in terms of the entire sensorium of other living beings and their own autopoietic ways of 'bringing forth a world'—ways that are, since we ourselves are human *animals*, part of the evolutionary history and behavioural and psychological repertoire of the human itself.³⁰

Here Wolfe takes on not only Descartes but also Martin Heidegger who insisted that other animals were “poor-in-world” because they did not “dwell” in the “house of

Being,” which is constituted by language.³¹ By grounding human beings in the “entire sensorium of other living beings,” Wolfe dispenses with the majority of Western philosophers’ fixation on language, reason, or *logos* the defining features of subjectivity. Instead, Wolfe properly insists that shared sensuousness alone is the basis of subjective experience, of richness-in-world.

Other critical posthumanist theorists, such as Jodey Castricano, seek to overcome human exceptionalism, dualist metaphysics, and the glorification of human rationality especially, in part by “exploring the medical, biological, cultural, philosophical, psychological, and ethical *connections* between nonhuman animals and ourselves.”³² For Castricano, as for many posthumanists, developing an ethics based on empathy is of central importance in this struggle.³³ When a strict hierarchy of beings is in place empathy is moot, for one cannot share the experience of another being who exists on an entirely different ontological plane, so to speak, than oneself. Indeed, as we will see in chapter four, Levinas and other existential phenomenologists have shown that empathy and (non-totalizing) identity with the Other are potential cornerstones of a radical interspecies ethics and politics.

Anat Pick offers a particularly appealing example of the reconceptualization of the subject outside the confines of dualism, in the form of the “creature.” She suggests that instead of continually trying to determine which criteria a being must meet to be considered worthy of ethical consideration, and instead of preoccupying ourselves with the “‘content’ or structure of otherness,” we ought to focus on the basic experience of “the flesh and blood vulnerability of beings—whether human or not.”³⁴ To develop her

concept of the creature, Pick extrapolates from Simone Weil's notion of "the creaturely abandonment to 'pitiless necessity,'" a kind of abject vulnerability.³⁵ As she explains further, "the creature...is first and foremost a living body—material, temporal, and vulnerable."³⁶ Like Levinas' "face," Pick's conception of the creature potentially avoids the anthropocentrism that often announces itself when animal ethicists resort to listing criteria or capacities upon which ethical consideration is said to depend. Although she refers to the vegetative elements of animality, and although "material," "temporal," and "vulnerable" are broad enough descriptors to potentially include plants and other vegetable matter, Pick seems to avoid the trap of spreading ethics too thin, as it were, and implies at least that she is focusing primarily on the vulnerability of embodied *animal* creatures.

As Wolfe, Castricano, Pick and other posthumanist authors demonstrate, the refusal to perpetuate the arbitrary bifurcation of humans and animals endemic to Western metaphysics from Plato to Heidegger is integral to overcoming animal exploitation. Posthumanists properly insist that we finally "get with the program," abandon tired old prejudices, and reformulate our understanding of ourselves and our role in the universe. They suggest we do so, not by relying on metaphysical speculation, but rather on indisputable scientific truths about the complexity of animal subjectivities. Reaffirming the importance of nonviolent scientific practices pointed to above, Best insists, for example, that "ethically progressive and truly inclusive, the new outlook—not only post-capitalist, but also post-anthropocentric, post-speciesist, and post-humanist—would also be scientifically valid, by accurately representing the true place of *Homo sapiens* in the social,

sentient, and ecological communities in which it finds itself enmeshed.”³⁷ Paola Cavalieri and Kelly Oliver similarly stress the important role a non-exploitative, non-mechanistic science can play in debunking humanist prejudices.³⁸ For Oliver a science inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology would be especially conducive to reframing scientific inquiry in non-anthropocentric terms. Taken together these efforts to debunk the myth of the rational disembodied human subject are integral to the larger campaign underway to reconfigure human and animal subjectivities in a complex matrix of sensuous, emotional, cognitive, and ethical potentialities.

But there is another side to the posthumanist coin—one that risks reinforcing rather than challenging the apparatus of domination general, and the logic of extermination-by-integration that defines technological rationality in particular.

The Haraway Effect: The Fetishization of Boundary Dissolution and Hybridity

Most posthumanists confuse a healthy critique of dualism, and an acknowledgment of the ways in which human and animal subjectivities are historically contingent, with a celebration of the dissolution of boundaries between humans, other animals, and the technical artifice, and the supposedly liberating ontological confusions and ambiguities it engenders. Since the publication of Haraway’s *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), and more recently *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *When Species Meet* (2008), hybridity has come to represent the ultimate antidote to the essentialist, dualist, and human supremacists conceits of humanism.

In opposition to the anthropocentric and dualist sado-humanist worldview that mercilessly pits an “abstract universal man” over and against the nonhuman, Haraway offers us nonhumanism and “companion species.” The latter concept is an outgrowth of Haraway’s famous “cyborgs,” or what she defines as “chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism.”³⁹ In “A Cyborg Manifesto” Haraway attempted to challenge patriarchal, capitalist, and anthropocentric ideology by exploring what she saw as the “transgressive” figure of the cyborg. In particular, she argued that through an “ironic appropriation” of these “cybernetic organisms,” it was possible to dismantle or at least significantly disrupt binary thinking.⁴⁰ As she put it, “my cyborg myth is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work.”⁴¹ It turned out that cyborgs had a special relevance for inverting the diametrical opposition between humans and animals and promoting a more-than-symbolic “bestiality.” “The cyborg,” Haraway contends, “appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. Far from signaling a walling off of people from other living beings, cyborgs signal disturbingly and pleasurably tight coupling. Bestiality has a new status in this cycle of marriage exchange.”⁴²

More recently, Haraway has described cyborgs as “junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species.”⁴³ Cyborgs and companion species, she tells us, “are hardly polar opposites.”⁴⁴ Rather, both figures “bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion,

modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways.”⁴⁵ In other words, cyborgs and companion species both represent areas of ambiguity and contradiction otherwise prohibited in the bifurcated framework of what she aptly refers to as humanism’s Great Divide (between humans and everybody/everything else). The main difference between cyborgs and companion species, then, is that the latter draws particular attention to the ethical and phenomenological inter-relationality of humans and animals.⁴⁶ I will reserve my critique of Haraway’s concept of companion species for chapter four. In the meantime, however, let us examine Haraway’s favourite example of a hybrid creation: OncoMouse®, the genetically engineered mouse used for breast cancer research mentioned in chapter one.⁴⁷

Hybrid animals, such as oncomice, are so important for the emancipatory project because they literally *embody* transgressive metaphysics and politics. Oncomouse, she tells us, need not be viewed as a product of, but can be seen as a challenge to anthropocentrism. She argues that, in the practice of hybridization, nature and society are no longer artificially divided. Echoing Bruno Latour, who was among the first contemporary theorists to challenge the conceptual bifurcation of nature and culture, Haraway suggests that our world is made up of “naturecultures” and hybrids, of which oncomouse is the ultimate example.⁴⁸ She writes, “symbolically and materially, oncomouse is where the categories of nature and culture implode for members of technoscientific cultures.”⁴⁹ In the same vein, she says of oncomouse that s/he is “my sibling, and more properly, male or female, s/he is my sister.”⁵⁰ Like female humans, “her

essence is to be a mammal, a bearer by definition of mammary glands, and a site for the operation of a transplanted, human, tumor-producing gene.”⁵¹

While it is important to demonstrate our solidarity with animals in laboratories and other sites of exploitation, in suggesting that oncomouse is her “sister” in this context, Haraway in fact papers over and minimizes the actual gap between herself and this transgenic creature, which is, unlike her, a victim of radical violence. By calling oncomouse her sister without wholly opposing its development to begin with, Haraway does not actually shrink the Great Divide that separates oncomouse from herself. Rather, she reinforces it by setting up what amounts to nothing more than a *false* identity between herself—a relatively free and inviolable human subject—with a totally unfree and utterly violated subject-turned-object. In the end, Haraway’s characterization of this creature as her “sister” seems to serve primarily as another justification for supporting violence that is committed against animals in the name of technoscience and the enormous profits it yields.⁵²

Haraway does acknowledge that oncomouse is the emblem of what she calls “secularized Christian salvation history,” which perilously integrates the Christian logic of sacrifice—and the “solace” it provides to our otherwise potentially troubled collective conscience—with the joint pursuits of scientific progress and economic gain.⁵³ Haraway contends that in this religio-secular framework that, in her view, characterizes modernity, the transgenic mouse is implicitly portrayed as a sacrificial figure whose “birth” and “death” is seen to fulfill the “promises of progress; cures; profit; and if not of eternal life, then at least of life itself.”⁵⁴ Similarly, she writes, “s/he is our scapegoat; s/he bars our

suffering.... s/he suffers, physically, repeatedly, and profoundly, that I and my sisters might live.”⁵⁵ Haraway also criticizes our tendency to find consolation for the violence we commit in genetically engineering other animals by appealing to what she calls the “majesty of Reason,” or the notion that the supposed development of human rationality and/or the pursuit of progress, cures, and so on, are the only criteria for determining whether or not enacting violence on other beings is permissible. Finally, Haraway points to the problem of the commodification by highlighting that oncomouse is “an ordinary commodity in the exchange circuits of transnational capital.”⁵⁶ These are all important points. As we have seen, genetically manipulated animals (along with “lab animals” more generally) are often characterized as necessary sacrificial objects for the greater human good, while the development of biotechnology is hailed as a great milestone in the joint pursuits of scientific advancement and economic development.⁵⁷

However, Haraway ultimately short-circuits her own critique by merely *replacing* the Solace of Sacrifice and the majesty of Reason with what amounts to the consolation of “mundane reasons.”⁵⁸ As she writes, “I may (or may not) have good reasons to kill, or to make, oncomice, but I do not have the majesty of Reason and the Solace of Sacrifice. I do not have *sufficient reason*, only the risk of doing something wicked because it may also be good in the context of *mundane reasons*.”⁵⁹ We certainly do not have sufficient reason, as Haraway suggests, to alter animals at the ontological level. But this realization should *end*, not *enable*, their violation by easing our conscience. What impact can the discursive shift from capital “R” Reason to lower case “r” reasons have on other animals as long as *any reason* is still found to justify the commission of atrocities against them? Indeed, beyond

exciting our curiosity or fulfilling a (twisted) desire to toy with other animals' lives and bodies by seeing what funky hybrid configurations we can come up with, it is difficult to imagine what these "mundane" reasons might actually be. In any case, the exact nature of those reasons is beside the point: from the standpoint of ethics, mundane reasons, whatever their content, are as problematic as "majestic" Reason if they ultimately serve to legitimize violence.⁶⁰

We must also seriously question Haraway's assumption that dissolving boundaries is *necessarily* ethically and politically transgressive and progressive. As we have seen, and as Haraway's own critique of the god trick indicates, the supposed collapse of the binary between nature and culture turns out not to be really a collapse at all but a one-sided imposition of culture (human) onto nature (mouse). The ontological distortion of the genetically engineered creature emerging from the "technohell" that is the animal industrial complex is nothing more than the human making itself by remaking nature in a new guise.⁶¹ The genetic engineering of animals is, as we have also seen, the culmination of Bacon's early modern vision of nature made wholly available to the machinery of instrumental reason and the fulfillment of Bacon's call to the mastery of nature through its ontological manipulation. The genetic engineers at Charles River Labs who, with DuPont's support, produced oncomouse are, as noted in chapter one, today's "Fathers of Solomon's House." Only now they are endowed with more power—financial, technical, and scientific—than ever before.

Haraway's glorification of the dissolution of boundaries between animal life and technics is one example of what Eileen Crist describes as the postmodern constructivist

tendency to treat the nonhuman as “ontologically indeterminate . . . white noise . . . an elusive trickster amenable to indefinite registrations,” and as totally reliant on humans to assign it meaning.⁶² The postmodern renaming of nature in general and animals in particular, which occurs through this imposition of false meaning, is indistinguishable from the Judeo-Christian heritage of human supremacism and exceptionalism that it ostensibly aims to undermine: the “naming-and-working” of humans onto nature or the nonhuman confers a special status on human beings.⁶³ Comparing the otherwise antagonistic schools of positivism and postmodern constructivism, Crist explains that, “for both the primary locus of meaning is human categories *cum* techniques—in Biblical terms, naming-and-working.”⁶⁴ While Haraway may not be a postmodern constructivist per se, the same parallel can be drawn between her anti-humanist “material-semiotics” of companion species and humanism: for both the primary locus of meaning is the human, and human *discourse about* the nonhuman, not the *nonhuman itself*.

As Crist further points out, the tendency to fetishize boundary dissolution is symptomatic of colonialism—political, cultural, and ecological. In particular, she reminds us that the colonization of other peoples and of the environment has always involved “the violation of rightful boundaries—first annihilating and then assimilating the other, whether nonhuman or human.”⁶⁵ The discourse of boundary blurring so lauded by Haraway is representative of what Vandana Shiva calls the “politics of disappearance,” and which Crist argues is endemic to postmodern constructivism. For the postmodern constructivists, the nonhuman *referents* themselves—such as “self-determining nonhuman habitats,” or in this case, self-determining nonhuman animals—are “denied

existential/ontological standing” and are thus made to “disappear.”⁶⁶ Indeed, as Crist and other outspoken critics of postmodernism have highlighted, there is a direct correlation between the *theoretical* and *actual* destruction of “nature” or the nonhuman. In the words of John Sanbonmatsu, “The main trouble with the postmodernist rejection of the subject in theory...is that it has fatefully coincided with the obliteration of the individual human and nonhuman subject in social or historical *fact*.”⁶⁷ With a similar observation in mind, Crist argues that “As the biosphere is colonized—settled, paved, mined, burnt, dammed, drained, overfished, poached, and roundly used—diversified conceptions of how ‘nature’ and ‘society’ (should) relate are more facilely bulldozed by a monolithic image of ‘nature-society’ hybridization.”⁶⁸ Although Haraway does not necessarily advocate the total annihilation of the subject per se, and indeed suggests that we recognize other animals are subjects, her conception of subjectivity is highly dubious if it permits the reduction of other animals to ontologically ambiguous, infinitely transformable, and boundary-less objects.⁶⁹

Haraway’s celebration of the erasure of ontological lines between beings in particular and between science fiction and reality in general is also symptomatic of the irrationality of technological rationality. In a world governed by technological rationality, Marcuse tells us illusion and reality, science and magic, and imagination and progress merge together and are jointly subsumed into the project of domination. As Marcuse puts it,

The willful play with fantastic possibilities, the ability to act with good conscience, *contra naturam*, to experiment with men and things, to convert illusion into reality and fiction into truth, testify to the extent to which Imagination has become an

instrument of progress.... The formerly antagonistic realms merge on political grounds—magic and science, life and death, joy and misery.⁷⁰

As we have seen, transgenic animals embody this dangerous conflation of formerly antagonistic realms. Haraway's enthusiastic claim that "Like it or not, we are catapulted into the narrative fields that contain Frankenstein and his monster and all the other alluring scenes of night births in the mythological culture of science" strikes a decidedly sinister note in light of Marcuse's critique.⁷¹ Indeed, the outcome of the self-perpetuating logic of irrational technological rationality in which former "areas of contradiction" (such as nature and technics) have collapsed is the loss of both our critical vantage point and the possibility of acknowledging our guilt in the perpetration of atrocities. We no longer see brutality, violence and horror for what they are. Rather, in the illusory ethical neutrality of science and technology we allow more and more heinous acts of cruelty to take place. Thus, Marcuse asserts, in modern industrialized societies "guilt has no place."⁷² Haraway's enthusiasm for biotechnology, genetic engineering, transgenics, and technoscience reflect the ethical myopia and impotency, which, as we saw in chapter one, Marcuse and Jacques Ellul so poignantly demonstrate are inherent to technological rationality.

By investing radical power in the laboratory, the site of the production of the most enormous wealth and power in the age of technoscience, Haraway offers herself as a glaring example of the "false consciousness" of technological rationality. She asks rhetorically, "How could feminists and antiracists in this culture do without the power of the laboratory to make the normal dubious?"⁷³ The laboratory might "make the normal dubious" by producing hybrid creatures but it does so only through the enactment of

domination, violence, and power on the bodies of helpless nonhuman beings, and with the enthusiastic support of agribusiness and pharmaceutical giants. If feminists and antiracists find a home in the laboratory in which animals are experimented upon and transformed into crippled monstrosities, they do so at the expense of any real challenge to the structure of domination which put animals there at their mercy in the first place.

Equally irrational is Haraway's *naturalization* of the laboratory setting, which she portrays as a "scene of evolution." Again with reference to oncomouse she writes, "Inhabiting the nature of no nature, oncomouse's natural habitat is the fully artifactual space of technoscience."⁷⁴ Making a similar claim about other laboratory animals, she suggests that "Like fruit flies, yeast, transgenic mice, and the humble nematode worm...[a laboratory rabbit's] evolutionary story transpires in the lab; the lab is its proper niche, its true habitat."⁷⁵ Haraway's avowal of the laboratory as a site of evolution of rabbits, flies, transgenic mice and worms once again eerily recalls the Father of Solomon's House proud proclamation that "we have also places for breeding and generation of those kinds of worms and flies which are of special use."⁷⁶ Haraway is not wrong to suggest that oncomouse and other genetically manipulated or vivisected animals are artificial constructs of the laboratory. It is true that such creatures "evolved" in the laboratory setting and not by some other natural evolutionary development. However, while it is one thing to acknowledge this, it is another to endorse it, as Haraway implicitly does.

Finally, Haraway's attitude towards oncomouse is a prime example of commodity fetishism. If we recall, Marx explained that the commodity "is a physical relation between

physical things.”⁷⁷ However, in the quasi-theological mystifications of commodification and reification,

the commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here . . . the fantastic form of a relation between things. . . . *There the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race.*⁷⁸

Like the fetishized commodity, oncomouse is granted a false autonomy it does not possess as a *mass-produced patented object*. Moreover, in truth, Haraway has no relationship with oncomouse beyond being a member of the species responsible for its “creation” and life-long torture. Any meaningful relationship—any relationship that could rightly be called “sisterly”—would be one defined by words and acts of resistance against the sado-humanist system that produces and profits from the distribution of the oncomouse-commodity in the first place. It is as though, in Haraway’s fantasy, both she and oncomouse live in a kind of bubble, completely removed from the social, political, and economic—in short, the historical material—conditions that determine the latter’s miserable existence. By presenting her relationship with oncomouse in such a positive light, Haraway ignores the brutal material reality, the actual social relations—between biotechnologists, corporations, and lab technicians, not to mention between human masters and animal slaves—behind its production. Ultimately, despite her claims to the contrary, Haraway reconfigures the social relations of oncomouse’s production “as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers” (165).

Despite these obvious dangers in celebrating hybridity, posthumanists tend to fetishize the concept of hybridity, and even Haraway herself. For example, Teresa Heffernan explains that,

Understood as local, fluid, contingent, and as contesting and rending the hierarchical boundaries of nature/culture, self/other, male/female, human/nonhuman, this postmodern subject [i.e. the hybrid] is by now a familiar to alternative to the conception of the self as fixed, autonomous, authentic, coherent, and universal. Hybridity is a privileged concept in the linear reproductive model that produces the same, allowing 'difference' to proliferate; the hybrid also displaces emphasis on the original and challenges the traditional understanding of nature.⁷⁹

A brief glimpse into posthumanist literature bears Heffernan's observation about the primacy and taken-for-granted-ness, if you will, of hybridity as necessarily emancipatory. Eugene Thacker, for example, applauds Haraway for the fact that she supposedly "shows how the doubled contingencies of humans and technologies will always require critical gestures, ironic gestures, even ludic gestures, which will turn upside down, and render impure and noninnocent, our views of the human condition."⁸⁰ This language of "ironic and ludic gestures" and "noninnocence" indicate that Haraway and other posthumanist thinkers whom she has influenced treat biotechnology as though it is an integral part of some kind of slightly dangerous but ultimately healthy, exhilarating, and playful teenage rebellion against uppity narrow-minded parents, a rebellion that brings the adolescent into maturation from a repressed product of stuffy, dualist Enlightenment, to a heroic representative of postmodernity. It goes without saying that the torture of animals in laboratories to produce glow-in-the-dark fish and spider goats is decidedly

“noninnocent.” But surely this lack of innocence should not be cause for celebration, but rather for profound lamentation.

Castricano also characterizes the aim of her edited volume *Animal Subjects: An Ethical Reader in a Posthuman World* (2008) as an attempt “to embody the cultural politics behind the idea of hybridity.”⁸¹ The essays in her book, she explains, are meant to act as interventions against the anthropocentrism of humanism in general and of cultural studies in particular.⁸² Castricano’s is undoubtedly a most worthy and important cause, and her edited collection, including her introduction, makes an important contribution to the field. However, drawing out the connections between human and nonhuman animals and cultivating an ethics based on empathy is very different from promoting *hybridity*—an important distinction Castricano does not acknowledge here.

In his forward to Cary Wolfe’s book *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species and Posthumanist Theory* (2003) W. J. T. Mitchell, falls into the same trap of confusing the critique of dualism with the celebration of hybridity: “Perhaps we need a new term to designate the *hybrid creatures* that we must learn to think of, a ‘humanimal’ form predicated on the refusal of the human/animal binary.”⁸³ Again, one must ask why the repudiation of dualism must amount to the celebration/promotion of *hybridity* per se, given the plethora of problems associated with actual practices of hybridization. Surely there are other ways of imagining co-human and nonhuman animal subjectivities that don’t risk reaffirming the logic of corporate technoscience.

Also recalling Haraway’s work, Scott Bukatman waxes lyrical about the “infinite possibilities and cyborg multiplicities, defined in and through the technologies that now

construct our experiences and therefore ourselves.”⁸⁴ What he does not acknowledge is that to actualize these “infinite possibilities” and “cyborg multiplicities,” thousands of terrified animals are forced to undergo torturous procedures that cause lifelong agony.

Meanwhile, Braidotti regards her own theory of “nomadic subjects” and “nomadic thought” as a direct development of Haraway’s hybridity theory and so-called “process ontology,” a term that chillingly evokes the mechanistic, the machinic, and the technoscientific preoccupations of late modernity.⁸⁵ She praises Haraway’s work for representing “power as a dynamic web of interconnections of hybrid contaminations, as a principle of non-purity,” and for its “refusal to fall into the pitfall of the classical nature/culture divide.” She claims that by rejecting the “subject-object, nature-culture divides [that] are linked to patriarchal, oedipal familial narratives,” Haraway “mobilizes an enlarged sense of community, based on empathy, accountability, and recognition. . . . Moreover, she extends these prerogatives to non-human agents or subjects, such as animals, plants, cells, bacteria and the Earth as a whole.”⁸⁶ She does not mention, however, that Haraway’s conception of empathy is such that one may claim solidarity, sisterhood, and solicitude for the same creatures she condones killing and eating.⁸⁷ Nor does she acknowledge that there might be an important ethical difference between having empathy for animals and empathy for bacteria, an issue we will take up below.

Braidotti applauds Haraway further for the “inspirational force” emanating from her posthumanist project in general and her account of oncomouse in particular. As she explains,

Haraway wants to invent a new discourse for the unconscious, one that can reflect the conditions of our historicity. The counter-figurations for this non-oedipalized

unconscious trace a sort of becoming-animal: the cyborg, the coyote, the trickster and the oncomouse produce alternative structures of otherness.⁸⁸

Based on our observations in chapter one, Braidotti's claim that oncomouse and other hybrids "produce alternative structures of otherness" is simply untenable—the relationship between humans and oncomouse reproduces the unequal (human) subject/(animal)object relation that has been characteristic of sado-humanism (and exterminationism) for centuries.

To be sure, not all posthumanists regard hybridity as inherently liberatory, nor do they necessarily conflate the theory with the practice of hybridity. For example, while he emphasizes that "new biotechnological innovations and their associated imaginaries have become the science for much speculation on the ontological status of the 'human,'" Twine also acknowledges that "animals remain real conduits for bio-capitalisation and targets of human consumption at the outset of the twenty-first century."⁸⁹ CAS scholar and critical pedagogue Helena Pederson also resists identification with the posthumanist "'cybernetic' orientation towards relationality, focusing on human-machine interaction and hybridity."⁹⁰ Heffernan too admits that "at first glance, it seems that, in many ways, these theoretical interests in hybridity seem to parallel and challenge the production of 'hybrids' in the scientific arenas of biotechnology and genetic engineering, begging the question whether postmodern theory has unwittingly laid the philosophical ground for this new science."⁹¹ In his introduction to a special issue of the journal *Cultural Critique*, which focuses on critical posthumanism, Bart Simon notes that a number of critical posthumanists such as Heffernan (featured in the same issue) are aware that "the proliferation of hybridizing practices in biotechnology and genetic engineering seem to

turn the postmodern conception of hybrid subjectivity into a technoscientific fact.” He adds, “increasingly the discourse of popular posthumanism [transhumanism] and theoretical postmodernism seem to parallel each other.” He rightly concludes that “this is a troubling situation for those invested in the political promise of the postmodern franchise.”⁹²

However, these acknowledgments of the dangers of hybridity theory are typically sidelined or dispensed soon after they are revealed. For example, Heffernan insists that “postmodern notions of hybridity *do* offer an ethical response to the issues that biotechnology raises.”⁹³ But her concern is only with the impact of hybridity on human beings. She is critical of “biotech companies” because they “mobilize hybridity as if humans were safeguarded from it.” In so doing, they reduce nature to “an instrument designed for ‘our’ disposal in the pursuit of immortality.” True enough. But the best she and other critical posthumanists can do to challenge this problematic attitude, apparently, is “to recognize that this violent differentiation between humans and nature paradoxically produces us as increasingly hybrid, as increasingly part of and produced by that other.”⁹⁴ Tellingly, in her discussion of the production of a human-cow embryo by Advanced Cell Technology, not once does Heffernan mention the problem of the perpetual violence against cows such genetic hybridizations entail. For Heffernan, what is really at stake in biotech experiments like this is not the harm they cause to animals but the fact that they may inadvertently lead to cannibalism.⁹⁵ Though Heffernan does not go this far, one might fairly posit that, following the logic of hybridity theory, cannibalism might be considered an acceptable practice, for it would involve a kind of inverted collapse of

boundaries—in consuming the cow, one consumes, and thereby at once absorbs, unifies, and disunifies, both the cow and the human. From a CAS perspective, of course, the proper critical response to the potential problem of cannibalism would be, “If we have never been human, if there is no dividing line between humans and other animals, irrespective of biotechnological interventions, is not the consumption of animal flesh *already* a form of cannibalism?” At the very least, anyone seeking to reformulate hybridity theory as anathema to rather than reinforcement of the violent practices of biotechnology should account for untold suffering of thousands of animals at the hands of profit-driven corporations. Yet, Heffernan’s analysis, which proposes to engage with the material conditions of hybridity, is, like Haraway’s, suspiciously detached from the real horrors it presents to our nonhuman counterparts. Not only is Heffernan silent on animal suffering—and what is arguably *the central issue* in any critical analysis of the ethical implications of biotechnology—but, as we have noted, the majority of critical posthumanists similarly remain suspiciously unconcerned with the real implications of hybridity for animals. It would seem that posthumanists are, much like the humanists they condemn, very much in favour of preserving a comfortable divide between humans and nonhuman animals.

Ironically, hybridity theory conducts the critique of dualism within the constraints of dualist metaphysics itself. By attempting to remedy the ills of binary thinking with the false panacea of collapsed boundaries, posthumanism reduces a potentially complex framework of inquiry into a simplistic reversal of a problematic tendency running through classical humanist thought. To reverse a concept is not necessarily to dispense with the

concept, but to reproduce it in a different guise. Proponents of hybridity theory often inadvertently reconstruct dualisms in their effort to dismantle them. As Terry Eagleton notes in his critique of postmodernism,

For all its talk of difference, plurality, heterogeneity, postmodern theory often operates with quite rigid binary oppositions, with “difference,” “plurality,” and allied terms lined up bravely on one side of the theoretical fence as unequivocally positive, and whatever their antithesis might be (unity, identity, totality, universality) ranged balefully on the other.⁹⁶

In the case of posthumanist hybridity theorists, it appears that ontological collapse is “unequivocally positive” while its antithesis (ontological distinction) is condemned to the status of the unequivocally negative.

Similarly, although posthumanism presents hybridity as a form of resistance to totalization (or the homogenization of animals into an indistinguishable conceptual mass permitting of no particularity or individuality), when evaluated through the Levinasian and Adornian lens, hybridity is, like its counterpart dualism, in fact another form of totalization. In short, dualism and boundary dissolution are two sides of the same totalizing coin. As both Adorno and Levinas point out, the co-mingling of subject and object tends to amount to the *appropriation of the* object (or other) by the subject (or same). As Adorno correctly observes, “to be undifferentiated is not to be one...unity requires diverse items of which it is the unity.”⁹⁷ In other words, proper unity does not consist of *indiscriminate integration* between (human) subject and (animal) object or other, but rather requires that their mutual *difference* and separation is preserved and emphasized. For Levinas and Adorno, the object/other is neither diametrically opposed to the subject, nor is it wholly identifiable or continuous with it. According to Levinas, ethics requires that the

other is recognized as being always already “prior” to the same. “*The metaphysical other is other with an alterity that is not formal, is not the simple reverse of identity, and is not formed out of resistance to the same, but it is prior to every initiative, to all imperialism of the same.*”⁹⁸ If applied to human-animal relations, Levinas’ formula would mean that while it is imperative to acknowledge how humans and animals are co-constituted in various ways—phenomenologically, biologically, and historically—it is equally necessary to recognize that nonhuman animals have also, in another sense, always existed on their own terms, long before and still after their confinement in imaginary metaphysical categories designed to justify their subjugation. Certainly, any fantasies about closing the metaphysical gap between humans and animals by exploding ontological boundaries, would be anathema to a Levinasian ethical project. Separation, in fact, not unification, is the key to ethical resistance to totalization: “The same and the other at the same time maintain themselves in relationship and *absolve* themselves from this relation, remain absolutely separated.” For Levinas “the idea of Infinity” (the antidote to totality) “requires this separation.”⁹⁹ Hybridity theory cancels this separation, and instead inadvertently advocates the usurpation of the animal other by the human. It therefore cancels the possibility of ethical transformation.

The Derogation of Species Integrity and the Conflation of Essence and Essentialism

The glorification of hybridity is connected to two other conceptual problems within posthumanist discourse: the dismissal of species integrity as an obsolete notion and the conflation of essence and essentialism. As with the bioethicists outlined in chapter one,

posthumanists flippantly reject arguments for the preservation of species integrity as appeals to neofascist notions of purity. According to Haraway, for example, critics of hybridity and transgenics subscribe to some kind of naïve belief that each being has its own ontological trajectory and, as though the notions of telos or self-definition are fundamentally repressive, exclaims in apparent horror that they “appeal to notions such as the natural telos, or self-defining purpose of all life forms.”¹⁰⁰ Pitting her work against the supposedly reactionary tradition which espouses the preservation of species integrity, Haraway warns, “Neither a cyborg nor a companion animal species pleases the *pure of heart* who long for better protected species boundaries and sterilization of category deviants.”¹⁰¹ The implicit claim that concern for preserving species boundaries is equivalent to fascistic or eugenic sterilization programs is not only unfairly disdainful of legitimate concerns regarding the suffering resulting from biotechnology’s disregard for animals’ species integrity, but it is profoundly ironic given that animal biotechnology, which is committed to producing profitable and/or “productive” and “successful” “designer” animals (and potentially designer humans as well), is devoted to producing pure and perfect commodities by eliminating animals’ “deviant” behaviours, characteristics, and traits—just as the Nazis and eugenicists of the early to mid-twentieth century sought to do with humans who disrupted the social and political order by failing to meet their standards of racial purity.

Although more cautious and critical of the naturalization of hybridization than Haraway, Jill Didur is equally perturbed by what she regards as the “humanist” overtones

in the critique of species boundaries violations. Echoing Haraway, she explains disapprovingly that for activists and critics of biotechnology,

genetic engineering in the lab . . . is represented as a violent assault on nature and a form of contamination invading the otherwise pure and untainted boundaries of the body of the liberal subject through the consumption of genetically modified food. . . . Laboratory procedures [are represented] as an assault that transgresses species barriers and the individual will of the gene.¹⁰²

She proceeds to undermine Vandana Shiva's critique of the horrific injuries and congenital defects experienced by genetically engineered pigs in factory farms as another example of the supposedly puritanical obsession with species boundaries.¹⁰³ She reduces Shiva's outcry against this injustice to yet another paranoid reaction to fanciful "images of miscegenation, contamination, deformity, and social deviance," images she claims, "abound in this [activist] literature." Not surprisingly, Didur goes on to cite Haraway's claim that, in the debates surrounding biotechnology, she detects "unintended tones of fear of the alien and suspicion of the mixed."¹⁰⁴ Like Haraway, Didur reduces legitimate criticism of the extreme violence against animals necessarily involved in genetic modification to an extension of oppressive ideological and social presuppositions and prejudices.¹⁰⁵

Haraway, Didur, and critical posthumanists fail to acknowledge that the biotechnologists responsible for systemic atrocities against animals similarly scoff at the notion of species integrity to justify the violence they commit.¹⁰⁶ As we saw in the first chapter, biotechnologists also naturalize the genetic manipulation of other animals in laboratories by suggesting it is simply another phase in the natural course of evolution (which, not coincidentally, Haraway has also claimed).¹⁰⁷ Also like the bioethicists

discussed earlier, posthumanist hybridity theorists fail to recognize that there is a difference between creaturely essence and essentialism. Whereas the essentialism to which posthumanists properly object reifies the subject into a fixed type with predetermined and immutable characteristics, the avowal of essence simply translates into the recognition that all beings possess certain phenomenologically defined perceptual, physical, social, and emotional traits, capacities, and potentialities that are existentially meaningful to them. Respecting a being's essence does not mean perpetuating some fantasy of a pure, untouched and unchanged and unchanging nature, as Rollin, Robert and Baylis, Haraway, Didur and other posthumanists claim. Honouring essence means honouring the fact that each species has a particular set of behaviours and needs that are specific to it, both as an individual and as a member of a particular species. Such essential traits and behaviours may include walking on four legs, having legs, having wings, flying great distances across the sky alone or in a flock, eating grass for hours on end, basking in the sunlight, inhabiting a particular time-space continuum, enjoying certain textures, sounds, and smells and disliking others, building nests, nursing one's young, having fur or feathers, playing, hopping, loving and being loved. If these traits are distorted or these behaviours curbed, tremendous suffering and existential injury ensues.

One can acknowledge essence while also acknowledging historical contingency. While phenomenology is "the study of essences," Merleau-Ponty insists, it is "also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity.'"¹⁰⁸ In other words, to study essences is not to study immutable forms, but

rather to recognize how beings unfold within always-changing historical and material conditions; it is, in fact, to study the vicissitudes, nuances, and particularities that constitute material and embodied life *in the world*.

Eagleton has made a similar point. He agrees with anti-essentialists that essentialism can be reductive and lead to oppressive ideologies and regimes which subjugate certain groups on the basis of perceived fundamental differences from the dominant group(s). However, like phenomenologists he also maintains that essence can simply be understood as meaning that things are constituted by certain qualities, properties, and capacities that are essential to a subject's flourishing, such that if they were to be undermined or removed they would radically transform the subject. To reiterate what we have already established, to insist that each being has an essence, does not mean to insist there is only ever *one* central property to which that being is *reducible*.¹⁰⁹ It simply means that another being ought to be allowed to be what it *is*—in the optimal sense. For a bird to be a bird it cannot live in cage, but must be allowed to fly freely, choosing its own course, and land where it wishes. By suggesting that animals ought to be permitted to be what they are, I am not positing some romanticized ahistorical figure of the untouched animal. As I have already noted, animals have been transformed by humans for millennia (by way of breeding, domestication, etc.). There is no idyllic “before” to which we should aspire to “return,” in some kind of primitivist narrative. Rather, the goal is to create the conditions for the *mutual* unfolding of *both* human and animal subjects as internally coherent, self-contained, infinitely variegated, but also intersubjectively intertwined, sensuous beings—which is to say, animals. For a being to be free *to* actualize itself and its

potentialities on one hand, and to be free *from* harm on the other, it must remain within certain species-specific ontological (and genetic) limits.

The call for the protection of animals' essence and species integrity is also a rebuke of technological rationality, which thrives on the dissolution of ontological oppositions between former areas of contradiction. To restore those contradictions, the essence of a particular being must be recognized and rehabilitated. In concrete terms, if we allowed mice and all other animals to be themselves, by themselves, as themselves, and stopped cruelly transforming them into the monsters that populate science fiction novels and films, we would be taking a genuine step towards reconciliation and freedom.

Ironically, though, as Crist aptly points out, for postmodernists (and by extension, posthumanists), “anti-essentialism...is perceived as the high ground of the intellectual elite” while the “essentialist view of wilderness [and I would add, nonhuman animals] is deemed as an anachronism held by naïve romantics—or by those uninitiated into the abstruse mediations of the postmodern illuminati.”¹¹⁰ Hence Haraway's telling condescension toward animal rights activists—her dismissal of those who would object to hybridization as “pure of heart,” or to other brutal practices as “romantic”—as if to rebuke them for indulging in “anachronistic” sentiments like compassion, or a commitment to transformative ethico-political critique and praxis.¹¹¹ Haraway and other posthumanists' giddy enthusiasm for transgenics and technoscience ultimately leaves the framework of technocapitalist domination unscathed. As such, they can be said to participate in what Crist aptly describes as the “redemption” of the destruction of nature or the nonhuman, “through icons of . . . a technologically remade world,” thus joining the

ranks of those whom Carol Gigliotti calls “apologists for an inevitably biotechnological future.”¹¹²

The Transhumanist Connection

In its fetishization of hybridity, posthumanism resembles transhumanism (also known variously as “popular posthumanism” and “extropianism”), despite the latter’s overt avowal of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism. Transhumanism, which emerged as a movement in the 1980s, seeks to “ameliorate” human life, and even overcome mortality, by way of technological innovation and intervention.¹¹³ According to Nick Bostrom, Oxford philosopher and founder of the World Transhumanist Association, transhumanism “holds that current human nature is improvable through the use of applied science and other rational methods, which may make it possible to increase human-health span, extend our intellectual and physical capacities, and give us increased control over our own mental states and moods.”¹¹⁴ Transhumanists also consider their movement to be an outgrowth and extension of Renaissance, Enlightenment and secular humanisms.¹¹⁵ The “Transhumanist FAQ” cites Pico della Mirandola, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, as well as Benjamin Franklin and Voltaire as its chief ideological predecessors, and enumerates as its key principles (the very humanist notions of): “Perpetual Progress, Self-Transformation, Practical Optimism, Intelligent Technology, Open Society, Self-Direction, and Rational Thinking.”¹¹⁶

Given transhumanism’s self-conscious grounding in humanism, it is not surprising that many posthumanists are loath to be in any way associated with it. Haraway,

Thacker, Wolfe, Badmington and others draw a clear line in the sand between critical posthumanism and transhumanism. Haraway proclaims outright that she has abandoned the terms “posthuman” and “posthumanism,” precisely because of the risk that they will be conflated with transhumanism. Haraway insists, for example, “I never wanted to be posthuman, or posthumanist, any more than I wanted to be postfeminist.”¹¹⁷ She is especially repelled by what she calls the transhumanist “techno-blissed-out” call which she sums up thus: “Let’s just go for downloading human consciousness onto the latest chip’ and get rid of pain and suffering that way.”¹¹⁸ Wolfe also distinguishes between various iterations of “cyborg-transhumanism” and *his* version of posthumanism which ostensibly rejects the transhumanist goal of “escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether.”¹¹⁹ Thacker similarly distinguishes transhumanism from critical posthumanisms. He explains that, “while not denying the significance and transformative possibilities of new technologies, these critical [posthumanist] takes on the posthuman offer a more rigorous, politically and socially rooted body of work from which the difficult task to imagining the future may begin.”¹²⁰ These statements remind us that it would be unfair to equate critical posthumanism with transhumanism. However, these stated differences notwithstanding, there are clearly many parallels between the two bodies of thought that are sufficiently serious enough to signal the need to rethink some of the basic assumptions and aims of critical posthumanist theory.

Both posthumanism and transhumanism embrace technoscience as the principle means for freeing human and nonhuman animal life from existing oppressive ontological and ideological constraints. Of course, critical posthumanists do not accept transhumanists' placement of humans at the top of the imagined hierarchy of beings, nor can they abide the transhumanist goal of "perfecting" human beings through technological enhancement. However, there is abundant evidence that posthumanists do share with transhumanists the enthusiasm for the ways in which technoscience can ameliorate human and nonhuman life. Hayles's work offers a good example of this. Hayles integrates her concept of inviolable embodied subjectivity with a decentred subjectivity formed (or de-formed) by encounters with "intelligent machines." In a refreshing move, Hayles initially desists from participating in the wholesale celebration of the ontological collapse between humans and machines. She admits to sharing the widespread "terror" evoked by the sci-fi elements of transhumanism such as the prospect of downloading human consciousness onto computers. Against such fantasies, she posits that the "human being is first of all embodied being, and the complexities of this embodiment mean that human awareness unfolds in ways very different from those of intelligence embodied in cybernetic machines."¹²¹ She goes on to contend that "there is a limit to how seamlessly humans can be articulated with intelligent machines, which remain distinctively different from humans in their embodiments."¹²²

However, Hayles' attempt to champion embodiment and the preservation of a distinction between information technologies and en fleshed beings is soon compromised, and begins to increasingly resemble transhumanist thought when she proceeds to express

excitement about the ways in which disembodied information can enhance *embodied* human experience. For example, she concludes that in the posthuman age, as imagined by Edwin Hutchins in his explorations into the powers of virtual technologies, for example, “human functionality expands because the parameters of the cognitive system it inhabits expands. It is not a question of leaving the body behind but rather of *extending embodied awareness in highly specific, local, and material ways that would be impossible without electronic prosthesis.*”¹²³ Why do we need to rely on “electronic prosthesis” or virtual technologies to extend embodied awareness? Doesn’t it make more sense to challenge the problem of disembodiment by dramatically reducing our dependence on computer technologies and instead returning to the human—which is to say, animal—body as a source of self-transformation? Though transhumanists wish to leave the body behind, Hayles’ vision of enhanced embodiment here simply looks suspiciously similar.¹²⁴

It is no coincidence that critical posthumanism and transhumanism are historically linked. Posthumanism in general and hybridity theory in particular are direct and loyal descendants of cybernetic theory, which, as we have seen, has also contributed to the development of bioinformatics, one of the branches of biotechnology. As both Wolfe and Hayles themselves point out, posthumanism can be traced back to the Macy Conferences on cybernetics from the mid- 1940s to the mid-1950s, which disrupted any assumed mutual exclusion between human ontology and mechanical, technical, and communicational systems.¹²⁵ According to Hayles, the key outcome of the Macy Conferences was “a theory of communication and control applying equally to animals, humans, and machines.”¹²⁶ At the same time, cybernetics set the stage for transhumanism

inasmuch as the former involves controlling, manipulating, altering, and enhancing organic life with the help of technology.

Tellingly, although Haraway attempts to distance herself from transhumanism, her cyborg theory has been hugely influential *both* in critical posthumanist thought *and* in transhumanist thought. Wolfe suggests that Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" is the "locus classicus" of "the 'cyborg' strand of posthumanism [which] is what is now being called 'transhumanism.'"¹²⁷ Not coincidentally, transhumanists are equally incredulous and dismissive of the importance of preserving species boundaries as posthumanists are. Bostrom levels his criticism of the notion of species integrity against those he contemptuously calls "bioconservatives." Prominent bioconservatives include critics of biotechnology such as Francis Fukuyama and Jeremy Rifkin, among others. Their main concern, as Bostrom sees it, is that "human enhancement technologies might be 'dehumanizing.'"¹²⁸ Like Haraway, Didur, and others, he conflates the argument for preserving respect for species boundaries with a naïve misconception that "nature" is wholly disparate from "culture," or that massive gulfs exist between humans and all other species and ought to be maintained. Bostrom explains that while bioconservatives, such as Leon Kass argue that each "creature 'has their given species-specified natures: they are each and all of a given sort' [t]ranshumanists counter that nature's gifts are sometimes poisoned and should not always be accepted. Cancer, malaria, dementia, aging, starvation, unnecessary suffering, and cognitive shortcomings are all among the presents we should wisely refuse."¹²⁹ Although, as this example demonstrates, transhumanists approach the question of species integrity from a different angle than

critical posthumanists—and even insist, contra the latter, that there are some universal and essential human characteristics—they concur that tampering with “species-specific natures” is, well, perfectly *natural* and acceptable.¹³⁰ Kass, Bostrom maintains, is wrong to “rely on the natural as a guide as to what is desirable and normatively right.”¹³¹ Certainly, we should not look to nature to determine our moral standards. But this does not mean that we should abandon all notions of what the natural is and ought to be and instead uncritically embrace radical technological intervention into every aspect of human and nonhuman life.

Transhumanist and posthumanist theorists are also equally hostile to opposition to biotechnology and enhancement technologies and often trivialize these criticisms as unnecessarily pessimistic, apocalyptic, and dystopian. Bostrom, for example, dismisses concerns that technological modifications of human “nature” will necessarily reduce the human to “a contented cow” as “exceedingly pessimistic.”¹³² Although Hayles attempts to distinguish herself from transhumanists by claiming not to be “seduced by [their] fantasies of unlimited power and disembodied immortality,” she nonetheless resembles them in reinforcing a dualism between either “nightmare” or “dream” scenarios of the posthuman.¹³³ Didur follows suit.¹³⁴ Braidotti, in turn, praises Haraway for being an “utterly non-nostalgic post-human thinker” whose “conceptual universe is the high-technology world of informatics and telecommunications.”¹³⁵ The implication is that the critique of technoscience, like the critique of the violation of species boundaries, is symptomatic of a foolish “nostalgia” for some kind of non-existent idyllic pre-technological age—an assumption which is entirely off the mark and does a disservice to

the important work being done to challenge the increasing incursion of the technological into human and nonhuman life.

Again, it must be acknowledged that not all posthumanists have the same attitude towards technics and informatics as Hayles or Haraway. To distinguish himself from the transhumanist position, for example, Wolfe argues that “posthumanism in my sense isn’t posthuman at all—in the sense of being ‘after’ our embodiment has been transcended—but is only *posthumanist*, in the sense that it opposes fantasies of disembodiment and autonomy, inherited from humanism itself, that Hayles rightly criticizes.”¹³⁶ On the other hand, unlike Hayles, Wolfe makes a point of insisting that part of the reason for asserting the importance of embodiment against these (trans)humanist fantasies of disembodiment, is to ensure that nonhuman animals are recognized as co-subjects with other humans, something Hayles remains unconcerned with.¹³⁷ These attempts at differentiation notwithstanding, Wolfe and other posthumanists clearly share the transhumanist affinity for the integrating the organic and biological with the technological and the scientific, if not in practice at least in theory. Although they are right to acknowledge the increasingly dominant role science and technology are playing in human and nonhuman life, they are wrong to applaud it, and seriously misguided in their adoption of technoscientific language to make a case for animal rights or welfare. For all of their putative concern for animals, animals scarcely appear in posthumanist writings. More often than not, animals take a back stage to computers, electronic devices, and, as we will now see, even bacteria.

Enter Bacteria, Exit Ethics: The Gross Misattribution of Agency

There is a bizarre and disturbing tendency in posthumanist thought to repudiate the notion that human beings constitute self-unified, coherent, social and political agents on one hand, and to attribute (a highly distorted) conception of agency to victimized animals, microorganisms, and objects on the other. Once again, Haraway is largely to blame for setting this trend. Haraway takes up the Latourian designation of nonhuman entities, both inanimate and animate, as “actors” or “actants,” or active participants in a nature-culture-science-politics mish-mash. For example, Haraway suggests that we ought to view lab animals not as victims, but as “lab actors,” “significantly unfree partners” and “workers.”¹³⁸ She does concede that animals do not work in labs by choice or “under the conditions of their own design.”¹³⁹ However, Haraway’s recognition of lab animals’ lack of choice does not prevent her from ascribing agency to them. In reality, animals in labs are not “workers,” not even alienated workers, but worked-on objects, slaves by any other name. To call them anything else is to gloss over the grim reality which is in fact characterized expressly by the deliberate denial of their agency. Essential to any system of domination is to *strip* the dominated of their agency. Isolated acts of resistance on the part of animals against their tormenters are heroic, but do not constitute political agency as such. At the same time, recognizing animals’ fundamental right to self-determination, to making choices, to making their needs known and so on, is integral to incorporating animals within the political and social community, and is something any interspecies emancipatory practice should aspire towards.¹⁴⁰ Yet, Haraway insists that while animals in labs can be workers on one hand, they cannot be slaves on the other, simply because

“they have paws, not hands”—that is, because they are not human.¹⁴¹ A glaring double standard appears to be at play here.

The discourse of agency is not necessarily ill intentioned. It has emerged in part as an attempt to re-empower marginalized beings, whose subjugation is only compounded by the assumption that they are *always already* victims. In short, it is an attempt to avoid reifying victims of injustice as permanent victims. This is an important distinction to make. If an individual or group is seen as inherently powerless rather than only incidentally powerless, it is all the more reason to continue subordinating them to one’s control for they cannot take responsibility for their own destiny. The attribution of agency to subjugated groups is meant to prevent the perpetuation of the kind of paternalism which undergirds most systems of domination.

Furthermore, as Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka properly point out, animals demonstrate a variety of forms of agency in a variety of different contexts all the time, even if in the case of many or most domesticated animals such as dogs, this agency is mitigated by a certain degree of dependence on humans they have developed as a result of domestication.¹⁴² As they explain,

To be sure, the capacity for agency seems to vary widely amongst animals. An adaptive and social animal like a dog, rat, or crow is capable of great behavioural flexibility, of choosing between options depending on context and needs. Other animals are more tightly ‘scripted’; they are ‘niche specialists’ who cannot readily adapt to changes in their environment, either because their needs are inflexible, or because they lack the cognitive flexibility to explore alternatives.”¹⁴³

It goes without saying that other animals continually make demands on us, strategize, refuse, express satisfaction and contentment when things go their way and

dissatisfaction and disappointment when they don't, and do their best to assert that their complex needs are met. With the overwhelming evidence of animals' agency in mind, Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that "any plausible theory of animal rights must be attentive to the potential for animal-initiated forms of interaction, and for animal agency in response to human-initiated interaction."¹⁴⁴ The problem is not that animals lack agency, then, but that human beings typically fail to acknowledge it. Any theory of animal rights must help bring animals' agency to the fore (an aim they suggest can be met by according animals' citizenship, denizenship, or sovereignty depending on their relationship to humans, their geographical location, habitat, etc.).¹⁴⁵

In the context of the animal industrial complex, animal agency is systematically undermined and negated. But even in situations of violence and objectification, some individual animals might assert agency by actively resisting their enslavement by attacking their tormenters, and/or attempting escape. In 2010, for example, Tilikum, a captive orca at Sea World in Orlando, Florida, killed his trainer in front of a packed audience, presumably in protest against his long confinement and torment as a wild-animal-turned-spectacle.¹⁴⁶ Similar stories have surfaced over the years in the context of circuses, zoos, and other sites of domination.

The problem is that there is a very fine line between acknowledging a subject's rightful claim to agency and eliding the reality of its victimization. The truth is that, for all intents and purposes, nonhuman animals who are condemned to life and death in the animal industrial complex *are* effectively helpless victims who are *deliberately* denied the expression of their latent agency, and/or genetically modified to no longer have the

capacity to assert agency at all. They may defend themselves on occasion, but overall, the machinery of violence is so vast, complex, and powerful that farm, circus, lab, and other animals in similar situations depend on human beings to come to their aid. They simply cannot overcome their own subjugation without our assistance. To acknowledge this is not to reinforce their alleged inferiority to human beings. *It is to simply recognize how the imbalance of power between humans and animals actually manifests itself.* Putting it another way, a clear acknowledgment of how the regime of extermination works—by systematically robbing all nonhuman animals of agency—is absolutely essential to any attempt to overcome it. This crucial distinction is typically glossed over by posthumanist theorists.

A different, but equally troubling trend, is some posthumanists' resolute denial of even potential agency in human and nonhuman animals, and its projection onto genes, microorganisms, and molecules. Building on Haraway's embrace of technoscience, for example, and appropriating the language of genetic science and microbiology, Susan McHugh maintains, "Genomes change across species lines even within our bodies, and *with motives and purposes attributable to forces of agency that we have only just begun to conceptualize*" such as "biological forces of cross-species genetic manipulation through which any given species evolves only ever with the help of others queering reproduction."¹⁴⁷ By suggesting that genetic manipulation is a form of "queering reproduction," glorifies biotechnology. In a barely intelligible passage, she goes on to displace the coherent or "autobiographical animal" with "agential relations" between genes and cells. "Recursivity and relentless differentiation prove the far more significant outcomes of companionable transactions across species, agential relations only ever partially realized by autobiographical animals."

¹⁴⁸ Animals in the animal industrial complex are indeed viciously denied an autobiography or an opportunity to develop themselves as individuals, and are instead cast into a mould we have carved out for them. But this does not mean that each animal does not still have its own story that needs to be told, or that genes and cells ought to take pride of place. To suggest as much is to reinforce the logic behind the project of animal extermination, which is rapidly reducing animals to nothing more than “molecular groupings.” The sciences, McHugh concludes, “clear the field for cultivating a politics based not on the rights of homogenous, atomized individuals so much as the affects that have always held together the heterogeneous, molecular groupings made so apparent in cross-species companionship.”¹⁴⁹ McHugh boldly proclaims here that we stop fighting for animals’ rights (for, neither human nor nonhuman individuals exist) and instead preoccupy ourselves with groups of molecules as the ground of a liberatory politics.

Along with molecules, cells, and genes, bacteria are now displacing unified human subjects as agents in posthumanist literature. Also drawing extensively on Haraway’s thought, Myra Hird “attempts to build a microontology—engaging with the sciences of the microcosmos—within biophilosophy.”¹⁵⁰ Myra Hird’s work provides an exquisite example of obscurantist technoscience-speak, the ethical and political abyss into which posthumanist thought so often leads, and what I am increasingly inclined to call “pornographic theory.” Hird urges us to think of ourselves not as subjects, not as selves at all, but as clusters of bacteria.¹⁵¹ Bacteria are people too, she insists, and ought to be ignored no longer. Reproducing Haraway’s “ironic” and “cutesy” language and tone, she writes,

Of all the cells in a human body, 10% are eukaryotic (derived from bacteria) and 90% are bacteria. . . . So turtling all the way down means that we are, ancestrally, made up of bacteria. It also means that any given human/animal body is a symbiont: 600 species of bacteria in our mouths and 400 species of bacteria in our guts, and the countless more bacteria that inhabit our orifices and skin.¹⁵²

Confirming her wish to blast the subject into oblivion forever, she exclaims, “Indeed, the number of bacteria in our mouths is comparable to the total number of human beings that have ever lived on earth.”¹⁵³ Here, Hird resorts to a crude mathematical logic—the logic of technological rationality—whereby quantity is more important than quality. For Hird, the very fact that there are so many bacteria inhabiting our bodies suggests that they ought to take the place of the anyway already dead subject. In a dazzling display of abstruse technobabble, Hird explains further,

microontologies concern companion species that are not species at all: companion with not-species as it were. Populating this ‘unseen majority’ are about 5×10^{30} bacterial cells on Earth: that’s 50000000000000000000000000000000 bacterial cells. . . . Another estimated 10^{18} —1000 000 000 000 000 000—bacteria circulate in the atmosphere attached to dust. Most organisms are bacteria: they evince the greatest organismal diversity, and have dominated evolutionary history.¹⁵⁴

Hird’s emphasis on the microscopic and the numeric reflects late capitalism’s increasing preoccupation with the minute and the mathematical in the form of computer code, DNA, and so on. We have seen what this has done to actual animals. There are so many bacteria, Hird reminds us with entirely unnecessary numerical precision, and yet we hardly pay heed to them when conceptualizing intersubjective relations. And this is intolerable, in her view. For, as Hird goes on to explain, bacteria have done so much for us. Ejecting human subjects from history altogether, Hird claims that, “Bacteria invented all major forms of metabolism, multicellularity, nanotechnology, metallurgy, sensory and

locomotive apparatuses (such as the wheel), reproductive strategies and community organization, light detection, alcohol, gas and mineral conversion, hypersex, and death.”¹⁵⁵ Bacteria are the agents of innovation and transformation, not human subjects. Echoing Haraway, and with the unsung glories of microcosmic organisms in mind, Hird goes on to argue that “our all-too-human insistent focus on ‘big like us’ obscures the rich diversity of living structures and processes through which the biota, including animals like us, thrive.”¹⁵⁶ The implication here is that animal liberationists focus on “big” creatures, such as primates, cows, pigs, and chickens, not because they are being subjected to horrific systemic violence, but because they are more human-like than bacteria. In making this point, Hird seems to conveniently forget that animal advocates also defend small creatures such as small birds, rodents, reptiles and insects, many of whom are distinctly unlike human beings in many ways.

The disastrous ethical implications of Hird’s “microontology” are exposed in her implicit disavowal of animal rights, vegetarianism, and veganism. Yet again imitating Haraway’s characteristically punny rhetorical flourishes, and also cribbing Derrida’s ethically dubious conception of “eating well” (which gives licence to continue eating animals as long as one does so “responsibly”), she writes,

Microontologies partake of further parting bites. . . . How does our current concern with human-animal relations obscure bacterial intra-actions that have nothing to do with humans, and are beyond human recognition? Eating well with bacteria, for instance, complicates animal rights discourse, vegetarianism, and veganism.”¹⁵⁷

If it were not so deeply disturbing it would be laughable that Hird feels no qualms displacing sentient beings with bacteria and suggesting in no uncertain terms that animal

rights, vegetarianism, and veganism are potentially irrelevant, or at the very least radically destabilized as a result. Hird closes the article by, not surprisingly, dismissing humanism: “This task is indeed far ahead of us: we must somehow survive humanism, if we are to survive at all.”¹⁵⁸ Since this statement follows on the heels of the challenge to veganism, Hird appears to be blaming humanism for leading animal rights activists to mistakenly direct their attention to mammals, birds, and fish instead of bacteria. Though, as we have seen, humanism has many things to be ashamed of, this is surely not one of them.

Of course, it is important to recognize that the earth is made up of diverse organisms of various sizes, and that there is more life and vitality around us than we may have traditionally acknowledged. As I will argue in chapter four, part of the emancipatory project is to re-enchant and re-animate the earth and its inhabitants. But Hird takes the vitalist and materialist perspective too far to the point of flattening ethics out beyond recognition. Ethics is purged of meaning if we start calling for rights for bacteria, and in the meantime abandon systematic efforts to boycott the torture of animals for human use and consumption. What’s next? Rights for viruses?¹⁵⁹ It is unacceptable from an ethical point of view to derail CAS and animal liberation’s current focus on the creatures ensnared in the animal industrial complex (and those ravaged by human hubris in the form of habitat destruction, environmental devastation and so on) in order to account for the existence and ethical claims of bacteria.

Overall, Hird’s microontology amounts to a form of intellectual “pornography.” It is ethically obscene and offensive. It seeks cheap intellectual thrills through a farcical simulation and mockery of genuine and meaningful ethical analysis.¹⁶⁰ It is a form of what

John Sanbonmatsu calls “baroque theory.” It tries to start the latest trend, to compete on the “marketplace of ideas,” by being as aesthetically outrageous and gimmicky as possible, by indulging in the extreme, but offering little of substance.¹⁶¹ In attempting to simultaneously shock, excite, and seduce its readers into displacing living animal subjects with microorganisms, and in challenging the validity of animal rights and veganism on this basis, it humiliates and degrades its object, and perpetuates an ideology and practice of violence. Object ontology falls into the same category.

Other posthumanists, meanwhile, attribute agency to inanimate objects and machines. Consider the description of one of the most recent books, *Alien Phenomenology: Or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (2012), by Ian Bogost, which has been published in Wolfe’s posthumanities series mentioned earlier. We read that *Alien Phenomenology* is

a bold new metaphysics that explores how all things—from atoms to green chiles, cotton to computers—interact with, perceive, and experience one another. In this book, Ian Bogost develops an object-oriented ontology that puts things at the center of being—a philosophy in which humans are elements but not the sole or even primary elements of philosophical interest. Bogost encourages professional thinkers to become makers as well, engineers who construct things as much as they think and write about them.¹⁶²

Wolfe’s series is saturated with explorations of this sort. And indeed a whole new field called “Object Studies” is emerging. As this book’s description suggests, objects are usurping the position of subjects in the posthumanist imaginary. I fail to see what is so bold and cutting edge about this metaphysics. While posthumanists regard the attribution of subjecthood to bacteria, chillis, cotton, and computers as transgressive and progressive, it is nothing short of grotesque. In a world characterized by the mass torture and slaughter of innocent creatures, and by the increasing colonization human and animal

consciousness and being by technics, the only transgressive and progressive move is to boldly re-assert the primacy of the *embodied human and nonhuman animal subject over and against bacteria, inanimate objects, and electronic devices*.

The Depoliticization of Theory

Another cause for grave concern, for which we have already seen much evidence, is posthumanism's tendency to elide important political and ethical questions and to sever theory from praxis. On one hand, critical posthumanists in AS and CAS insist that they are genuinely committed to the larger struggle in the animal advocacy movement to effect systemic change. As Castricano explains, for example, citing Wolfe,

posthumanist theory takes seriously the possibility that, 'a hundred years from now we will look back on our current mechanized and systematized practices of factory farming, product testing, and much else that undeniably involves animal exploitation and suffering . . . with much the same horror and disbelief with which we now regard slavery or the genocide of the Second World War.'¹⁶³

Claims such as this confirm that posthumanists wish to bridge the gap between theory and praxis, and that they seek political and ethical transformation. However, it appears that posthumanism strays wildly from its task. While, as Gary Steiner explains, postmodernism (and, by extension, posthumanism) "appea[r] to hold the promise of according to animals a more adequate sense of their inherent moral worth, and of motivating humanity to take considerably more seriously our moral obligations towards our animal kin," postmodernism and posthumanism disappoint on this front.¹⁶⁴ As Steiner continues, despite their promise to validate the nonhuman subject and take moral commitments to them seriously, "this is precisely what one does *not* find in postmodern

writings on animals.” Instead, Steiner observes, “one encounters a panoply of vague gestures toward some indeterminate sense of continuity between human and animal life, and a general sense that we ought to have more compassion for animals.”¹⁶⁵ This is the result of the irreconcilable internal contradiction, “the fatal limitation,” that lies at the heart of postmodern/posthumanist thought: “a commitment to the indeterminacy of meaning and a sense of justice that presupposes the very access to a sense of determinacy that postmodern epistemology dismisses as illusory.”¹⁶⁶ We have already seen the ethical travesties associated with affirming this indeterminate sense of meaning and of continuity between human and animal life in the form of hybridity theory. While Haraway and other posthumanists make ethical gestures, they do not seem to recognize that their ontological claims are inconsistent with their ethical claims. Or, if they do try to develop an ethics out of their hybrid ontology and technoscientific theory, they can only offer a distorted or perverted ethics, which implicitly and often explicitly supports the violent domination of animals. In posthumanist thought, ethics meets the fate of ontological boundaries: it simply collapses in on itself.

Posthumanist scholars often explore the animal question as an apolitical literary or intellectual exercise, a kind of thought experiment, rather than as a means for developing a radical praxis, another symptom of baroque theory. Sanbonmatsu explains that “for earlier generations of radical intellectuals, theory was closely tied to its usefulness both in illuminating structures of power and in providing a theory of how to actually change society.”¹⁶⁷ Baroque theory, however, eliminated this connection between theory and praxis. According to Sanbonmatsu, since the arrival of postmodern and poststructuralist

thought on the proverbial intellectual scene, theory is now committed more to “trend innovation” than to ethical or political transformation.¹⁶⁸ Without recognizing this contradiction in his own affiliation with posthumanism, Best echoes Sanbonmatsu and argues, that in its “immersion in abstraction, indulgent use of existing and new modes of jargon, pursuit of theory-for-theory’s sake, avoidance of social controversy,” and so on, animal studies is emptied of ethical and political substance.¹⁶⁹ In their poststructuralist preoccupation with textuality, semiotics, and deconstruction, Wolfe and other posthumanists often “vaporize animals’ flesh and blood realities” and “reduce them to reified signs, symbols, images, words on a page.”¹⁷⁰

The tendency towards self-indulgent and ethically and politically vacuous theorizing is already apparent in Derrida’s work. Derrida is arguably the first theorist to bring focus and legitimacy to what he termed “the question of the animal” in Continental philosophy and, as we glimpsed in the general introduction and the first chapter, offers a scathing critique of institutionalized violence against animals. Derrida crucially incorporates other animals into the (Levinasian) ethical fold by insisting, for example, on their “unsubstitutable singularity,” on the “irreplaceability” of each “living being,” and by asserting that “nothing can ever rob me of the certainty that what we have here [in the body of his cat, and by extension all other animals] is an existence that refuses to be conceptualized.”¹⁷¹ In the oft-cited *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2008), Derrida sets out to explore the alterity of his cat, to better understand what it means to *relate to* and *with* other animals.¹⁷² How do animals constitute human Being? What does it mean to “be-with,” to “be-before,” to “be-after” other animals?—historically, metaphysically,

politically.¹⁷³ These are all important and meaningful questions, which Derrida seeks to answer by deconstructing his relationship with his cat. However, in the end, Derrida's effort to pursue this inquiry is undermined by his discursive meanderings. As Nicole Shukin puts it, "by framing his encounter with his cat in the same terms he uses to frame the ghostly visitation of Hamlet's father," Derrida conflates "animality and spectrality," and thereby empties animals of their "historical materiality."¹⁷⁴ While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to engage in a more thorough analysis of Derrida's writings on animals, the implications of his commitment to the indeterminacy of meaning are epitomized in his refusal to unambiguously endorse vegetarianism.¹⁷⁵

A similar, and arguably even more sinister, lapse into opacity occurs in Haraway's work. Haraway employs myriad euphemisms to conceal and even exonerate acts of violence against animals. We have already seen how she attributes false agency to creatures who have been expressly refused agency. Haraway goes so far as to attempt to redeem animal exploiters themselves by euphemistically labeling them animal "caretakers" or "caregivers" rather than experimenters.¹⁷⁶ She thereby falsely reconfigures the whole relationship between the nonhuman experimental object and the scientist, not just into worker and employer, but into caregiver and patient. In her discussion of experiments on "bleeder dogs"—dogs used in research for hemophilia—at a lab run by Kenneth Brinkhous at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Haraway outlines the so-called caregiver-patient relationship in more detail:

The principal problem Brinkhous faced in his lab when he brought in male Irish setter puppies who showed the stigmata of bleeding into joints and body cavities was keeping them alive. The puppies had to become patients if they were to become technologies and models. . . . Lab staff could not function as researchers if

they did not function as caregivers. Dogs could not work as models if they did not work as patients.¹⁷⁷

This passage could not be more revealing of the irrational logic of instrumental domination Haraway espouses, despite her claims to the contrary. The only reason the experimenters had to find a way to keep the bleeding puppies alive was to continue their experiments successfully, not out of any actual concern for the puppies' well-being. The puppies' welfare was at best secondary to maintaining them as instruments. This reminds us that the lab staff are not caregivers in any true sense of the word, but rather very thorough and efficient experimenters who sustain their victims until they are no longer useful and can be disposed of permanently. By labeling them "caregivers" however, Haraway absolves the experimenters of any sense of responsibility for the harm they are actually doing to the puppies, while at the same time detracting attention from the substantive ethical questions surrounding the appropriateness of inflicting violence on helpless creatures—questions which are in urgent need of addressing.

Haraway's concept of "sharing suffering" is guilty of the same kind of discursive deception.¹⁷⁸ At first glance, the notion of sharing suffering might indicate an ethics which fosters human empathy for animal suffering, and a subsequent rejection of all practices which cause animals harm. However, we soon learn that sharing another animal's pain does not, as Haraway conceives of it, translate into any kind of struggle for the abolition of violence against animals. In fact, as she frames it, the conception of sharing suffering amounts to no more than an *apology* for systemic animal abuse.

Haraway develops her conception of sharing suffering in the context of a discussion of animal experimentation—in this case, through the analogy of a fictional

experiment she read about in a novel by Nancy Farmer entitled *A Girl Named Disaster* (1996). In the novel, a man named Baba Joseph is said to have overseen an experiment “at a little scientific outpost in Zimbabwe around 1980” in which “guinea pigs were held in tight little baskets while wire cages filled with biting flies were placed over them, their skin shaved and painted with poisons that might sicken the offending insects.”¹⁷⁹ Baba Joseph was not immune to the animals’ suffering but rather, sought to “share” in it, by sticking his arm in the cage so that he too would be bitten by the flies.¹⁸⁰ However, Baba Joseph’s gesture of sharing or “solidarity” with the guinea pigs was not meant to represent a protest against their torture. Rather, his gesture served as an avowal of the very ethos of instrumental domination which produced the conditions for the guinea pigs’ abuse in the first place. As Haraway explains, “Baba Joseph’s bitten arm is not the fruit of a heroic fantasy of ending all suffering or not causing suffering, but the result of remaining at risk and in solidarity in instrumental relationships that one does not disavow.”¹⁸¹ If sharing suffering is not meant to stop suffering, what good can it possibly do? What is empathy with the victims of violence if it does not lead to action to abolish that violence? Indeed, to claim, as Haraway does, that the goal to end and prevent suffering is a “heroic fantasy” is downright nihilistic.

The notion of sharing suffering is rendered increasingly dubious when we consider the fact that it would simply never occur in reality between an experimenter and their experimental subjects: none of the scientists involved in the torture of the estimated one-hundred million animals who perish in laboratories each year around the world would poison, irradiate or electrocute themselves and so on in false solidarity with their victims.

An ethics based on sharing suffering appears, once again, to be more of a discursive exercise than an attempt to create the conditions for any concrete ethico-political transformation.

Indeed, it turns out that it is the abuser, not the abused, who benefits from an ethics of shared suffering. As Haraway explains further, Baba Joseph “sustained bites not to stand in as experimental object but to understand the rodents’ pain so as to do what he could about it, even if that was only to serve as witness to the need for something properly called forgiveness.”¹⁸² In other words, in reaching into the guinea pigs’ cage, Baba Joseph was not lending a hand to the animals, so to speak, to end or even mitigate their misery, but was really grasping for his own absolution. Certainly, Baba Joseph did not need to “stand in as experimental object” to relieve the guinea pigs of their suffering. Haraway is thus not wrong to insist that sharing suffering is “nonmimetic.”¹⁸³ However, if he really wanted “to do what he could about it,” he should have opened the cages and set the guinea pigs free.

CAS Beyond Posthumanism

Given the dangers posthumanism poses to the integrity of ethical and political theory and praxis, CAS ought to radically distance itself from posthumanism. If we continue to regard posthumanism as *the* progressive discourse by which to automatically define all CAS scholarship, we risk derailing the emancipatory commitments by which CAS has been and ought to continue to be defined.

The fact that “posthumanism” and the “posthuman” represent so many different philosophical, epistemological, methodological positions and approaches is itself cause for

concern. As Horkheimer has shown, in filling a concept with multiple, often contradictory meanings, in throwing a concept about carelessly here and there as a catch-all concept, it risks being emptied of meaning altogether.¹⁸⁴ Posthumanism is not limited to AS or CAS, but is also gaining ground within gender studies, queer theory, postcolonial theory, science and technology studies, cultural studies, comparative literature, and more. Not only is transhumanism one of the branches of posthumanism but, as Pederson points out, at least within the context of the field of education, posthumanism represents multiple viewpoints, many of which are not conducive to rethinking or radicalizing human-animal relations, namely because these viewpoints attack humanism without attacking anthropocentrism. Pederson also observes that posthumanist literature in education has ignored interspecies subjectivities and has been more interested in the figure of the posthuman as a “*symbolic* decentering of the human subject,” while posthumanist thought within environmental studies has disappointingly and inappropriately remained preoccupied with “human concerns.”¹⁸⁵

Although it is important to enable CAS to evolve as a field, it is also helpful to “go back to the sources” of CAS and revisit its original mandate. CAS is and ought to remain unabashedly abolitionist.¹⁸⁶ In Best’s words, “CAS avows its explicit ethical and practical commitment to the freedom [and] well-being of all animals and to a flourishing planet. It opposes all forms of discrimination, hierarchy, and oppression as a complex of problems to be extirpated from the root, not sliced off at the branch.”¹⁸⁷ As such, it cannot abide hybridity theory or other posthumanist musings on the agency of bacteria.

For CAS to remain a properly *critical* discourse it ought to remain loyal to its origins in the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School. As Best explains,

Like the Frankfurt School, CAS synthesizes social theory, politics *and* the critique of capitalist domination in a revolutionary project to transform society and psychology alike. CAS must stay relentlessly negative and uncompromising in its critique of the current social order, as it remains affirmative in the sense of validating possibilities of resistance and envisioning an alternative future. . . . Just as in the 1930s and beyond Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, and others confronted a situation of growing totalitarianism, the domination of nature, the defeat of revolutionary movements, rampant consumerism and conformism, the co-optation of dissent, and the occlusion of emancipatory alternatives and possibilities, the same situations prevail today, only in more advanced form, and they all form the context, background, and motivation for CAS.¹⁸⁸

As Shapiro and DeMello have noted, CAS scholars attempt to “develop and employ an ideological critique of current animal-related institutions, using approaches originating in the Frankfurt School of social criticism *and* posthumanist thought.”¹⁸⁹ But this attempt to bridge critical theory and posthumanism under the umbrella of CAS is untenable. As this chapter has evinced, the basic tenets and aims of critical theory and posthumanism directly contradict each other in many important ways: Whereas the critical theorists of the early Frankfurt School were resolutely committed to rehabilitating the internally coherent, rational, and embodied subject, posthumanists embrace the subject’s evaporation into an ontologically indeterminate hybrid; whereas Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse were highly critical of the technologization of life and consciousness, posthumanists tend to regard both as at least potentially emancipatory; whereas critical theory is loosely grounded in the (Marxist, socialist) humanist tradition, posthumanism is, for all intents and purposes, resoundingly anti-humanist; whereas the early Frankfurt School express a healthy suspicion towards the technological,

posthumanists embrace it uncritically; where Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse seek to disentangle critical discourse from scientific discourse, posthumanists seek the exact opposite; while critical theorists oppose domination in all its forms—even if they did not explicitly advocate veganism—posthumanists are not necessarily averse to the ongoing instrumentalization, exploitation, and even killing of animals. These and other striking incompatibilities ought to signal the need to detach CAS from posthumanism if the former is to remain true to its roots in the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School. As long as CAS scholars position themselves within the discourse posthumanism, the abolitionist and properly critical dimensions of CAS will remain in great jeopardy.

We must somehow survive posthumanism, if we, and our fellow animals, are to survive at all.

¹ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London: Continuum, 2004), 43; 86.

² For the sake of clarity and simplicity, I will not distinguish between human-animal studies (HAS) and animal studies (AS), but will refer to them collectively as AS.

³ Ken Shapiro and Margo DeMello, “The State of Human-Animal Studies,” *Society and Animals* 18 (2010): 310.

⁴ My critical analysis of Haraway in this chapter is adapted with permission from the editor from a previously published article: Zipporah Weisberg, “The Broken Promises of Monsters: Haraway, Animals, and the Humanist Legacy,” *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 7, no. 2 (2009): 23, accessed October 10, 2012, www.criticalanimalstudies.org/.../Zipporah-Weisberg-pg.-22-62.pdf.

⁵ Because hybridity and boundary blurring are arguably *the* central categories of posthumanist thought, and because they are also the most ethically and politically dangerous, I spend a large portion of this chapter critically analyzing their metaphysical, ethical, and political implications.

⁶ Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvf. Neil Badmington, "Introduction," in *Posthumanism*, ed. Neil Badmington, *Readers in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Catherine Belsey (Houndmills: Pallgrave, 2000), 2. Jill Didur is credited with introducing the term critical posthumanism. See Jill Didur, "Re-embodiment Technoscientific Fantasies: Posthumanism, Genetically Modified Foods, and the Colonization of Life," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 98-115, accessed September 8, 2012. doi 10.1353/cul.2003.0021.

⁷ Badmington, "Introduction," 9.

⁸ Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, xii.

⁹ It should be noted that posthumanists relationship with the poststructuralist antihumanist tradition is no less strained than with humanism itself. In fact, many posthumanists (and animal studies theorists more generally) are as critical of the lingering anthropocentrism of the classical antihumanists as they are of the humanists. Braidotti objects to any blanket identification of posthumanism with poststructuralism and antihumanism for this very reason. She points out that there is a "twofold dimension within this complex category [of what she calls "high posthumanism"]": the first concerns the philosophical post-humanism of the post-structuralist generation; the second is a more targeted form of post-anthropocentrism that is not as widespread" (Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman, All Too Human: Towards a Process Ontology," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 23 [2006], 197). Here Braidotti is attempting to distinguish between the critiques of humanism and the subject initiated by Continental philosophers, and those introduced by scholars, ecofeminists, and others who are more concerned than their Continental predecessors with the problem of *human* supremacism and *human* exceptionalism (as opposed to white European male supremacism, for example). In a similar vein, while Matthew Calarco seeks to "recast [pro-animal] discourse as a direct *challenge* to liberal humanism and the metaphysical anthropocentrism which underlies it," and works with the antihumanist Continental tradition to do so, he is nonetheless critical of thinkers like Heidegger whose "earlier works, while promising in some respects, are ultimately unsuccessful in elaborating a thought of animality that escapes or significantly challenges the ontotheological tradition" (Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2008], 6; 30). While posthumanism remains beholden to poststructuralism, then, its focus on the impact of humanism and the relevance of antihumanism for nonhuman beings signals an important departure from the traces of anthropocentrism which contaminate the bulk of poststructuralist antihumanist thought. In the end, though, posthumanism is without question inflected with poststructuralism and remains fundamentally committed to the same kinds of interventions into humanist thought in particular and philosophy in general.

¹⁰ Jodey Castricano, "Introduction," in *Animal Subjects: An Ethical Reader in a Posthuman World*, ed. Jodey Castricano (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2008), 6-8. Paola Cavalieri, "A Missed Opportunity: Humanism, Anti-humanism and the Animal Question," in *Animal Subjects*, 97.

¹¹ Calarco, *Zoographies*, 104-106.

¹² Badmington, "Introduction," 2.

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- ¹³ Richard Twine, "Genomic Natures Read through Posthumanisms," *Sociological Review* 58 (2010): 175f, accessed May 13, 2013, <http://journals2.scholarsportal.info.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/tmp/7227950529667592882.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ Steven Best, "Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy* 5 (2009): 1, accessed June 12, 2012, http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_best_minding_animals.htm.
- ¹⁵ See Zipporah Weisberg "The Broken Promises of Monsters: Haraway, Animals, and the Humanist Legacy," *The Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 7(2009): 23, accessed October 10, 2012, www.criticalanimalstudies.org/.../Zipporah-Wesiberg-pg.-22-62.pdf.
- ¹⁶ Donna J. Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York; London: Routledge, 1989), 233.
- ¹⁷ Donna J. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, ed. Donna Harway (New York: Routledge, 1991), 189.
- ¹⁸ Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 233.
- ¹⁹ Haraway, *Primate Visions*, 239-242.
- ²⁰ Though Enlightenment humanism radically departs from Renaissance humanism—not least in its suspicion and derogation of religious authority—it perpetuates the view that rationality (defined as "understanding") is the key to autonomy and/or freedom and that human beings are distinguished from all other beings for their unique claim to all three things.
- ²¹ Badmington, "Introduction," 9.
- ²² Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, 2010.
- ²³ Twine, "Genomic Natures."
- ²⁴ Neil Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 11, accessed August 18, 2012, doi: 10.1353/cul.2003.0017.
- ²⁵ Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," 13.
- ²⁶ Badmington, "Theorizing Posthumanism," 10.
- ²⁷ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, 6.
- ²⁸ Jane Goodall, "Foreword," in Marc Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A Leading Scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy – and Why They Matter* (Novato: New World Library, 2007), xiii.
- ²⁹ See for example, Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals*; Jonathan Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good* (London; New York: Macmillan, 2006); Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003); Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy, *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1995).
- ³⁰ Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, xxv.
- ³¹ Cited in Calarco, *Zoographies*, 20.
- ³² Castricano, "Introduction," 2. Author's italics.

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- ³³ Castricano, "Introduction," 5-6.
- ³⁴ Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 2-3.
- ³⁵ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, 2-3.
- ³⁶ Pick, *Creaturely Poetics*, 5.
- ³⁷ Best, "Minding the Animals," 26.
- ³⁸ Cavaleri, "A Missed Opportunity," 98. Kelly Oliver, "Stopping the Anthropological Machine: Agamben with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty," *PhaenEx 2* (Fall/winter 2007): 15-19, accessed August 1, 2012, <http://www.phaenex.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/phaenex/article/view/236/396>
- ³⁹ Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 150.
- ⁴⁰ Donna J. Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 4.
- ⁴¹ Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 154.
- ⁴² Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 152.
- ⁴³ Donna J. Haraway, "Cyborgs to Companion Species: Reconfiguring Kinship in Technoscience," in *The Haraway Reader*, ed. Donna Haraway (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), 300.
- ⁴⁴ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 4.
- ⁴⁵ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 4.
- ⁴⁶ It should be noted that dogs figured more prominently in Haraway's earliest discussion of companion species in *Companion Species Manifesto*. However, in *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway addresses a much broader range of animals.
- ⁴⁷ Donna J. Haraway, "Race: Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture. It's all in the Family: Biological Kinship Categories in the Twentieth-Century United States," in *The Haraway Reader*, 273. As we saw in chapter one, oncomouse is a genetically engineered mouse implanted with an "oncogene"—or cancer-producing DNA taken from the genome of another animal—intended to serve as a model for breast cancer in women, and now used in laboratories throughout the world, and which bears the dubious distinction of being the first patented animal.
- ⁴⁸ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet, Posthumanities*, vol. 3, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 16; 32.
- ⁴⁹ Haraway, "Race," 273.
- ⁵⁰ Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 79.
- ⁵¹ Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 79.
- ⁵² Regrettably, Haraway's invocation of "sisterhood" and feminist solidarity to describe human-animal relations in the laboratory has found a great deal of traction in the works of other cultural studies theorists. See Braidotti 99-101.
- ⁵³ Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 47.
- ⁵⁴ Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 47.
- ⁵⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76.

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- ⁵⁶ Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 79.
- ⁵⁷ Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 9.
- ⁵⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76.
- ⁵⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76.
- ⁶⁰ Indeed, as Hannah Arendt has so convincingly shown us in her investigation of Adolph Eichmann's trial and conviction for orchestrating the mass deportation of Jews to their deaths during the Nazi Holocaust, resorting to banal reasoning is a particularly effective vehicle for enabling the commission of atrocities and the evasion of responsibility.
- ⁶¹ Steve Best, Anthony J. Nocella II, Richard Kahn, Carol Gigliotti, and Lisa Kemmerer, "Introducing Critical Animal Studies," *Institute for Critical Animal Studies*, accessed September 8, 2012, <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Introducing-Critical-Animal-Studies-2007.pdf>.
- ⁶² Eileen Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature and Wilderness," *Environmental Ethics* 26 (2004): 8. For Haraway's use of the term "trickster" in this capacity see Harway, *Modest_Witness* 127.
- ⁶³ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 11.
- ⁶⁴ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 11.
- ⁶⁵ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 22.
- ⁶⁶ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 21f.
- ⁶⁷ John Sanbonmatsu, "The Subject of Freedom at the End of History: Socialism beyond Humanism," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 66, no. 1 (January, 2007): 239. Author's italics.
- ⁶⁸ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 19.
- ⁶⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 67.
- ⁷⁰ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 247f.
- ⁷¹ Haraway, "Race," 275.
- ⁷² Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 79.
- ⁷³ Haraway, "Race," 275.
- ⁷⁴ Haraway, "Race," 275.
- ⁷⁵ Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *The Haraway Reader*, 72.
- ⁷⁶ Francis Bacon, "New Atlantis," in *Francis Bacon: Selected Philosophical Works*, ed. Rosemary Sargent (Indianapolis; Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 264.
- ⁷⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 165.
- ⁷⁸ Marx, *Capital*, 165. Italics added.
- ⁷⁹ Teresa Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties, Virgin Births, and the Secret of Life," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 118, accessed May 14, 2013, doi: 10.1353/cul.2003.0024.
- ⁸⁰ Thacker, "Data Made Flesh," 79.
- ⁸¹ Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties," 3.
- ⁸² Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties," 4f.

⁸³ W. J. T. Mitchell, "Forward," in Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), xiii. Mitchell notes that the term was coined in Wolfe's words, "'in the title of a really cheesy and blessedly short-lived TV show back in the seventies or eighties—a sort of variation of the 'Hulk' theme'" (xiii). The term also appears in the title of an online journal *Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies* (<http://www.depauw.edu/humanimalia/>), and as the title of a series of books on humane education edited by Helena Pedersen, (Stockholm: Stiftelsen Forskning utan djurförsök, 2004). As already noted in the general introduction, in my work I too adopt the term "hum-animal"—as a way of reinforcing human animality (and the "personhood" of other animals), human-animal relationality, the inextricable link between human and animal liberation. But the term does not—and, I will argue, *ought* not to—have any connection with hybridity. Indeed, to deliberately avoid any such conflation, I refer to "hum-animals" and "hum-animalism"—the dash serving as a reminder of the importance of maintaining some sense of ontological distinctiveness between and among human beings and the myriad other animal species.

⁸⁴ Scott Bukatman, "Postcards from the Posthuman Solar System," in *Posthumanism*, 111.

⁸⁵ Braidotti, "Posthuman," 199; 200.

⁸⁶ Braidotti, "Posthuman," 199f.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 296-300.

⁸⁸ Braidotti, "Posthuman," 201.

⁸⁹ Twine, "Genomic Natures," 175; Richard Twine, "Animal Genomics and Ambivalence: A Sociology of Animal Bodies in Agricultural Biotechnology," *Genomics, Society, and Policy* 3, no. 2 (2007): 99, accessed May 14, 2013, www.gspjournal.com/Genomics.

⁹⁰ Helena Pedersen, "Is 'the Posthuman' Educable? On the Convergence of Educational Philosophy, Animal Studies, and Posthumanist Theory," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 31, no. 2 (2010): 242, accessed September 5, 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/0.1080/01596301003679750>.

⁹¹ Pederson, "Is 'the Posthuman' Educable," 118.

⁹² Bart Simon, "Introduction: Toward a Critique of Posthuman Future," *Cultural Critique* 53 (2003): 4.

⁹³ Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties," 119. Italics added.

⁹⁴ Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties," 131.

⁹⁵ Heffernan, "Bovine Anxieties," 131.

⁹⁶ Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 25f.

⁹⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, "Subject and Object," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York; London: Continuum, 2005), 499. See also Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 41f.

⁹⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 38f. Italics added.

⁹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Donna Haraway, "Mice into Wormholes: A Comment on the Nature of No Nature," in *Cyborgs and Citadels: Anthropological Interventions in Emerging Sciences and Technologies*, ed. Gary Lee Downey and Joseph Dumit, School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1998), 217.

¹⁰¹ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 4.

¹⁰² Jill Didur, "Re-embodying Technoscientific Fantasies: Posthumanism, Genetically Modified Foods, and the Colonization of Life," *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 108, accessed September 8, 2012. doi 10.1353/cul.2003.0021.

¹⁰³ Didur, "Re-embodying Technoscientific Fantasies," 108. The horrors Shiva mentions and which Didur cites include being born with "'splayed legs, no anus, or inverted mammary glands,'" or "'banana disease' so named because stricken pigs arch their back into a banana shape'" (108).

¹⁰⁴ Haraway cited in Didur, "Re-embodying Technoscientific Fantasies," 109.

¹⁰⁵ Didur, "Re-embodying Technoscientific Fantasies," 109.

¹⁰⁶ See B. E. Rollin, "The 'Frankenstein Thing': The Moral Impact of Genetic Engineering of Agricultural Animals on Society and Future Science," in *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, ed. Richard Sherlock and John D. Morrey (Lanham; Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 271-286.

¹⁰⁷ Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *The Haraway Reader*, ed. Donna Haraway (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), 72.

¹⁰⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), vii.

¹⁰⁹ Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 98.

¹¹⁰ Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 22.

¹¹¹ Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto*, 4.

¹¹² Crist, "Against the Social Construction of Nature," 19. Carol Gigliotti, "Introduction," in *Leonardo's Choice: Genetic Technologies and Animals*, ed. Carol Gigliotti (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 1.

¹¹³ "Transhumanist FAQ," *Humanity+*. Accessed August 31, 2012.

<http://humanityplus.org/philosophy/transhumanist-faq/>. On the Extropy Institute website extropy is defined as "The extent of a living or organizational system's intelligence, functional order, vitality, and capacity and drive for improvement."

"Prologue: What is the Purpose of the Principles of Extropy?" Extropy Institute, accessed May 14, 2013, <http://www.extropy.org/About.htm>.

¹¹⁴ Nick Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," *Bioethics* 19, no. 3 (2005):202f.

¹¹⁵ Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 202.

¹¹⁶ "Transhumanist FAQ."

¹¹⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Gane and Donna Haraway, "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?: Interview with Donna Haraway," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 23, no. 7-8: 151, accessed August 25, 2012. doi: 10.1177/0263276406069228.

¹¹⁹ Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, xv.

¹²⁰ Thacker, "Data Made Flesh," 79f.

¹²¹ Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 283f.

¹²² Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 284.

¹²³ Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 290f.

¹²⁴ Italics added. It is also troubling that although Hayles adamantly insists that subjectivity is necessarily embodied, she inadvertently reinforces humanist and transhumanist anthropocentrism by limiting the nonhuman to the machinic and ignoring nonhuman *animals'* embodied subjectivity and the numerous mutilations they undergo as a result of the development of modern technologies, *especially* digital, information, and biotechnologies.

¹²⁵ Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, xii. Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 7.

¹²⁶ Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 7.

¹²⁷ Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*, xiii.

¹²⁸ Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 203.

¹²⁹ Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 203.

¹³⁰ Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 203.

¹³¹ Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 205. Bostrom presents a confused logic in this discussion: on the one hand he "biologizes" social ills, if one can say that, and naturalizes artificial technological modification of human beings (and other animals), while at the same time he accuses bioconservatives of naturalizing human behavior—in short he accuses bioconservatives of the same tendency he is equally guilty of. In any case, Bostrom's repudiation of the Kassian view that different creatures have certain ontological trajectories that we ought not to interfere with, recalls Haraway, Didur, and others' reductive view of the concept of telos explored above.

¹³² Bostrom, "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity," 205f.

¹³³ In Hayles' words, "If my nightmare is a culture inhabited by posthumans who regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being, my dream is a version of the posthuman that embraces possibilities of information technologies without being seduced by fantasies of unlimited power and disembodied immortality, that recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being, and that understands human life is embedded in a material world of great complexity, one on which we depend for our continued survival." Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*, 5.

¹³⁴ Didur, "Re-embodiment Technoscientific Fantasies," 98. The quote by Hayles is the epigraph in Didur's article.

¹³⁵ Braidotti, "Posthuman," 198.

¹³⁶ Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, xv.

¹³⁷ Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?*, xvf.

¹³⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 72; 62; 71.

¹³⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 73.

¹⁴⁰ Donaldson and Kymlicka's concept of "dependent agency" helps to clarify the ambiguous relationship animals have with agency. On the one hand they (esp. domesticated animals) have been made dependent on us, on the other hand, they are entitled to and often do make very clear demands on us and assert their needs. See Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 107-108.

¹⁴¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 56.

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- ¹⁴² Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65; 66.
- ¹⁴³ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 66.
- ¹⁴⁴ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 66.
- ¹⁴⁵ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 101.
- ¹⁴⁶ "Whale Kills a Trainer at SeaWorld," *New York Times*, Feb. 24, 2010, accessed Oct. 5, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/25/us/25whale.html?_r=0.
- ¹⁴⁷ Susan McHugh, *Animal Stories: Narrating Across Species Lines, Posthumanities*, vol. 15, ed. Cary Wolfe, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 216.
- ¹⁴⁸ McHugh, *Animal Stories*, 217.
- ¹⁴⁹ McHugh, *Animal Stories*, 219.
- ¹⁵⁰ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 28 (2010): 36, accessed June 16, 2013, doi:10.1068/d2706wsc.
- ¹⁵¹ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 36.
- ¹⁵² Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 37.
- ¹⁵³ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 37.
- ¹⁵⁴ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 36.
- ¹⁵⁵ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 36f.
- ¹⁵⁶ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 37.
- ¹⁵⁷ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 38.
- ¹⁵⁸ Hird, "Meeting with the Microcosmos," 38.
- ¹⁵⁹ Lori Gruen asked this question in a seminar devoted to Hird's work during the Animals and Society Institute's Human-Animal Studies Fellowship at Wesleyan University from May to July 2013.
- ¹⁶⁰ For my concept of pornographic theory, I am indebted to David Redmalm, my colleague during the ASI Fellowship program. During the seminar noted above, David was the first to describe Hird's use of numbers as "pornographic." I have borrowed this idea directly, and developed it into a critique of pornographic theory more generally.
- ¹⁶¹ John Sanbonmatsu, *The Postmodern Prince: Critical Theory, Left Strategy, and the Making of a New Political Subject* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 91.
- ¹⁶² "Books," University of Minnesota Press, accessed July 1, 2013, <http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/alien-phenomenology-or-what-it-as-like-to-be-a>.
- ¹⁶³ Wolfe cited in Castricano, "Introduction," 11.
- ¹⁶⁴ Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*, 1f.
- ¹⁶⁵ Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*, 2.
- ¹⁶⁶ Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*, 4.
- ¹⁶⁷ Sanbonmatsu, *The Postmodern Prince*, 79.
- ¹⁶⁸ Sanbonmatsu, *The Postmodern Prince*, 91.
- ¹⁶⁹ Best, "The Rise of Critical Animal Studies."
- ¹⁷⁰ Best, "The Rise of Critical Animal Studies."
- ¹⁷¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans., David Wills, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy Series, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 9.

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- ¹⁷² Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 9-14.
- ¹⁷³ Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 10f.
- ¹⁷⁴ Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, *Posthumanities* 6, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 37; 34.
- ¹⁷⁵ See, for example, David Wood, "Comment ne pas manger—Deconstruction and Humanism," in *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, ed. Peter H. Steeves (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 15-36.
- ¹⁷⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 59.
- ¹⁷⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 59.
- ¹⁷⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.
- ¹⁷⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 70.
- ¹⁸⁰ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.
- ¹⁸¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.
- ¹⁸² Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.
- ¹⁸³ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.
- ¹⁸⁴ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 16-17.
- ¹⁸⁵ Pederson, "Is 'the Posthuman' Educable," 243-244.
- ¹⁸⁶ Best et. al, "Introducing Critical Animal Studies."
- ¹⁸⁷ Best, "The Rise of Critical Animal Studies."
- ¹⁸⁸ Best, "The Rise of Critical Animal Studies."
- ¹⁸⁹ Shapiro and DeMello, "The State of Human-Animal Studies," 311. Italics added.

Chapter Three

Animal Repression: The Psychopathology of Animal Exterminationism¹

Secret doubts tormented all of us. Under no circumstances could I reveal my secret doubts to anyone. I had to convince myself to be like a rock when faced with the necessity of carrying out this horribly severe order, and I had to show this in every way, in order to force all those under me to hang on mentally and emotionally.... I had to appear cold and heartless during these events which tear the heart apart in anyone who had any kind of human feelings....

Rudolph Höss, SS Kommandant of Auschwitz²

So far we have seen that the development of the increasingly sophisticated ideological and technological machinery of extermination has confirmed human beings' status as the master species on earth. We have also observed how the co-optation of animal life by technique goes hand in hand with the cooptation of conscience and critique. In this chapter, I focus on the psychosocial ramifications of animal exterminationism. I contend that we dispense with any ethical concern for other animals' well-being at the expense of our own psychic, emotional, and social health. Building on Sigmund Freud's writings on repression and the early Frankfurt School's integration of these insights into the critical theory of society, I argue that both the active participation and complicity in institutionalized atrocities against other animals has caused profound psychosocial and existential damage to the subject in late modern society. A society that systematically tortures, mutilates, and kills billions of gentle creatures each year—the same animals whose affection and companionship we long for, whose presence consoles and delights us, whose loyalty and devotion humbles us, whose grace and beauty inspires awe—can be neither healthy nor sane.

Although Freud was primarily concerned with the therapeutic treatment of individual patients rather than examining the sources of social ills, or inspiring social, political, or economic transformation, he devoted some attention to the “metapsychology” of civilization. The repression of libidinal “instinctual drives,” Freud argued, not only played a crucial role in the development of the individual but also of civilization as a whole—by cultivating socially acceptable behaviours in the former, for example, and by creating the conditions for artistic, cultural, and technological development in the latter. While repression enabled both the individual and society to function with relative cohesion, it was also a debilitating force, the source of myriad “discontents” and neuroses.

Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, and Wilhelm Reich built on Freud’s social or metapsychology but, unlike Freud who overtly distanced himself from socialism and communism, they critically evaluated the role of repression from a Marxian perspective. As Fromm lamented, “Freud was never a radical critic of capitalistic society. He never questioned its socio-economic bases, nor did he criticize its ideologies—with the exception of those concerning sexuality.”³ This, Fromm and his colleagues noted, was a major lacunae or shortcoming in Freud’s analysis. They sought to correct this by paying particular attention to the specific historical permutations of repression throughout the ages, especially under late capitalism and technological totalitarianism. They also placed greater emphasis on the relationship between the repression of “inner nature” (i.e. human animality and sensuous) and the domination of “outer” nature (i.e. nonhuman beings). Finally, they took a much broader view of Eros to encompass not merely sexual drives, but also sensuous, creative, intellectual, aesthetic,

and social needs, inclinations, and proclivities. With this in mind, they analyzed in greater detail than Freud the way in which Eros is manipulated, especially through repressive *desublimation*, to serve the interests of domination.

In what follows, I expand on the Frankfurt School's insights into the relationship between repression and ideologies of domination, but with a specific view to the function of repression in supporting animal exterminationism. After briefly outlining the Frankfurt School's attempts to reframe Freudian thought within a Marxian perspective, I outline their discussion of the joint repression of external and internal nature—or what I call the repression-oppression complex. I go on to demonstrate how the repression of animality and the extermination of other animals has contributed to a number of troubling neuroses, including the development of aggressive tendencies towards animals, ambivalence and guilt, the compulsive ridicule and mockery of animals, a sense of the “uncanny” in the face of other animals, and a desperate attempt to restore the mutilated bodies of animals to their lost wholeness and splendour in our collective fantasy life, while we continue torturing and murdering them en masse.⁴ I end by exploring how Marcuse's retelling of the myths of Orpheus and Narcissus can help us re-imagine the reconciliation of human and nonhuman beings as mutually reinforcing co-subjects-of-a-meaningful-life.

The Frankfurt School's Historicization of Freud

In *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud suggested that the repression of instinctual drives has played a crucial role in the historical development of civilization. He argued that there is a fundamental parallel between the development of the individual (ontogenesis) and the development of the human qua *genus* in Western civilization

(phylogenesis).⁵ It was his view that the maturation of both the individual and of civilization more generally depends on and generates a series of conflicts between various psychic forces within the individual, between the individual and society and the various social, cultural, and political institutions of which it is comprised. These conflicts are instigated, orchestrated, and governed by the repressive mechanism, which in “essence consists simply in the act of turning—and keeping—something away from the conscious.”⁶ Repression also requires people to sacrifice unmitigated gratification (the mandate of the “pleasure principle”) to the more sober dictates of “reason” and social mores (the “reality principle”).⁷ For Freud, progress depended on repression in part because the latter forced individuals to “sublimate” their unruly sexual drives (Eros) and aggressive drives (Thanatos) into socially acceptable cultural, intellectual, and artistic activities.⁸ At the same time, Freud was keenly aware of the myriad neuroses caused by the repression of Eros and Thanatos and was especially bothered by the degree to which civilization was steeped in an unhealthy sense of guilt stemming from conflicts between the subject’s drives and the pressure to squelch them.⁹ Nevertheless, Freud asserted that a functioning civilization without repression was impossible.¹⁰

The early Frankfurt School developed Freud’s insights but critically evaluated the role of repression from a Marxian perspective. They were especially concerned with the function of repression in advancing ideologies and systems of domination. For example, Fromm, who stressed that “the relationship between man and society is not a static one,” devoted his book *Escape from Freedom* (1969) to uncovering the *dynamic* “process of man’s creation in history” throughout different historical epochs.¹¹ It should be noted that while

Fromm criticizes Freud for not properly accounting for shifting socio-economic paradigms, he also laments the fact that Marx did not “put his psychological views in any systematic form,” but also understands that this is partly due to the fact that “Marx’s dynamic psychology came too early to find sufficient attention.”¹² From this newly historicized perspective, Fromm insists that it is not the fear of castration (as punishment for incestuous desires) that fuels repression, but “the fear of complete isolation from [one’s] fellow men, of complete ostracism,” a fear stemming from the atomism of life under industrial capitalism and liberal democracy.¹³ Thus, Fromm at once brought more specificity to Freud’s analysis, while also broadening it to encompass issues such as political economy, which otherwise fell outside the purview of metapsychology.

In a similar vein, Marcuse argued that the joint emphasis on the “biological” (i.e. instinctual) and “sociological” in Freud’s metapsychology provided crucial insight into the “sickness” of advanced industrial civilization, but had to be re-opened and re-examined from a dialectical perspective.¹⁴ Marcuse focused especially on the relationship between “psychological categories” and “political categories.”¹⁵ Echoing Fromm, he maintained that the psychic life of the subject in capitalist modernity is manipulated to advance a specifically *violent* and *destructive* form of civilization (i.e. one governed by technological rationality). For Marcuse, “intensified progress seems to be bound up with intensified unfreedom,” not just the unfreedom of the repressed libidinal instincts but also of other individual, social, political, intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural forms of expression.

Noting the distinction already implicit in Freud’s work between “necessary” and “unnecessary” repression, Marcuse also distinguished between “basic” and “surplus”

repression. The former, he argued, potentially enables humans to live together harmoniously and is not necessarily oppressive, while the latter is constitutive of domination. Of surplus repression, Marcuse tells us, "Within the total structure of the repressed personality, surplus-repression is that which is the result of specific societal conditions sustained in the specific interests of domination."¹⁶ Whereas Freud subordinates non-genital, non-procreative sexual activity and gratification to the procreative function in the course of the human individual's sexual maturation, Marcuse insists that this process is one of the principal forms of surplus repression in advanced industrial society because it reduces infinitely varied free erotic expression to just another source of labour power. Under the reign of "genital supremacy" the body is a servant to the capitalist machinery of production, which demands a constant influx of efficient workers.

Although basic and surplus repression are distinct, Marcuse also notes that they overlap, or rather, that basic repression has been mobilized to serve the interests of surplus repression. For example, the "normal progress to genitality has been organized," Marcuse explains, "in such a way that the partial impulses and their 'zones' were all but desexualized in order to conform to the requirements of a specific social organization of the human existence."¹⁷ Whatever the relationship between basic and surplus repression, it is clear that the latter is inherently inimical to the healthy development of human beings. As Gad Horowitz points out, Marcuse's

conceptual disentanglement of the 'basic' from the 'surplus' aspects of repression is no simple matter, since they are empirically tightly intertwined. Nevertheless, it is one of the most important conditions for the integration of the discoveries of psychoanalysis and of historical materialism, the fusion of Freud and Marx.¹⁸

While basic and surplus repression are overlapping and mutually reinforcing, Marcuse's differentiation between them paved the way for a more nuanced account of the social, political, economic, and historical function of repression in advancing a capitalist system of economic and social rationalization.

Marcuse also sought to historicize Freud's analysis by focusing especially on the changing nature of "the various modes of the reality principle" throughout different historical socio-economic configurations.¹⁹ In advanced industrial society, he argued, the reality principle manifests itself primarily as the "performance principle" under which "society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members."²⁰ The performance principle "is that of an acquisitive and antagonistic society in the process of constant expansion [and] presupposes a long development during which domination has been increasingly rationalized."²¹ The performance principle extends beyond Freud's principle of "rational control," which is focused primarily keeping sexual drives in check. The performance principle is the principle of rationalized labour, production, and social organization, and its primary aim is to generate an infinite supply of efficient and docile workers.

The early Frankfurt School also took issue with Freud's assumption that civilization is *inherently* repressive, and the Hobbesian presupposition that without externally imposed restrictions, human beings would tear each other apart in a "war of each against all." From the perspective of critical social theory, such a view effectively justifies repression.²² Because, Fromm argues, "Freud accepted the traditional belief in a basic dichotomy between man and society, as well as the traditional doctrine of the

evilness of human nature,” he was inevitably required to justify repression as a means to rein in those competitive and hostile tendencies.²³ Fromm also objected to Freud’s comparison of the “field of human relations” to the market—i.e. as a series of exchanges and mutually beneficial instrumental relations—as though the liberal capitalist model of social relations was the *only* model, and one to which we would be forever bound.²⁴ Fromm pointed to “the dialectical character of the process of growing freedom,” and outlined the impact of the nuances of different historical epochs on the individual and society.²⁵ He observed that the transitions from the medieval period, to the Reformation, to the modern industrial capitalist period, at once equipped human beings for their emancipation, while at the same time preventing them from realizing this possibility. For example, Fromm explained that “the structure of modern society affects man in two ways simultaneously: he becomes more independent, self-reliant, and critical, and he becomes more isolated, alone, and afraid.”²⁶ Capitalism, which Freud rarely mentions in his analysis, “not only freed man from traditional bonds, but it also contributed tremendously to the increasing of positive freedom, to the growth of an active, critical, responsible self.”²⁷ In other words, the problem was not that civilization was interchangeable with unhappiness and unfreedom, but that *a certain modality* of civilization took away with one hand the possibility for individual and social flourishing it offered with the other.

Like Fromm, Marcuse criticized Freud for rationalizing repression by suggesting that the only plausible form of civilization was a repressive one but maintained that there was a “hidden trend in psychoanalysis” that militated against such a position, and which indicated that, “the very achievements of repressive civilization seem to create the

preconditions for the gradual abolition of repression.”²⁸ As we will see below, at the centre of Marcuse’s dialectical analysis of repression is a vision of the reconciliation of humans and nature.

The Repression of ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ Nature and the De-Animalization of the Body

For the most part, Freud’s theory of repression does not account for the repression of animality or of other animals/nature per se as part of civilization’s development. However, on more than one occasion Freud not only admits that the domination of nature in general and of animals in particular is a defining feature of civilization, but that it also produces pathological tendencies. In the following passage, for example, Freud highlights the role that humans’ domination of animals has played in the development of civilization, and the metaphysical fallacies and delusions that are associated with it:

In the course of his cultural development man achieved a dominating position over his animal fellow-creatures, but, not content with this supremacy, he began to place a gulf between their nature and his own. He denied to them all reasoning power, arrogated to himself an immortal soul, and pretended to a Divine descent, which allowed him to sever all bonds of community with the animal world.²⁹

Here, in no uncertain terms, Freud asserts that human supremacism, or what he also calls the “universal narcissism” of the human species, is pathological inasmuch as it is founded on *fantasies* of power and divinity but has no actual grounding in reality. Indeed, Freud points out that humans’ “*naïve* self-love had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science,” the first of which was the shift from geocentrism to heliocentrism, and the second of which was the Darwinian theory of evolution, which “destroyed man’s supposedly privileged place in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom

and his ineradicable animal nature.” And if that wasn’t enough, “Human megalomania” Freud continues, “will have suffered its third and most wounding blow” from psychoanalysis, “which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on.”³⁰

Psychoanalysis, in other words, broke the proverbial and potentially earth-shattering news that the human being is neither ruled by nor rules reason, as it so boldly and arrogantly proclaims, but is rather the slave of a series of salacious libidinal forces and drives.

These realizations are a source of great distress. Freud surmises that people are well aware that “this newly won mastery over space and time, this subjugation of the forces of nature—the fulfilment of an age-old longing,” which has been brought about largely by rapid technological development, “has not increased the amount of pleasure they can expect from life or made them feel any happier.”³¹ Elsewhere, Freud outlines the ubiquitous narrative of humans’ “ascent” from their lowly animal nature to their self-designated divinity. Although “man has become, so to speak, a god with artificial limbs,” Freud cautions, “let us also remember that modern man does not feel happy with his god-like nature.”³² In contrast to “modern man,” he maintains, “primitive” peoples were better off, in part because of “nature’s bounty and the ease with which their major needs could be satisfied.”³³ Although this is a problematic statement on many levels, not least because it sets up an arbitrary dichotomy between “civilized” and “primitive” peoples, and proceeds to paint the latter with unjustifiably broad strokes, it nonetheless highlights Freud’s implicit assumption that the fulfilment of the pleasure principle is closely associated with an immediate and spontaneous, which is to say animal, connection with

the natural world, a connection European civilization had done its best to destroy. Freud goes so far as to suggest that the benefits of technological advancements (and the increasing subjugation of nature they promise) are about as meaningful as the benefits accrued from sticking one's leg out from under a blanket in a cold room and pulling it back under.³⁴ Rather than offering any substantive and objective good, as is widely believed, technological development and mastery over nature and animals at best create needs whose fulfilment offer only a minor consolation to other deprivations that that same technological progress and mastery has produced.

Freud also suggests that part of the reason that the mastery of nature (and the repressions associated with it) have contributed to the development of neuroses is that human beings are fundamentally *pleasure seeking animals*, not the heroes of culture and reason that we make ourselves out to be. Freud sees no distinction between humans and other animals in terms of their primary aim to preserve life and return to a primordial state of peace (Nirvana). As far as he is concerned, any claim that civilization developed out of a specifically human drive towards "perfection" not shared by other animals is entirely unfounded, and is, in fact, nothing more than a "disagreeable illusion." While some humans may aspire towards attaining perfection, they are few and far between, and in any case their struggle for perfection is an outcome of repression—that is, it is a form of sublimation. As Freud puts it,

The development of mankind thus far appears to me to call for no other explanation than that applicable to animals; and the restless urge for ever greater perfection that we observe in a minority of human beings can readily be understood as resulting from the repression of drives – the foundation on which all that is most precious in civilization is built.³⁵

Freud's theory of repression thus challenges, albeit perhaps only inadvertently, humans' claim to an *inherently* privileged ontological status. Sure, we may have produced artistic masterpieces, but only at the expense of the drives, particularly the drive for pleasure, which, as Freud has indicated, identifies us both *as* and *with* other animals.

Even though he rejects the human presumption of inherent superiority to a fantasy, however, Freud was not otherwise critical of the domination of other animals as such, nor did he examine the relationship between the domination of animals and repression of animality in any great detail per se, or their function in bolstering ideologies of domination more generally. Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, in contrast, pursued this course of inquiry with much greater attention. They had a much keener sense of the relationship between the repression of "inner" nature (or human animality and sensuousness) and the domination of "outer" nature (or the nonhuman). They were probably the first political theorists since Jean-Jacques Rousseau to acknowledge that this twin process of external and internal repression or negation has resulted not just in misery for other beings, but in serious psychic, and even cognitive, injury to human beings.

As Asher Horowitz has duly noted, Rousseau stood out from other Enlightenment philosophers by drawing a direct parallel between the modern human's increasing scorn for and estrangement from nature and its psychosocial malaise. By tracing the psychic turmoil of the modern subject to nature's subjugation, Rousseau paved the way for Freud's argument that a civilization built on repression may function well politically, culturally, and economically, but will very likely be filled with miserable people.³⁶ Rousseau's analysis of civilization in the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality (Second Discourse)*

is also important for its historicization of the process of what, since Freud, we have come to understand as repression. As Horowitz put it, “in the most general terms the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* is a critique of the European social order, an attempt to show that it is not the only one or the best, and that it is the product of history.”³⁷ Rousseau revealed that the cost of social order was the increasing self-alienation of the human being from itself as a member of the natural world. Rousseau argued that indigenous peoples, on the other hand, who maintained a more direct, immediate, and respectful relationship with the natural world and nonhuman beings, were not plagued with the same existential and psychosocial crises as Europeans. With this contrast in mind, and foreshadowing Freud’s own comments to the same effect, Rousseau asks rhetorically,

Now I would really like someone to explain to me what type of misery there can be for a free being whose heart is at peace and whose body is healthy. I ask which, civil or natural life, is most liable to become unbearable to those who enjoy it. We see around us practically no people who do not complain of their existence, even many who deprive themselves of it insofar as they have the capacity; and the combination of divine and human laws hardly suffices to stop this disorder. I ask if anyone has ever heard it said that a savage in freedom even dreamed of complaining about life and killing himself. Let it then be judged with less pride on which side true misery lies.³⁸

Of course, Rousseau could and should be charged with romanticizing the so-called Noble Savage here, but his point that humans’ entrance into a society that artificially seals off the human subject from nature and its self-identification as a natural being, has led to more not less unhappiness, remains convincing nonetheless. As Horowitz observes, such a view is certainly echoed by Freud and Marx, and eventually the early Frankfurt School, especially Marcuse (even if a discussion of Rousseau’s importance is

inexplicably and unjustifiably absent from Left political theory until the publication of Horowitz's *Rousseau, Nature, and History* [1987])³⁹

Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse restored Rousseau's original emphasis on the problem of nature's domination, which was alluded to but otherwise elided by Freud. For example, Horkheimer outlines the direct relationship between the repression-oppression of nature and the damage it causes to human beings. As we have already seen, the domination of nature is inextricably bound up with the domination of human beings. Horkheimer explains further that, "Each subject not only has to take part in the subjugation of the external nature, human and nonhuman, but in order to do so must subjugate nature in himself. Domination becomes 'internalized' for domination's sake."⁴⁰ In short, enlightenment and technological rationality require the human being to direct its learned disdain for the nonhuman against itself as well. Since the human is a natural being, it can only learn to despise other natural beings, by despising itself (while, paradoxically, self-aggrandizing at the same time).

Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse also draw attention to the fact that the repression of nature depends on the progressive "de-animalization" of the human body.⁴¹ Marcuse points out, for example, that the sensuous "animal" body is the primary object of both "basic" and surplus repression. Freud indirectly nodded to this phenomenon himself. In his view, the aim of basic repression is to compartmentalize or "subdu[e] the proximity of the senses." Certain senses such as smell and taste are associated with sexual pleasure (and with a certain conception of animality), while sight enables human beings to engage in what is assumed to be a uniquely human capacity: to behold "the sight of something

beautiful.”⁴² But, in Marcuse’s view, this putatively “basic” repression of the senses is indistinguishable from surplus repression inasmuch as under technological rationality any immediate gratification of the senses “is incompatible with the effectiveness of organized *domination*,” especially the violent domination of other sensuous beings.⁴³

Reich makes a similar point and laments that capitalism has de-animalized the human in part by imposing “a pattern of compulsory work” on the individual. Labour and activity are drained of any “animal” pleasure to such a degree that workers mindlessly and bodilessly, as it were, mimic the machines they use.⁴⁴ This is especially apparent in the agricultural industry. While slaughterhouse workers are in closer contact with more animals than people in other industries, they are arguably the most de-animalized in the sense we are outlining here. As Barbara Noske has noted, the industrial farm worker “is reduced to an assembly line, sometimes even working on piece-rates, endlessly repeating the same monotonous movements at a merciless speed.”⁴⁵ The worker’s self-alienation in the slaughterhouse is also the result of the fragmentation of the labour process so vividly outlined by Marx—in which the once (or potentially) *whole* human being has been severed into a series of parts, limbs, like so many components of a machine, both in body and spirit.⁴⁶ Overall, to meet the mandate of maximized performance, the human body is organized in much the same way society is organized; the senses are fragmented, compartmentalized, and partitioned one from the other.⁴⁷ Under surplus repression and the performance principle, “natural” and “animal-like” spontaneity is sacrificed to order and control. To indulge in the unmediated experience of the senses is tantamount to “reverting” or “regressing” to an animal-state.⁴⁸ This restoration of animality is

systematically curtailed in late capitalist society because it would very likely lead to the development of deep feelings of empathy for the screaming, moaning, wailing, heaving, vomiting, struggling, kicking, bleeding, terrified animals passing by on the disassembly line, which in turn, would very likely lead to a refusal to participate in atrocities against them (and in the self-mutilation the mutilation of other animals inevitably involves).

The Repression of Empathy and the Cultivation of Aggression

The repression of empathic feelings for other animals is also constitutive of the repression of animality and enables people to participate actively in animals' extermination, especially in slaughterhouses, laboratories, and other places of violence. Animal studies scholars, especially ecofeminists, have long been arguing that empathy, sympathy, and compassion for animals are also primary targets of (surplus) repression, particularly in men. As Greta Gaard notes, for example, "Because Western culture has defined ongoing suffering as 'unmanly,' many men learn to repress or deny their own suffering and are unable to sympathize with other's suffering." But, this repression of empathic emotions and attentiveness to one's own and other's suffering is not limited to men. She goes on to explain that, "in a culture based on the denial of feelings and the denigration of suffering, people of all genders may respond by denying their own emotions, by making those who suffer invisible, by dissociating themselves from the suffering by rationalizations, or by identifying with the aggressor."⁴⁹ Brian Luke has observed that the very mythologies that undergird human supremacism are designed to repress what he insists are humans' natural inclination to feel sympathy for other animals. Such mythologies of human greatness and metaphysical remoteness from other animals are

invoked time and time again to expiate our guilt. As he puts it, society must employ “guilt-mediating mechanisms around systems of animal exploitation. . . . People are naturally inclined against harming animals: otherwise, there would be no need for social mechanisms that make killing somewhat more bearable—the killing of animals would be as straightforward as, say, drinking water or breathing air.”⁵⁰ Adorno and Horkheimer point out that in the world governed by cold, enlightenment rationality, “to show concern for animals is considered no longer merely sentimental but a betrayal of progress.”⁵¹ As such, the only choice is to expunge this concern from the repertoire of human emotionality. Those who work in factory farms, animal research facilities, circuses, fur farms and so on, undoubtedly depend upon the repression of empathy, sympathy and compassion in order to successfully complete the task at hand. Repression is, in effect, part of their job description. As we noted above, slaughterhouse workers, for example, must continually perform an immense feat of denial and repression to subject other sentient creatures to acts of brutality en masse. They must daily endure the cacophony of screams and cries of terrified, helpless animals in the throes of the most torturous and violent deaths.⁵²

While the empathic tendencies are actively silenced in advanced industrial society, aggressive tendencies are actively cultivated. In Marcuse’s view, aggressive tendencies are exacerbated as a result of the repressive desublimation of Eros. Freud maintained that the desublimation of the libido would lead to the depletion of the aggressive drives. However, Marcuse insists that the desublimation of Eros (into promiscuous and permissive sexuality, for example), does nothing to quell the aggressive instincts. Rather, the repressive desublimation of genital sexuality only further serves the interests of domination because

what really takes place is “the *simultaneous* release of repressed sexuality and aggressiveness.”⁵³ Sometimes this aggressiveness presents itself in and as sexuality, but other times it involves the “diversion of primary destructiveness from the ego to the external world,” *especially nature and nonhuman animals*:

The entire progress of civilization is rendered possible only by the transformation and utilization of the death instinct or its derivatives....[A]ggressive impulses provide energy for the continuous alteration, mastery, and exploitation of nature to the advantage of mankind. In attacking, splitting, changing, pulverizing things and animals (and, periodically, also men), man extends his dominion over the world and advances to ever richer stages of civilization.⁵⁴

The triumph of Thanatos over Eros, then, is concomitant with the triumph of human beings over nature and animals. The direct correlation between the suppression of empathy and the corresponding explosion of aggression against animals is evident in the reflections of one ex-slaughterer who admitted that, “he overcame his feelings by building up hatred for the animals he was going to kill.”⁵⁵ Many slaughterhouse workers engage in deliberately sadistic activities on top of the routinized violence they participate in. Timothy Pachirat, who worked undercover on the kill-floor of a Great Plains slaughterhouse in which 2,500 cattle were killed each day, noted that rather than prodding cows somewhere on the outside of their body, an excruciating enough experience for the creatures, one of his co-workers would typically insert electric prods into cows’ anuses, causing them additional pain. The cows subjected to this sadistic treatment, shriek and bellow in pain, and sometimes, in their confusion, mount the cow directly ahead of them, adding another layer of humiliation and degradation to their victimization.⁵⁶

The Trauma of Perpetration

The repression of empathy in people who participate in violence against animals also leads to serious emotional trauma. When “the emotive charge can be made to disappear entirely,” so that a person is completely emotionally detached from a previously loved object or object of care, he is subject to what Freud calls “hysterical indifference.”⁵⁷ While hysterical indifference may enable someone to meet the requirements of the performance principle, their indifference is a reflection of their internal, or psychological and emotional, self-mutilation. According to Jennifer Dillard, slaughterhouse employees do not initially regard the animals they are required to kill as instruments or objects, but as living beings, and fellow animals. They must systematically erase their recognition of the animals’ subjecthood, however, in order to get the job done. In her words,

farmers face a disconnect between their natural identification with animals as living beings and their treatment of animals as a means to an end. . . . Thus, people who naturally empathize with the animals are likely to have a difficult time with animal industry work, since the nature of the work requires the worker to treat the animal not as a living being with individual worth, but as another widget, a means to an end.⁵⁸

This silencing of empathic tendencies and our intuitive moral aversion to harming other animals (human and nonhuman) is also known as “doubling.” Apparently, doubling was a common experience of Nazi doctors who conducted brutal and often lethal experiments on inmates of the death camps. As Dillard explains, citing the book *The Nazi Doctors*, doubling is

‘the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self. An Auschwitz doctor could, through doubling, not only kill and contribute to killing but organize silently, on behalf of that evil project, an entire self-structure (or self-process) encompassing virtually all aspects of his behavior. In

other words, as the doctor violated his natural morals to carry out his functions in the concentration camps, the doctor developed two 'selves'—a new self, performing the evil acts and implicated in the crime, and another self, the doctor's prior self, which he saw as the same husband, father, son, that he had been before the concentration camp began.⁵⁹

Through the act of doubling, the death camp doctor or the slaughterhouse worker are capable of carrying out their required tasks efficiently and effectively, but they are internally fragmented and self-estranged. This self-fragmentation and estrangement is constitutive of self-annihilation. As Carol Adams observes, people who “work in the disassembly line of slaughterhouses...must accept on a grand scale a double-annihilation of self... must be alienated from their own bodies and animals' bodies as well.”⁶⁰

Those who are involved in violence against animals are often severely traumatized and experience a variety of mental health issues including Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Perpetration-induced Traumatic Stress (PITS). According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, PTSD “can occur after you've seen or experienced a traumatic event that involved the threat of injury or death.”⁶¹ Symptoms include anything from flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance, irritability, detachment, numbness, insomnia, agitation, substance abuse, among many others. PTSD can be caused by exposure to assault, domestic abuse, war, imprisonment, rape, or terrorism.⁶² There is increasing evidence that PTSD/PITS can also occur when human beings are exposed to or participate in systemic violence against other animals. PITS is especially common among slaughterhouse employees.⁶³ Melanie Joy, an animal studies scholar and psychologist, recounts her experience working with such people: “I have personally worked with numerous vegetarian advocates who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder . . . as the

result of prolonged exposure to the slaughter process; they have intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, insomnia, and a host of other symptoms.”⁶⁴ One man named Virgil Butler who worked in a chicken slaughterhouse “recalled having nightmares of chickens and reported a fellow worker being ‘hailed off to the mental hospital’ for severe recurring dreams.”⁶⁵ A woman protesting at a pig slaughterhouse in Toronto noted that one minute a worker was yelling misogynist obscenities at her and the pigs (i.e. “MOVE, you stupid fucking bitch!”), and the next moment ran over to the woman and confessed, under his breath, “I have nightmares you know...we all do.”⁶⁶

There is also widespread abuse of alcohol and drugs among slaughterhouse workers. One former hog-sticker (whose job it is to stab hogs to cause them to bleed to death) stated that “[a] lot of [the hog-stickers] have problems with alcohol. They have to drink, they have no other way of dealing with killing live, kicking animals all day long. If you stop and think about it, you’re killing several thousand beings a day.”⁶⁷ Pachirat, describes the gruesome and undoubtedly traumatizing experience of the “knocker,” whose job it is to “stun” cows with a steel bolt before they are strung up by one hoof on a moving rail to be knifed:

The knocker pulls the trigger, which releases a retracting cylindrical steel bolt approximately five inches long and an inch in diameter. The bolt penetrates the cow’s skull, then quickly retracts. The sound made by the firing of the bolt and its impact is a muted *pfffft, pfffft*. As the bolt retracts, gray brain matter often flies out of the hole in the cow’s skull, sometimes splattering the clothing, arms, or face of the knocker. Seconds later, blood gushes out of the wound, bubbling up and out in a dark maroon stream as it oxygenates. Sometimes the cow’s head will immediately drop, hitting the metal conveyor or (if the cattle are spaced closely together) falling onto the rump of the cow in front of it. At other times the cow’s neck will stiffen, with its head locked unnaturally face up in the air. When this happens, the neck

and head tremble at a high speed, as if in a seizure. Whether the head falls or the neck stiffens, the cow's eyes typically take on a glazed look, and its tongue often hangs limply from its mouth. Sometimes the power, angle, or location of the steel bolt shot is insufficient to render the cow unconscious, and it will bleed profusely and thrash about wildly while the knocker tries to shoot it again.⁶⁸

The cow is then led to a conveyor, often falling on its face and "breaking its teeth or biting its tongue." After this, a hook is wrapped around its hind leg so that it can be suspended onto a moving rail above. The horrors only intensify: "The cow's right hind leg and front legs often begin to kick wildly at this point. . . . If it has not done so already, the cow will often vomit, depositing a rank greenish substance onto the floor that mixes with the blood flowing from its head wounds."⁶⁹ Due to the high volume of animals being "processed" at any given time, not to mention the sheer size of the animals themselves, the animals are often not properly stunned or suspended, end up falling off the hooks, and frantically slipping and sliding around the kill floor in terror and panic at the sights, sounds, and smells of violent death all around them. (I have seen footage of this same thing happening to a pig.)⁷⁰ This horror occurs before a knife has sliced through the cow's carotid arteries and jugular veins.⁷¹ After the large, gentle, terrified animal has been so cruelly transformed into a carcass, other employees are responsible for dismembering and disembowelling it. By the end of the day, anyone working in any of these areas of the processing plant is splattered with blood, intestines, brain matter, feces, and other gore. To be actively participating in and witnessing such gruesome cruelty and violence on a daily basis is without question as profoundly psychologically damaging as participating in combat.

Maximum Tolerated Dose, a recent documentary by Canadian filmmaker Karol Orzechowski, features ex-animal researchers who have come to acknowledge the injustice of their work and the harm it causes both other animals and themselves. Rachel Weiss, a former primate researcher who worked with chimpanzees in HIV studies at Yerkes National Primate Research Centre for many years, for example, talks about her emotional anguish and the avoidance mechanisms she employed during her research tenure to shield herself from the cruelty of what she was participating in. Clearly suffering from denial and internal torment, she could not bring herself to photograph Jerom, one of the chimpanzees she worked on and developed affection for, a primate who was repeatedly injected with various strains of HIV from the age of two onwards. Weiss witnessed Jerom progressively deteriorate over the years into a barely functioning heap of bones by the age of fourteen, at which point he was put to death. Throughout his sad life, she explains,

I thought about taking photos of Jerom but I just couldn't do it. I just... I didn't want to capture him. I didn't want to remember, I didn't want to, you know, someday flip back through my old pictures of all those good times, you know? The good times I never had in the lab and the good times they never, ever had their whole lives in the lab.⁷²

Weiss' trauma led her to start up an organization called Laboratory Primate Advocacy Group (LPAG), which doubles as a support group for researchers who have been traumatized or psychologically distressed by their role as researchers, and an advocacy group campaigning to end primate research and the sale of primates for pets and entertainment. The website assures former and current researchers, "You are not alone! On these pages you will find practical advice on how to deal with the emotional impact of witnessing and participating in research, and support for your legitimate concerns about

laboratory conditions.”⁷³ As this citation indicates, like Weiss, who started out wanting to help animals as a vet, many primate researchers are severely traumatized by their experiences and are in great need of emotional support from others.

Melancholia, Ambivalence, and Guilt

As these examples of trauma have evinced, despite the apparent immensity of the repressive mechanism, repression by its very nature is not absolute.⁷⁴ The powerful psychic apparatus that is oriented towards maximizing pleasure (and which potentially bonds humans with other animals) can never be wholly dismantled, only silenced and hidden away in the dusty corners of the unconscious. As Christopher White observes, even Freud recognized that there are not only traces of drives but also traces of “‘animal life’ lingering in the human body and psyche” and “the modern human subject finds himself inhabited by his most other Other.”⁷⁵ Though we—both those directly and indirectly involved in violence against animals—may seldom directly acknowledge our moral repulsion at the atrocities our society commit against animals, empathy with animals is not fully expunged through repression, and, if we don’t experience full-fledged trauma, a painful sense of melancholia can unconsciously nag us. In fact, it is precisely the denial of the egregious cruelty around which our system of production revolves that is the source melancholia. Freud explains that, unlike mourning, where the object of loss is known to the subject, and who can thence work the emotion through, melancholia is the result of an unknown or unconscious loss, chiefly the alienation from (or loss of) one’s own ego, coupled with a persistent attachment to the lost object.⁷⁶

This presence of the repressed and lost object within the unconscious is, of course, also the basis of neurosis more generally.⁷⁷ While the idea of fulfilling a drive may have been expunged from the conscious, the drive itself remains alive and well in the unconscious and seeks “activation” or “release” in a variety of, usually distorted, forms.⁷⁸ Ambivalence and guilt are among the manifestations of this internal conflict. In Freud’s theory, ambivalence is “the reversal of a drive’s content into its opposite” as in “*the transformation of love into hate*.”⁷⁹ Ambivalence engenders guilt, in turn, because one is naturally likely to feel guilty for harbouring feelings of hatred for the object of one’s love. As Freud observes, “when a drive is repressed, its libidinal elements are converted into symptoms and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt.”⁸⁰ Freud defines guilt specifically as “the tension between what our conscience demands and what our ego actually does.”⁸¹ Guilt typically remains unconscious but produces, among other things, “*malaise*, a kind of anxiety.”⁸²

Ambivalence and guilt, he argues, most clearly manifest themselves in the Oedipal complex and are represented in the drama of the “band of brothers” who kill their father in order to rob him of his exclusive sexual rights to their mother.⁸³ Governed as much by Eros and their love of the father as by Thanatos, and trapped forever in the torturous web of ambivalence, the band of brothers feels tremendous guilt at both imagining and carrying out their violent betrayal. In an attempt to appease their conscience and compensate for their crime, they resurrect the dead father in the form of a surrogate—first in the form of the totemic animal and then, with the arrival of Christianity, in the form of God the Father.⁸⁴ Driven by an admixture of blood love and blood lust, the band of brothers—here

a figure of the human species as a whole—proclaims its authority and autonomy through its act of violence but not without remaining forever tormented by feelings of ambivalence and guilt.⁸⁵

Human beings are clearly caught in a similar, proverbial tug-of-war between affectionate and aggressive impulses toward other animals, and are mired in guilt as a result. Not surprisingly, those who abuse animals for a living undergo the most pronounced struggle with ambivalence and guilt (as well as other forms of psychological distress). *To Make a Farm*, a recent documentary about the future of local and organic farming in Canada, offers a striking example of this. In the film, Tarrah, one of the owners of Being Green Farm, which raises pigs, chickens, and lamb for meat, is asked by the filmmaker whether she would talk more about why she has said in the past that she thinks “It is OK to get attached to your animals.” Both her comments and her body language throughout the interview expose her profound psychological confusion about the operation she runs. “Yeah,” she responds, reluctantly, “Yeah, I dunno, I mean, slaughter day is really hard for us ‘cause we *do* get so attached to our animals—and—*really* hard, right? It’s like sending your dogs to a terrible place to die.” This she says all the while cuddling, caressing, and rubbing the tummy of a pig she has knelt down beside in the hay, as though embracing a big teddy bear. In this comment and in her affectionate comportment towards the pig she plainly reveals her acute awareness of the betrayal involved in sending her animal companions off to the local abattoir to be turned into sausages. As she says herself, the pig is no different from the family dog, who no one with any decency would send off to have its throat slit. After a sniffle, she goes on to admit that,

“Um...the reason why we raise them is because we *love* them.” This statement exposes her ambivalence and guilt further. She and her partner do love the pigs, but that is clearly not why they raise them, of course. The more truthful admission would be that they grow to love them *despite* the fact that they are going to have them killed so they can sell them as “Berkshire Pork ... a heritage breed of pig, known for its succulent flavour!”⁸⁶ In fact, on their website they openly admit that they raise the pigs in the best possible conditions, but, crucially, not because the pigs deserve to be treated properly as fellow subjects, but because *the meat turns out best that way*. The following excerpt from their website exposes the ulterior motives behind their kind treatment of the pigs:

We strive to raise our animals in a way that lets them be the animals they are, so for the pigs, that means the right to root in the brush, wallow in the mud, run around in the grass, and feel the sun shine on their backs. . . . Allowing them the space to exercise creates muscling, allowing intramuscular fat deposits to form, which is just like the marbling you see in a good cut of beef. . . . Also, exercise gets the blood flowing, and there is evidence to suggest that this increased movement of hemoglobin in the body also leads to improved flavor.⁸⁷

Notice their selective use of the language of rights. They adamantly defend the pigs’ right to root in the brush, etc., but clearly have no interest in defending the pigs’ right to life. Their suggestion that giving the pigs space “creates muscling” and “marbling,” and that allowing them to exercise leads to “increased movement of haemoglobin” and ultimately to “improved flavor,” are particularly sinister. Providing the animals with some space to move around is only important inasmuch as it is scientifically proven to provide a more succulent product. Since their ultimate goal is to sell a desirable product, it follows that if keeping the pigs immobilized and depriving them of activity happened to improve the flavour of their flesh, Being Green Farm would do just that.

While it may be easier for Tarrah to remain detached when revealing such instrumental logic in a carefully composed product description on her website, she clearly struggles when asked to discuss the contradiction between loving and killing the same creatures. Her emotional confusion becomes increasingly apparent as she attempts to rationalize the killing. She goes on to explain, after a joyous giggle, “I mean, I *love* pigs, and I don’t want to deny myself, or I guess the pig, the privilege of a relationship, just because one day it’s going to die.” What she fails to mention, or perhaps to even admit to herself in the first place, however, is that *she is responsible for causing the pigs’ untimely, violent, and utterly avoidable death-by-slaughter*. In an obvious attempt to absolve herself of this responsibility, she frames their entirely preventable violent deaths in the same light as the natural deaths that she and her partner and every other mortal being will eventually succumb to. She continues, “You know ’cause we’re all going to die, I mean Nathan [her partner] is gonna to die one day, [that] doesn’t mean I’m not going to love him every day.” Is she going to send her partner off to slaughter at some point too? “So, if you’ve chosen to give this animal a life,” she continues, “then I think it’s your duty to give it the best life...um...and give it the best death too...” The best death? Surely being strung up on a hook by one leg and having one’s throat slit as one’s fellows meet the same fate before one’s very eyes is far from the best death one could have.

The glaring contradictions Tarrah is steeped in remain unresolved. Just after assuaging her conscience with the “everybody dies someday” argument, she now admits to being decidedly uncomfortable with the whole business: “We talk and talk in circles and we *try* to be OK with it. We’re *not* OK with it.” And then, again, she contradicts herself. “I

mean you can be OK with it when you look at it in the face.” Tellingly, just as she claims that one can be OK with killing an animal friend if one looks at it in the face, she abruptly *turns away* from the pig into whose face she has been looking the entire time. Her voice, meanwhile, begins to break, and her face shows the subtle contortions of someone trying to hold back tears. After regaining her composure, she eventually returns her gaze to the pig and says lovingly and gushingly, “You look like a good pillow.” She proceeds to lay her head on the pig’s body, mutter its name, and kiss it. Meanwhile, the pig grunts happily away, blissfully ignorant of its impending doom. On slaughter day, also captured in the documentary (perhaps the same day the preceding discussion took place), Tarrah clearly tries to remain upbeat as she lures the pigs into the truck, which will spirit them away to their deaths, but she is clearly upset, and sniffles and averts her eyes as the truck drives off with the hapless creatures inside.⁸⁸ The entire scene is extremely disturbing. One cannot help but feel sorry for Tarrah as well as for the animals. Tarrah clearly feels tormented about what can only be described as one of the most profound betrayals possible—to send ones companions and charges to a premature and terrifying death.

In late capitalist society more generally, our feelings and behaviour toward nonhuman animals are nothing if not saturated in ambivalence and guilt. According to Gary Francione, there is a glaring “disparity between what we say about animals and how we actually treat them,” which, in his view, suggests that we suffer from a kind of “moral schizophrenia.” Most people, he observes, “agree that it is morally wrong to impose unnecessary suffering on animals,” and yet, he argues, primarily as a result of animals’ status as property, we impose unconscionable suffering on tens of billions of them every

year.⁸⁹ Echoing Francione, in her book *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*, Melanie Joy suggests that, although many people see cows and chickens as companions and delight in their presence at places like petting zoos, they nevertheless accept that these same animals, or those very much like them, will be killed so that they can eat them. According to Joy, this bizarre cognitive dissonance is the result of the perpetuation of a triple “mythology” that “eating meat is *normal, natural, and necessary*.”⁹⁰ The “three Ns” are part of the larger ideology called “carnism,” which she defines as “the belief system in which eating certain animals is considered ethical and appropriate,” while eating others is considered unethical and inappropriate.⁹¹ Lesli Bisgould, one of Canada’s most well-known animal rights lawyers, similarly notes that “our relationship with the others in the animal kingdom is confused indeed.” In her view, this confusion comes down to the basic fact of instrumentality and convenience. The animals “that seem handy to us” as food, clothing, tools for research, sources of entertainment, and so on, are the ones that suffer the most extreme violence. The others, who are “handy to us” as pets, are relatively shielded from the most extreme brutality. Although there is increasing exposure of the horrors taking place inside the animal industrial complex, “most of us prefer to look away when someone tries to show us the photographs; while we care on the one hand, we prefer to be oblivious on the other and, as a whole, we are prepared to grab on to the first available excuse in order to protect our turkey dinners, our annual hunting trips, our fur-trimmed jackets, our nice day at the zoo.”⁹² In other words, we are not willing to give up the most inane comforts, even if those comforts depend on inflicting unfathomable

suffering on billions of creatures. There is a glaring lack of consistency in our attitudes towards and treatment of other animals.

Certainly, the concerted effort on the part of governments, corporations, research institutions, and other interested parties to conceal and seal off labs, factory farms, slaughterhouses, and other sites of violence, and to sanitize the brutal business of torturing and killing, also points to the degree to which they are aware of the moral decrepitude surrounding the practices that take place there. One former UK researcher describes how a laboratory specializing in toxicology resembled a military base.⁹³ Labs like this are ostensibly isolated to protect against “animal rights extremists,” but are clearly designed to keep public scrutiny at bay. No one can ask any questions about the research complex if no one knows it exists. If there was nothing to hide, there would be no reason to go to such lengths to conceal the truth.

The complex machinery of concealment surrounding the animal industrial complex is part of what Pachirat calls the “politics of sight” behind all systems of power and domination. Pachirat observes that, “Although we literally ingest its products in our everyday lives, the contemporary slaughterhouse is ‘a place that is no-place,’ physically hidden from sight by walls and socially veiled by the delegation of dirty, dangerous and demeaning work to others tasked with carrying out the killing, skinning, and dismembering of living animals.”⁹⁴ Not only is the brutal business of killing animals concealed from the public, but it is also, counter-intuitively, hidden from the workers themselves by way of elaborate systems of “*surveillance* and concealment” within the confines of the slaughterhouse.⁹⁵ These mechanisms that control who sees what, when, and how, ensure

that “a labor considered morally and physically repellent by the vast majority of society...is sequestered from view rather than eliminated or transformed.”⁹⁶ The system of surveillance, however, also functions paradoxically by “*removing* barriers to sight, by eradicating obstacles that create possibilities for darkness and concealment,” by, for example, designing the facility so that workers can be seen from almost every angle, just as in Jeremy Bentham’s infamous Panopticon prison design.⁹⁷

This dual exposure and concealment of death factories epitomizes our ambivalence and guilt surrounding our treatment of animals by pegging the “blame” for the horrors on the workers themselves, whose dual concealment and exposure leaves the rest of us immune to scrutiny, just as similar treatment of prisoners absolves the rest of society of its responsibility to ensure that all people are properly provided for, are able to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, and are therefore not compelled to get involved in criminal activities. As Pachirat aptly points out, however, contrary to the old animal rights motto that if slaughterhouses had glass walls no one would eat meat, the exposure of violence does little to quell it and may even only inure people to it further.⁹⁸

Narcissism, Sadomasochism, and the Authoritarian-Supremacist Personality

Narcissism, sadomasochism, and the development of the authoritarian-supremacist personality are also among the pathological tendencies that develop in response to the repression of animality. In the classical Freudian formulation, narcissism occurs when “an individual retains his libido entirely within his own ego and expends none of it on object-cathexis.”⁹⁹ In other words, with its libidinal desires for others thwarted by repression, the

narcissist redirects its attention towards its ego (i.e. itself). The ego seeks to compensate for the lost external object of libidinal desire by reproducing that object, or a substitute for it, internally. As Freud explains further, the ego “adopts the features of the object, it so to speak presses *itself* on the id as a love-object; it seeks to make good the id’s loss by saying, ‘There, you see, you can love me too—I look just like the object.’”¹⁰⁰

Although the contents may be very different, a similar process appears to be at play in the development of the narcissism endemic to human supremacism. As we have seen, by its very nature, human supremacism promotes an inflated sense of the importance, nobility, specialness, and greatness of human beings in the grand scheme of things. The human supremacist/narcissist proclaims that humans are at the proverbial centre of the world, at the top of the species hierarchy, and simply the most wondrous of all creations for our intellectual and moral superiority. Yet, as Freud has also shown, the narcissist does not in fact love itself, but the “ego-ideal” which, as we saw above, is constituted by everything we consider to be the “higher presence’ in man.” While in Freud’s analysis this higher presence was equivalent to God the Father, in our analysis God is only one element of an ego-ideal; another element is the concept of the “Human” itself. Just as in Freud’s analysis the ego feels inadequate in comparison to the great Father, so the human being may be said to feel inadequate in the face of the myths we perpetuate about our comparative excellence.¹⁰¹ Also like the classic narcissist described by Freud, the (collective) human supremacist subject is, by all accounts, very likely profoundly insecure on some level. At the very least, the self-love it fosters is inherently deficient because it is a compensation for the love of another (i.e. other animals) that cannot be fulfilled in our current system of

extermination. The human supremacist or narcissist is not inspired by genuine admiration for human talent—because such admiration could and should go hand in hand with admiration for other animals’ and *their* respective talents—but rather by the fact that in systematically objectifying and degrading other animals, it has no one else to “love” but itself (i.e. as a member of the great human race).

The human supremacist subject also shares characteristics of the “authoritarian personality,” described by Fromm. There is the “passive-authoritarian,” the “masochist” who bows to power, and the “active-authoritarian,” the “sadist,” who wields power, but they are two sides of the same coin, and are ultimately expressions of the same pathology.¹⁰² Fromm suggests that the defining feature of the authoritarian personality is the “inability to rely on one’s self, to be independent . . . to endure freedom.”¹⁰³ The development of the authoritarian personality is the outcome of bad faith or the flight from the responsibility integral to nondestructive and nonrepressive freedom. Fromm attributes this “bad freedom” to the increasing alienation of the individual throughout modernity, mentioned above.¹⁰⁴ In being destabilized thus, the individual resorts to submissiveness and “compulsive and irrational activity.”¹⁰⁵ The rise of capitalism, of course, has compounded the individual’s atomization and the pathological behaviours it results in.

Although Fromm’s discussion of authoritarian personality is based on his observations of *political* totalitarianism (i.e. fascism), late capitalist society in the 21st century also exhibits elements of both the masochistic and sadistic variations of the authoritarian personality. As our discussion of technological rationality has evinced, like both the passive and active authoritarian, the subject in late modernity is clearly in flight from freedom (she

prefers to sacrifice the difficulty of genuine freedom, autonomy, and critical thinking to the security, material comforts, and leisure time the voluntary submission to the apparatus of domination guarantees). Human supremacist and animal exterminationist ideology in particular have created the conditions whereby, rather than embrace the possibility of a freedom without domination (i.e. a “good” freedom) and accept the risks and small “sacrifices” of gratuitous comforts (such as meat and dairy and visits to the zoo and circus) such freedom entails, the subject prefers the easier path of false or bad freedom and so keeps the wheels of the machinery of extermination turning. Despite the opportunities for desublimation it offers, this bad freedom is a thinly disguised subservience to a repression and to bigoted ideologies, which themselves partially stem from an insecurity as to what humans’ position in the universe is.

To be sure, not every individual in advanced industrial society harbours “feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance.”¹⁰⁶ However, *as a society* our political and ethical passivity in response to animal extermination is arguably a manifestation of the masochist tendency to identify with forces of domination. According to Fromm “nature” is one of the “outside forces” a masochist may blindly subordinate itself to. But most of all, the masochist, who is afraid to think or act independently, identifies itself with *institutional* and ideological powers. As Fromm explains further, the masochist seeks to “become a part of a larger unit, a pendant, a particle, at least a small one, of this ‘great’ person, this ‘great’ institution, or this ‘great’ idea.”¹⁰⁷ As noted above, the “Human” (defined in contradistinction to the “Animal”) is arguably one of these “great” units and ideas, while of

course agribusiness and the biomedical and pharmaceutical industries comprise some of the “great” institutions to which our society remains in thrall.

The human supremacist personality also shares with the active-authoritarian or the sadist the desire to “master and control another individual, to make him a helpless object of one’s will, to become his ruler, to dispose over him as one sees fit and without limitations.”¹⁰⁸ The sadist, of course, has a penchant for cruelty. “Humiliation and enslavement are just means to this purpose,” Fromm notes, “and the most radical means to this is to make him suffer; as there is no greater power over a person than to make him suffer, to force him to endure pains without resistance.”¹⁰⁹ As we have seen, in the case of human-animal relations, sadism is often expressed in isolated acts of cruelty, such as torturing cats or kicking already severely injured and sick chickens around factory farms like footballs. This is the most explicit manifestation of the sadistic tendency to “wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer.”¹¹⁰ But, as Fromm crucially points out, sadism is not limited to individual *acts* of cruelty, but in fact characterizes the *institutions* that make up any fascistic society.¹¹¹ Certainly factory farms, laboratories, circuses, and zoos are nothing if not sadistic institutions.

Not coincidentally, Fromm notes that reducing the objectified other to something edible is another feature of sadism. The sadist exhibits “the impulse not only to rule over others in this absolute fashion, but to exploit them, to use them, to steal from them, to disembowel them, and, so to speak, to incorporate anything eatable in them.”¹¹² It is unlikely Fromm is referring to disembowelling and eating animals specifically here, but the applicability of this tendency to our attitude towards and treatment of other animals is

striking. What greater sense of absolute power could one assert than literally masticating and digesting the body of one's victim?

Mimesis and Maniacal Laughter

Not only does repression not eradicate its object but, Freud explains, "there is an unmistakable tendency to restore the repressed idea in its entirety."¹¹³ One way we attempt to revive the lost other is through identification and imitation, another distinguishing feature of melancholia.¹¹⁴ Mimesis is also one of the manifestations of the "compulsion to repeat" the repressed drive. One on hand, mimesis can have a therapeutic quality. For example, Freud explains that the tendency to "repeat the repressed matter as an experience in the present" typically occurs in the course of therapy as a part of the "transference" process, and is intended to alleviate the neuroses that have developed as a result of repression.¹¹⁵ Mimesis occurs inasmuch as the therapist stands in for the object of the repressed drive. In the context of a system of violent domination, however, mimesis is not therapeutic but an instrument of domination itself. Horkheimer's theory of mimesis illustrates this process well. In his view, repressed nature or animality returns in the form of a "revolt" against the subject that has repressed it. This revolt occurs when the human subject mimics the very nature she aims to transcend. Horkheimer paints a vivid picture of this mimetic tendency at play in Nazi Germany:

Anyone who ever attended a National-Socialist meeting in Germany knows that speakers and audience got their chief thrill in acting out socially repressed mimetic drives. . . . The high spot of such a meeting was the moment when the speaker impersonated the Jew. He imitated those he would see destroyed. His impersonations aroused raucous hilarity, because a forbidden natural urge was permitted to assert itself without fear of reprimand.¹¹⁶

The “raucous hilarity” these impersonations evoked is an example of what Adorno and Horkheimer call “wrong,” “diabolical,” “ringing,” and “sadistic” laughter. Wrong laughter resounds with the subject’s subordination to coercive power. It spews forth from the mouth of the oppressor and falls onto her victims, only compounding their degradation. Such laughter is “wrong” because it is on the side of oppressors, not the oppressed. It “is laughter when there is nothing to laugh about.”¹¹⁷ Rather than foster reconciliation, wrong laughter “parodies” the possibility of reconciliation.¹¹⁸ It understands only humiliation and violence. Genuine celebratory or “reconciled” laughter, on the other hand, “resounds with the echo of escape from power.”¹¹⁹ It too involves the bursting out of the repressed drive, but it is directed at the forces of domination rather than their victims. It is the laughter of resistance, of freedom (the laughter evoked, for example, by clowns like Charlie Chaplin or the Marx Brothers).

The Nazis’ ridicule of Jews in the Third Reich is replicated in the widespread ridicule of other animals in the media, in popular culture, and in our jokes at the dinner table today. As the repressed animal revolts within us, we engage in acts of brutality normally ascribed to other “vicious” animals who, in reality, would cause us no harm if we simply left them alone and/or treated them kindly. Certainly those who engage in deliberate acts of sadism against other animals imitate the vilified “beast” who, they imagine, ravages her victims without recourse to moral restraint. But it is they who lack moral restraint, not their animal victims. The very machinery of violence is itself an imitation of the cold, amoral violence we associated with animality. Though it is controlled, efficient, and bureaucratized, it tears living creatures from limb to limb

without a second thought, and effectively swallows them alive, just as our cultural imaginary imagines animals do to each other. Indeed, as Reich has noted, the capacity to systematically torture and murder on a massive scale is a uniquely human one, yet somehow, perversely, we peg this tendency onto other animals and animality.¹²⁰

Charles Patterson draws out the connection between the Nazi's mockery of the Jews being led to their deaths in gas chambers, and animals being led to their deaths in slaughterhouses. "At Treblinka and Sobibor," he explains,

the SS called the tube [which led to the gas chambers] the 'Road to Heaven' (*Himmelfahrtsstrasse*). At Treblinka the Germans placed a dark curtain they took from a synagogue over the entrance to the building that contained the gas chambers. On one it was written in Hebrew: 'This is the gate through which the righteous may enter.'¹²¹

He goes on to point out that "The same blend of mocking irony and self-exculpation is evident in the agribusiness industry in the United States. Dr. Temple Grandin, an animal scientist employed by the meat industry, calls the ramp and the double-rail conveyor she designed to funnel cattle to their deaths the 'Stairway to Heaven.'"¹²² Lab animals are also often the butt of researchers' jokes. As Steve Best has noted, "A Maine lab specialized in breeding sick and abnormal mice that go by names such as Fathead, Fidget, Hairless, Dumpy, and Greasy."¹²³ Such names are reminiscent of comic book or cartoon characters, and are perhaps partly meant to distance the researchers from the horrors they are responsible for. Whatever the case, these names are especially demeaning and inappropriate given the degree of suffering and humiliation these creatures are already experiencing as a result of their injuries and deformities. Science reporters presenting stories on animals are often inappropriately sanguine and jocular.

Hilary Jones, who reported on the development of transgenic chicken eggs, for example, resorts to what cannot be described as anything other than cheap humour at the expense of already debased creatures. In a “wink, wink and nudge, nudge” to her readers she quips, “In answer to the old conundrum, the transgenic egg came before the chicken.”¹²⁴ These puns and jokes not only trivialize the unfathomable suffering of the billions of animals languishing in their crates and cages in factory farms and laboratories, but also undermine the validity of any meaningful ethical scrutiny of the practices taking place there.

Radio presenters seem to revel in animal jokes because of the quick and easy chuckles they apparently induce in the listeners. The ridicule of animals appears to be a staple of “As it Happens” (AIH), a popular Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) news commentary show. For example, in 2009 Barbara Budd, one of the show’s hosts, relayed the story of a pig who had managed to escape from a transport vehicle on the way to slaughter, only to be hit by a car on the highway and killed. But rather than take this incident as an opportunity to question the ethics of animal transport and factory farming (a potentially reconciliatory gesture) the host demeaned the pig further by making a pun about how the poor creature ended up, despite his best efforts, just another piece of “pork on the grill.” In 2012, AIH did a report on the impending construction of highways in the middle of emus’ “ever-dwindling habitat” in New South Wales Australia, and described the unsuccessful efforts to resolve the problem by building underground tunnels for the emus to travel through instead. Rather than focus on the glaring injustice of slicing through other animals’ habitats to make way for yet more vehicles, AIH chooses not only to make light of the emus’ plight, but to ridicule them for their “stupidity.” In the words of AIH host Jeff

Douglas, “The emu has a lot going for it: lush plumage, intimidating height, strong claws at the end of powerful legs. Too bad it’s a complete idiot.” He explains that the plan for redirecting the emus to underground tunnels is destined to fail, not because traveling underground is obviously completely unnatural and probably terrifying to emus, but “because emus are so preternaturally stupid.”¹²⁵ In all of these cases, there is laughter where there is nothing to laugh about.

The *raison d’être* for circuses, zoos, aquaria, and other animal theme parks is to serve as sources of entertainment, thrills, and amusement. In the case of circuses, for example, the juxtaposition of animals’ bodies with distinctly human artefacts such as bicycles or hula hoops is the principal source of wrong laughter. A bear riding a giant tricycle, or an elephant balancing on a ball, is “funny” in its awkwardness, in its unwieldiness, its ineptitude, and its disproportionate size in relation to the object at hand. The spectators’ laughter is evoked in part by how ridiculous the creatures look doing things that are entirely unnatural to them.

Marineland, a tourist attraction in Niagara Falls, Ontario, which is currently under investigation by the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) for various forms of negligence—including, among other things, poor water quality resulting in peeling skin and blindness, and lack of enrichment—attempts to lure in customers to experience a “fun-filled show,” where they will “see high-flying dolphins perform amazing flips and other awesome feats.”¹²⁶ Of course, animals only “learn” to perform such “awesome feats” after months and years of relentless physical and psychological torment by their “trainers.”¹²⁷ Marineland assures potential spectators that they “will fall in love with

adorable walruses and *enjoy the hilarious antics of their comical sea lion friends.*¹²⁸ Given the link between mimesis and wrong laughter, it is not coincidental that, as John Sorenson also notes, Marineland is also equipped with several mechanical rides to provide added thrills. As he explains, “Marineland’s website presents these mechanical devices in such a way as to suggest that, through some unexplained process, the excitement they provide is imbued with the essence of the captive animals caged nearby.”¹²⁹ In other words, in another example of mimesis—and the false reconciliation it engenders—these rides are meant to reproduce the physical glory, speed, strength, and immensity associated with the diminished creatures wallowing in despair in the tiny tanks nearby.

Putting animals on display for derisive amusement has a long sordid history which is intimately interwoven with colonialism and imperialism. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century, P.T. Barnum (the forebear of today’s circus monolith Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus) began a profitable enterprise “exhibiting various human ‘freaks’ as well as exotic nonhuman animals.”¹³⁰ As Sorenson has noted, “the zoo is a fundamental construct of imperialism.” Building on Randy Malamud’s insights into zoos as “a model of empire” Sorenson points out that, “In these institutions, animals are used as specimens that demonstrate the imperial power to penetrate and control the world, to collect and to order.”¹³¹ This power is not only displayed in the capture, collection, and confinement of animals, but, as we have seen, in their explicit mockery as well. The laughter which reverberates through the audience of these shameful spectacles is the diabolical laughter that reverberates across any totalitarian regime.

Dennis Soron has noted that there is now a growing market for “road kill novelties,” in the form of souvenirs and toys, which are also meant to inspire giggles. Road kill products include candy in the shape of animal corpses with tire-treads imprinted on them or stuffed animals with missing and broken eyes, tails, and limbs. These consumer products have silly names like “RoadKill Kitties,” “Rikki-Tikki Roadkill,” and “Trolli Road Kill Gummi Candy.”¹³² The producers of road kill commodities capitalize on the “yuck factor” of the squashed, flattened, disembowelled, mutilated animal bodies scattered on the side of every roadway. And, like any other fetishized commodity, road kill novelties serve to highlight and obscure the violence involved in their production.¹³³

In an even more nauseating display of diabolical humour, Dutch artist Bart Jansen used the body of his dead cat to create a gruesome spectacle for an exhibit at an art festival. As Guardian reporter Jonathan Haynes explains, “After his cat Orville died, Dutch artist Bart Jansen decided to give him a new lease of life ... by having him stuffed, attaching propellers to him and flying him around as a radio controlled helicopter.”¹³⁴ (As per usual, the reporter’s choice of words is itself meant to cause some guffaws. “New lease on life,” get it?!) The cat’s body is splayed into an “X” shape, with all four limbs stretched to their outer limit, and with propellers attached to each one. When not in flight, the cat’s body is held up by two long plastic rods. The facial expression of the cat is eerily one of shock and terror—as though the cat cannot quite believe the humiliation, desecration, and indignity his former human companion and caregiver is subjecting him to.¹³⁵

As Carol Adams observes, wrong laughter is often specifically directed at both women and animals. As one example, Adams describes the cover of a “satirical” magazine

called *Playboar* that circulated in the early 1980's, which featured the photo of a dead pig named "Ursula Hamdress" (after the Swiss actress Ursula Andress), sitting spread-eagled on a chair wearing women's panties, and posed to appear as though she was masturbating.¹³⁶ In a similar gesture of dual objectification, the cover of a joke book (found by the present author in a US bookstore) shows a real decapitated and de-feathered hen, propped against a brick wall in an alleyway, posed to look like a prostitute, holding a cigarette, and puffing smoke out of her hollow neck. The violated body of the dead hen is equated with the soon-to-be-violated body of the almost-dead prostitute. Both the dead hen and the dead pig function as absent referents for the rape of women—i.e. both are "transmuted into a metaphor for someone else's existence or fate."¹³⁷

To be sure, *some* jokes involving animals may be an unconscious gesture in the direction of reconciliation. In Freud's view, jokes can be healthy outlets for repressed unconscious desires or acts of rebellion against the unnatural strictures of "ruthless morality."¹³⁸ As products of repression they may also indicate a repressed desire that needed to be released, exposed, and thereby relieved.¹³⁹ In this regard, the frequent use of animal imagery or analogies in jokes, idioms, and figures of speech may reveal society's underlying need to give voice to the repressed animality dwelling in our own unconscious, in our own bodies, and to our discomfort with the knowledge of our collusion in atrocities against other animals. But, as noted, the healthy release of repressed impulses, drives, and inclinations in the form of humour *never* deride those who are already laid waste by the excesses of a dominant power. Reconciliatory and nonrepressive humour *always* side with the persecuted, never with the persecutor. Any humour that is genuinely meant to restore

our connection to our lost animality would make a mockery of our irrational attitude towards animals, rather than their imagined irrationality, stupidity, hideousness, barbarism, viciousness, and goofiness. Sadly, if it exists at all, such therapeutic and/or reconciliatory laughter is much less common than laughter at the expense of other animals, which positively abounds in contemporary culture.

Occasionally, wrong laughter is self-directed but rarely as a reconciliatory gesture. For example, with ninety-eight percent of their DNA shared with us, with a strikingly similar physique and mannerisms, but covered in fur, the chimpanzee is the *animal* double (the doppelgänger) of the human being, and is often used to represent idiotic versions of ourselves. A double sado-masochistic humiliation is at play when a chimpanzee is made to don human clothing (a staple of satirical cartoons, TV, and movies for decades). Both the chimpanzee and her human counterpart are mocked—one for being not-quite-human, and the other for being almost-animal. This kind of thrill is also part and parcel of the thrill of the “uncanny” Freud outlines.

Animal Uncanny

Though the experience of the uncanny is not a neurosis per se, it taps into unconscious and repressed fears and desires. The very term “uncanny” (*Unheimlich*), Freud relates, contains a dual and ambiguous meaning. On the one hand, *Unheimlich* means literally “un-homely,” or more generally, that which is “unfamiliar.” Our experience of the uncanny arouses horror, fear, or dread.¹⁴⁰ Yet in order for something to be *Unheimlich* it must first have been *Heimlich*. *Heimlich* means “belonging to the house, not strange, familiar...dear and intimate, homely.”¹⁴¹ We identify the familiar with that which is

contained or concealed in an intimate, private space, like the home, and the unfamiliar with that which is exposed and revealed.¹⁴² Hence German philosopher Friedrich Schelling's remark (quoted by Freud) that the uncanny is "everything that was meant to remain secret and hidden and has come into the open."¹⁴³ This exposing of what was hitherto concealed becomes a source of terror, even though, paradoxically, it is that which is most intimately known to us.

According to Freud, any depiction of a double or *doppelgänger* also arouses a feeling of the uncanny. In depictions of the *doppelgänger* in literature, he explains,

a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other's self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged....The double was originally an insurance against the extinction of the self...[but] the meaning of the "double" changes: having once been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death.¹⁴⁴

To look into another animal's eyes is uncanny because encountering our *doppelgänger* de-stabilizes our artificial sense of ourself as not-animal. The subjugated animal other is the uncanny harbinger of death, inasmuch as its ravaged body reminds us of the (attempted) expulsion of our animality. Theodore Roethke's poem, "The Bat," captures this jarring impact of the *doppelgänger*: "But when he brushes up against a screen / We are afraid of what our eyes have seen / For something is amiss or out of place / When mice with wings can wear a human face."¹⁴⁵ In a similar vein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty underscores the way in which other animals faces are like mirrors of our own, and that to behold them both reveals and conceals our own animality:

...this relationship is an ambiguous one, between beings who are both embodied and limited and an enigmatic world of which we catch a glimpse (indeed which we haunt incessantly) but only ever from points of view that hide as much as they

reveal, a world in which every object displays the human face it acquires in a human gaze.¹⁴⁶

The animal face—and the “face” of the other which, in Emmanuel Levinas’ terms, solicits our ethical responsibility not to kill it and to protect it from harm—haunts us like the memory of our own (repressed) animality.¹⁴⁷ In the eyes of other animals we see the challenge to their oppression, their implicit rebuke of human arrogance, and the irreversibility of what makes us and other beings *animal*: our embodied vulnerability. Thus, while our animal doubles may be, in one sense, the harbingers of death, in their eyes we may also glimpse *the promise of a new life*.

Freud’s notion of the uncanny certainly captures the psychic struggle that results from the joint repression of our own animality and our extermination of other animals—the struggle that results from our longing for connection with other animals, on the one hand, and our contempt for animals, on the other. The animal is that which is both familiar and feared, hidden and revealed. According to White, other animals evoke the uncanny through their voices because, though they speak without words, we can nonetheless understand what they are saying. White describes a scene in William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* to illustrate this point: “Coming from out of the wild and voiceless darkness, the sounds of the honking geese, in their uncanny proximity to speech, mock the ineffectuality of language.”¹⁴⁸ Language itself, White suggests, is permeated with and grounded in the “other-than-human.”¹⁴⁹ But it is not only animals’ voices that arouse in us a feeling of the uncanny—their bodies, especially when pacified for human amusement, can also arouse a sense of *das Unheimlich*. “Exotic” animals on display at zoos are both familiar and foreign, and that is part of their attraction, while the circus is a kind of orgy of

the uncanny. As noted earlier, the crowds are not only amused but also dazzled and terrified by the contorted animals they see before them. In coercing other animals into performing actions reserved normally for humans, in pressing the more-than-human into a human mould, we closed the gap between the strange and the familiar—but only artificially. For what is *truly* familiar about these animals is their need for freedom and independence, social interaction with their family members, peers, and friends, spontaneous and varied activity, safe spaces in which to live, explore, and play, sensual fulfillment, love and care—the same needs that shape and give meaning to our own lives.

The uncanny is also at play when other animals resist their subjugation. In 1994 a female elephant named Tyke killed her trainer, Allen Campbell, in front of a crowd of spectators at Circus International. She then made a run for it down the streets of Honolulu, trying desperately to find *home*, before she was gunned down by the local police. Tyke was “meant” to be kept hidden in some dark stall and exposed under the glare of circus lights, but burst out into the open air and outside the confines of human domination, if only momentarily. And so she had to be terminated. As Adorno and Horkheimer remind us: “Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized....Nothing is allowed to remain outside since the mere idea of the ‘outside’ is the real source of fear.”¹⁵⁰

Fleeting glimpses of animals in the photographs and images of the “wilderness” in National Geographic magazines, for example, also inspire a sense of the uncanny. There is something vaguely familiar in the faces of these more-than-human creatures, whether mammals, amphibians, or insects, which reverberates through the recesses of our unconscious. But we are also struck by their “outsideness,” by the total unfamiliarity of the

particular space-time continuum(s) they inhabit, of their alien “styles of being.” We are reminded that the “open” is in a sense the *outside*. It is a place of being that is *open to all beings* and not, as Martin Heidegger claimed, the exclusive province of humans.¹⁵¹ Indeed, it is humans who, in our routinized, operationalized, mechanized lives have closed ourselves off from the open—a point encapsulated in Reiner Maria Rilke’s *Duino Elegies*: “With their whole gaze / animals behold the Open. Only our eyes / are as though reversed / and set like traps around us, keeping us inside.”¹⁵² Our efforts to achieve transcendence through reason has lead us into a self-imposed homelessness. The “emergence” of “self-awareness, reason and imagination,” according to Fromm, has “made man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe....He is set apart while being a part; he is homeless, yet chained to the home he shares with all other creatures.”¹⁵³ We have exiled ourselves from our proper home amongst our fellow beings-in-the-world, alienated ourselves from the embodiment we continually try, in vain, to transcend. In beholding these creatures, we catch a glimpse of who we unconsciously long to be: ourselves.

Animal Fantasies

Freud posited that the function of dreams is to fulfill dreams that cannot be fulfilled in reality. Our collective “dream-life” as expressed in popular culture also seeks to fulfill unfulfillable dreams. Even as we dream up ever more diabolical ways to *desubjectify* animals, we recreate them symbolically on screen and in other media, desiring to *resubjectify* them. Melanie Klein notes that fantasies of violence are often accompanied or followed by restorative ones. In the case of infants, she explains, “if the baby has, in his aggressive phantasies, injured his mother by biting and tearing her up, he may soon build

up phantasies that he is putting the bits together again and repairing her.”¹⁵⁴ As Gary Steiner has observed, “the history of the West is marked by a conspicuous tension between fanciful depictions of a peaceful ideal state and the *factum brutum* of violence.”¹⁵⁵ These “fanciful depictions” to which Steiner refers, are at least partially compensatory. Through them we seek to restore to life to the animal bodies we have so savagely violated in reality. Like the band of brothers who attempt to atone for their sin of patricide by resurrecting the murdered father in the idea of God, so we attempt to compensate for the murder of our fellow sentient beings in bucolic images of happy, healthy farm animals grazing and sunbathing in lush fields, joyously bounding about, scratching, sniffing the earth, cuddling their human companions, in animated films and storybooks. These scenes reflect a repressed desire to reconstitute objectified animals as subjects.¹⁵⁶ According to Reich, we also attempt to redeem the animals we malign in reality by resurrecting them as paragons of goodness in our fantasy life. In these same fantasies, we condemn ourselves for the misdeeds we commit against other animals in our waking life. In Reich’s words, “In his fantasies, man appears as a mechanical, vicious, overbearing, heartless, inanimate monster, while the animal appears as a social, kind, fully alive creature, invested with all the human strengths and weaknesses.”¹⁵⁷

On one hand, such images assert the powerful claim of the erotic imagination against enlightenment rationality. As Adorno and Horkheimer observed of the “culture industry” of their own time, “Cartoon and stunt films were once exponents of fantasy against rationalism. They allowed justice to be done to the animals and things electrified by their technology, by granting the mutilated beings a second life.”¹⁵⁸ On the other

hand, this reversal is politically impotent when restricted to fantasy alone. Indeed, such images can serve to assuage the conscience and so perpetuate rather than challenge domination. In her analysis of the proliferation of animal images in cell phone advertisements and mass media, Jody Berland describes the promise of reconnection to other animals granted by such images and the products they are promoting. She explains that, “The pictures of animals promise a sense of attachment and security which might feel analogous to the ‘natural’ connection between animals and man, and which is waiting to be fulfilled the way a love-struck teenager waits for a phone call.”¹⁵⁹ Ironically, cell phones and other digital communication technologies may in fact increase our distance from animality by, for example, turning our attention from the sounds of *real* birds chirping in the trees around us to the sounds of electronic ring tones. Moreover, as Berland further points out, and reinforcing what we have already suggested, there is a glaring disconnect between the images of human-animal harmony in mass culture and the reality of the devastating impact the production and disposal of cell phones have on the health and well-being of other species.¹⁶⁰ For the most part, restorative images are misleading and often deliberately designed to conceal ongoing violence and brutality. Nonetheless, so hungry are we for a renewed connectivity with our lost animal kin that we allow ourselves to be duped by the telecommunications’ companies false promises of “connection.” By and large, images of happy animals are not restorative, then, but instead “merely confirm the victory of technological rationality over truth,” and disguise the brutal reality of our domination of other beings with an imaginary counterpart, without actually effecting any real transformation.¹⁶¹ As Freud explains, in many cases, art only

superficially reconciles the reality principle with the pleasure principle.¹⁶² In his work, the artist re-animates the repressed pleasure principle without threatening the established order. But there is a deception involved inasmuch as the artist “shap[es] his fantasies into a new kind of reality, which are appreciated by people as valid representations of the real world.”¹⁶³ When people look at the artist’s work, they are momentarily convinced that the canvas (or screen) depicting the fantasy world is really just a *mirror* of reality. The artist is able to deceive others into believing that he is somehow living proof of this other world “only because other people feel the same dissatisfaction he does at the renunciations imposed by reality.”¹⁶⁴ But especially in the case of commercial or commodified cultural expression, such collective self-deception ultimately perpetuates this dissatisfaction. Adorno and Horkheimer emphasize how easily art can reinforce rather than challenge the status quo: “As long as art does not insist on being treated as knowledge, and thus exclude itself from praxis, it is tolerated by social praxis in the same way as pleasure.”¹⁶⁵ In other words, so long as art remains simply a representation of an unattainable ideal, and not the stuff of actual change, it reproduces what *is*, at the expense of depicting what *ought* to be.

Marcuse’s Vision of Reconciliation: Orpheus, Narcissus, and Mutual Adoration

Our analysis thus far indicates that civilization is so bound up with animal repression that the possibility of reconciliation can be nothing more than negligible. Certainly, as we saw above, Freud rejected the possibility of conceiving of a society not bound to repression more generally. However, as we also noted, the early Frankfurt

School repudiated this view, and instead argued to the contrary that a dialectical reading of psychoanalysis pointed to the possibility of a nonrepressive civilization, of re-appropriating Eros for the healthy development of the human as an intellectually, sensuously, and aesthetically fulfilled being.

The reconciliation of humans, nature, and animals, and of human beings with their repressed animality, are central features of the nonrepressive civilization that Marcuse imagines emerging at the dialectic's resolution. Marcuse illustrates his vision of a re-erotized human who renounces dominating power over other animals (and other humans) through a re-telling of the myths of Orpheus and Narcissus. (Marcuse's use of these myths of course, is to inspire praxis, not to falsely pacify human beings into inaction by presenting them with beautiful but unattainable visions.) Both myths represent the antithesis of the performance principle. Learning from Narcissus—whose love was not for himself as such, but for the *water* out of which his reflection shone—and from Orpheus—who shared aesthetic pleasure and companionship with other animals—the personality can be re-erotized to challenge the sway of the performance principle on the subject. The re-erotization of the personality involves the celebration of play and pleasure and of taking pleasure in the unadulterated joy and voluntary self-display of other animals. In watching other beings play and display themselves, Eros is potentially liberated from its enslavement to the performance principle. As Marcuse explains,

The Orphic and Narcissistic experience of the world negates that which sustains the world of the performance principle. The opposition between man and nature, subject and object, is overcome. Being is experienced as gratification which unites man and nature so that the fulfillment of man is at the same time the fulfillment, without violence, of nature. In being spoken to, loved, and cared for, flowers and

springs and animals appear as what they are – beautiful, not only for those who address and regard them, but for themselves, ‘objectively.’¹⁶⁶

This scenario would be the fulfillment not of the pleasure principle—which, with its frenzied and unrestrained pursuit of the organism’s pleasure *at all costs*, contains the seeds of destruction and violence—but of the Nirvana principle, the principle of peace, and of the return of Eros and Thanatos to their lost unity.¹⁶⁷ In Marcuse’s readings of these myths, human and nonhuman beings engage in harmonious relations without any hint of instrumentality. It is only by being recognized as subjects in their own right that other beings are restored to their essence, are freed from the constraints of having to be something for someone else’s use, and are simply allowed to be who and what they are. More than that, and crucially, animals, as Marcuse describes them here, are self-objectifying subjects, perhaps not in exactly the same way that humans are or can be self-objectifying, but in the sense that their lives matter to them. They are self-objectifying because they treat their own lives as a project—again, not necessarily consciously or in the same way that humans do, but in their own way, in the sense that they actively seek out pleasurable and satisfying activities, such as soaking up the sunlight, resting, nuzzling a friend, for these activities are part and parcel of their telos. As Marcuse explains further, “The Orphic and Narcissistic Eros awakens and liberates potentialities that are real in things animate and inanimate, in organic and inorganic nature. . . . These potentialities circumscribe the telos inherent in them as: “just to be what they are, ‘being-there,’ existing.”¹⁶⁸ Simply existing is more complicated than one might imagine. It requires the correct conditions, conditions we ruthlessly deny our fellow creatures. But if we were to put a stop to our rapacious violence, we would benefit as much as the other animals. For,

as Marcuse has shown, the relationship comes full circle. In being loved and cared for, other animals are able to be, and therefore to show themselves in all their glory. And in beholding such splendour, human beings are able to remove the heavy armour of repression and relax into their own newly discovered state of self-acceptance and peace.

As we have seen, gawking at animals on display in aquariums, zoos, and circuses would entail the negation of the Nirvana principle—for animals in such contexts are not displaying themselves but rather are *put on* display through acts of coercion. The human viewers are in thrall not with the animals but with their own power over them. As we have also seen, an element of ridicule is always present in such contexts as well. The endless pacing back and forth of the tiger across its tiny, barren cage, the “dancing” or psychotic head rolling of the elephant permanently chained at the foot in a dark, cement enclosure, represent the triumph of the performance principle and of Thanatos over Eros—for these wretched, lonely, abused animals are as good as dead. The Nirvana principle is active, however, when we stand in humble awe of other animals, watching them being themselves, on their own terms.¹⁶⁹ As we will discuss in more detail in chapter four, this humility is crucial to challenging our oppressive and exterminationist attitude towards other animals.

Marcuse also offers Narcissus not as a symbol of solipsistic self-interest—Freud’s characterization of the first few years of infancy—but rather of our potential for nontotalizing relationality with and love for nonhuman beings. As we remarked above, when Narcissus gazes with love at his own image in the water, he is enraptured not only with himself, but also with the other: nature or the more-than-human. In short, he does

not project himself onto nature or impose a singular meaning upon the latter (as European humans did with the transition to enlightenment) but rather sees himself as a part of and as constituted by nature:

The love of Narcissus is answered by the echo of nature. . . . His silence is not that of dead rigidity; and when he is contemptuous of the hunters and nymphs he rejects one Eros for another. He lives by an Eros of his own, and he does not only love himself. He does not know that the image he admires is his own.¹⁷⁰

Narcissus' naïvete represents the humility that human beings need to develop if we are to have any hope at reconciliation. Narcissus teaches us to love ourselves by loving the other and giving it priority.

If Narcissus can be seen as the symbol of the triumph of Eros over modern humanity's hatred of itself as a natural being, as an *animal*, Orpheus represents our potential reconciliation with both ourselves and other animals. In Marcuse's words, "the song of Orpheus pacifies the animal world, reconciles the lion with the lamb and the lion with man."¹⁷¹ This reconciliation and pacification is not coercive. It is brought about by the cultivation of gentleness, respect, and humility. Marcuse is of course not calling for us to tamper with lions genetically so that they would no longer regard lambs as prey, but recalls Isaiah's prophesy of peace in order to inspire transformative praxis.

Following from this, we can reiterate what we stated in the general introduction, that although the violent domination of other animals is inextricably linked with the development of civilization as we know it now, and has caused severe psychic and emotional injury to individuals and to society more generally, it is possible to envision another, healthier civilization. As long as animals remain reduced to raw material and

reified commodities, and as long as humans remain in thrall to their omnipotence, the human subject will remain internally fragmented and corrupted, and the possibility of historical transformation will be as remote as ever. To avoid falling into such a self-defeating trap, one of the principal historical tasks is to *remember* what we have lost, or perhaps not yet found, in the course of the development of exterminationist civilization. As Marcuse reminds us, collective remembrance must be transformed into action. In his words, "Remembrance is no real weapon unless it is translated into historical action."¹⁷² If we wish to see and think clearly, and act justly, we must embrace a praxis that restores our repressed animality to its fullest expression. Only then might we take up our proper position amongst the other beings-in-the-world.

¹ A shorter version of this chapter appeared under the title “Animal Repression: Speciesism as Pathology,” in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), 177-194. This chapter has been adapted from the original with permission from the editor.

² Rudolph Höss, *Death Dealer: Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, trans., Andrew Pollinger, ed. Steven Paskuly (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 161f.

³ Erich Fromm, *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis: Essays on Freud, Marx, and Social Psychology* (Greenwich: CT: Fawcett Publications, 1970), 44.

⁴ It should be noted that while I examine specific cases of trauma experienced by those who have been directly involved in harming and/or killing animals, such as slaughterhouse employees or laboratory technicians in animal research facilities, my main objective is to identify certain pathological tendencies which characterize our attitudes towards and treatment of other animals *as a society*, and to outline how repression and neuroses shape the contours, substance, and trajectory of the ideology of human supremacism/exceptionalism and extermination specifically. Although I draw to some extent on representations of animals in the media and popular culture, as well as on comments from those who have worked within the animal industrial complex, to illustrate how some neurotic tendencies manifest themselves in popular culture, my analysis remains primarily a *theoretical* exploration.

⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. David McLintock (London; New York: Penguin, 2002), 76.

⁶ Freud cited in Simon Boag, “Freudian Repression, the Common View, and Pathological Science,” *Review of General Psychology* 10 (2006): 74, accessed May 14, 2013. doi: 10.1037/1089-2680.10.1.74.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, trans. John Reddick (London; New York: Penguin, 2003), 48.

⁸ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 55.

⁹ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 60f.

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, “The Future of an Illusion,” in *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London; New York: Penguin, 2004), 130.

¹¹ Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1969), 10; 11.

¹² Fromm, *The Crisis*, 62. As Fromm points out, Marx also used the term “repression,” perhaps anticipating Freud’s eventual preoccupation with it. Fromm, *The Crisis*, 74.

¹³ Erich Fromm, “The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx’s Theory,” *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium*, ed. Erich Fromm (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1966), 241.

¹⁴ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) 4-5.

¹⁵ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, xvii.

¹⁶ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 87.

¹⁷ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 38.

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- ¹⁸ Gad Horowitz, *Repression: Basic and Surplus Repression in Psychoanalytic Theory: Freud, Reich, Marcuse* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 2.
- ¹⁹ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 37.
- ²⁰ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 44.
- ²¹ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 45.
- ²² Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 48.
- ²³ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 8.
- ²⁴ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 10.
- ²⁵ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 104.
- ²⁶ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 104.
- ²⁷ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 108.
- ²⁸ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 20; 5.
- ²⁹ Sigmund Freud, "One of the Difficulties of Psychoanalysis," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 67 (January 1921): 36f, accessed May 17, 2013, doi: 10.1192/bjp.67.276.34. Also cited in Charles Patterson, "The Great Divide: Animals and the Holocaust," *Tikkun* 18, no. 3 (May/June 2007), 77.
- ³⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Fixation to Traumas: The Unconscious," in *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis—Part III* (1916-17), Lecture XVIII, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVI, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 284f.
- ³¹ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 26.
- ³² Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 29.
- ³³ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 25.
- ³⁴ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 26.
- ³⁵ Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 82.
- ³⁶ Asher Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature, and History* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 6.
- ³⁷ Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature, and History*, 50.
- ³⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men (Second Discourse)," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 127.
- ³⁹ Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature, and History*, 4.
- ⁴⁰ Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), 64.
- ⁴¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 204.
- ⁴² Freud cited in Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 39.
- ⁴³ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 39.
- ⁴⁴ Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971), 335f.
- ⁴⁵ Barbara Noske, *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals* (Montreal; New York: Black Rose Books, 1997), 28.

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- ⁴⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 481f.
- ⁴⁷ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 39.
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- ⁶⁹ Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds*, 55.

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- ⁷⁵ Christopher T. White, "The Modern Magnetic Animal: *As I Lay Dying* and the Uncanny Zoology of Modernism," *Journal of Modern Literature* 31, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 90.
- ⁷⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 207.
- ⁷⁷ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 55.
- ⁷⁸ Boag, "Freudian Repression," 76.
- ⁷⁹ Freud, *The Unconscious*, 25. Freud's italics.
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- ⁸² Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 72.
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- ¹¹¹ Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 162.
- ¹¹² Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, 143.
- ¹¹³ Freud, *The Unconscious*, 44.
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- ¹¹⁵ Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 56.
- ¹¹⁶ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 79.
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- ¹⁵¹ According to Heidegger, “Plant and animal are suspended in something outside of themselves without ever being able to ‘see’ either the outside or the inside, i.e., to have it stand as an aspect unconcealed in the free of Being.” Although Heidegger does distinguish between stones, machines, and other animals, he still denies the latter access to “the open.” “And never would it be possible for a stone, no more than for an airplane, to elevate itself toward the sun in jubilation and to move like a lark, which nevertheless does not see the open.” Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 160. In his analysis of this and other passages in *Parmenides*, Giorgio Agamben also notes contradictions in Heidegger’s thought and argues that in fact for Heidegger “the animal is at once open and not open.” As a way out of this metaphysical bind, Agamben posits that we “let [the animal] be *outside of being*,” and abandon the question of Being altogether Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 59; 91f.
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- ¹⁶⁹ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 165.
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- ¹⁷¹ Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 166.
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Chapter Four

**The Ecstasy of Being Animal: Reconstituting, Re-enchanting, and
Reconciling the Human and Nonhuman Animal Subject**

*Be. And, at the same time, know what it is not to be.
That emptiness inside you allows you to vibrate
In resonance with your world. Use it for once.*

*To all that has run its course, and to the vast unsayable
Numbers of beings abounding in Nature
Add yourself gladly, and cancel the cost.*

Rainer Maria Rilke¹

*And these one and all tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am.*

Walt Whitman²

*Believe in the simple magic of life, in service in the universe, and it will dawn on you what this waiting,
peering, 'stretching of the neck' of the creature means. Every word must falsify; but look, these beings live
around you, and no matter which one you approach you always reach Being.*

Martin Buber³

Our discussion thus far has established that both the human subject qua animal and the animal subject qua animal are in great peril, in theory and practice, and within and beyond the corridors of academia. We have seen that animals that are trapped in the infernal animal industrial complex are ravaged beyond recognition, and that neoliberal capital has created the conditions for and capitalized on the fragmentation, disorientation, and dissolution of human subjects as well. We have examined how the complicity and active participation in the exterminationist system requires human being to systematically repress and estrange themselves from their own animality—a process that results in

profound psychic turmoil and neuroses. Despite their mutual degradation, the reconstitution, re-eroticization, and reconciliation of human and animals subjects is possible. This chapter aims to lay out a theoretical framework for this undertaking.

With the various aspects of the deprived state of human and animal subjectivity in mind, the primary objective is to develop a theory of the subject that escapes the constraints of totalizing humanist metaphysics on one hand, and the differently but equally totalizing poststructuralist and posthumanist anti-metaphysics on the other. A related goal is to return to the proverbial drawing board to redefine the contours of animal subjectivity outside the confines of the prevailing technoscientific worldview, which has been indelibly shaped by the reductive frameworks of mechanism and behaviourism and the frenetic and irrational logic of neoliberal capitalism. I seek to achieve these multiple and overlapping objectives by building on Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jacob von Uexküll's phenomenologies of human and animal subjectivity, David Abram's phenomenological animism, and, in the final section, Theodor Adorno and Emmanuel Levinas' respective accounts of nontotalizing intersubjectivity.

The chapter begins by examining Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll's critiques of traditional accounts of consciousness, before moving on to explore ethologists' angle on the same issue. I demonstrate how phenomenologists' reconfiguration of the human and nonhuman animal subject as embodied purveyors of meaning, coupled with ethologists' discoveries into the emotional, social, and cognitive depth of animal subjectivity, are integral to rehabilitating animals as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life. I conclude by suggesting that the re-enchantment of nature and animals, and the cultivation of awe for and wonder

at the mystery, magnificence, and resplendence of nonhuman animals are integral to the project of reconciliation. Phenomenology advances the project of re-enchantment and reconciliation by actively cultivating a sense of reverence for the natural world and its inhabitants, while Levinas' "philosophy of infinity" and Adorno's "negative dialectics" contribute to it by each positing a metaphysics that strikes a balance between onto-epistemological "proximity" and "remoteness," or "identity" and "non-identity," between the subject and other (or object).

Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Idealism, Empiricism, and Behaviourism

One of the chief goals of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological project was to uncover the dynamism, intricacy, and depth of human, and to a lesser extent, nonhuman subjectivity, which idealist, empiricist, mechanist, and behaviourist perspectives had respectively occluded and/or denied. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty was not directly concerned with eliminating the structural oppression of nonhuman animals per se, nor of teasing out the nuances of human and nonhuman relationality or intersubjectivity as such. In fact, as Bryan Smyth duly notes, Merleau-Ponty's thought was decisively "humanist" inasmuch as he was ultimately more concerned with investigating human animality, than animals and animal subjectivity as such. Yet, at the same time, Smyth agrees with ecophenomenologist David Abram's equally tenable claim that Merleau-Ponty was at best a "recalcitrant humanist," which is to say that although he was committed to advancing the Marxist humanist project of creating the conditions for human beings to flourish and fulfill their entelechy, he sought to do so by radically redefining the terms of that

fulfillment without subscribing to the human supremacist orientation of humanism.⁴

Whatever the nature of Merleau-Ponty's humanism, and whatever his aims in developing a phenomenology of embodiment, however, his reconceptualization of the nature of human and animal subjectivity carry enormously important ethico-political implications for the transformation of our attitude towards and relationship with other animals.

According to Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine, phenomenology has a central role to play in drawing attention to the intricacies and significance of human and nonhuman relations. In their words,

Phenomenology is set apart from other theoretical methods by its unique capacity for bringing to expression, rather than silencing, our relation with nature and the experience of value rooted in this relation.... For environmental philosophers, phenomenology suggests alternatives to many of the ingrained tendencies that limit our inherited perspectives: our myopic obsession with objectivity, our anthropocentric conceptions of value, and other legacies of Cartesian dualism.⁵

Although the authors here emphasize phenomenology's importance for environmental philosophy and ecology specifically, phenomenology is also of especial value for animal philosophy and CAS because of its bold affirmation of animal subjectivity in and amidst a tradition drenched in zoophobia (pathological fear and hatred of animals). The emerging field of ecophenomenology, for example, is a natural development in the trajectory of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which not only rejected Cartesian dualism and other problematic accounts of consciousness and subjectivity, but posited a holistic account of human being's relationship to the natural world.

In the footsteps of the founder of phenomenology Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Merleau-Ponty sought to challenge the basic presuppositions of behaviourism and naturalism, namely, the notion that natural phenomena operate on the basis of causal laws.⁶ From *The Structure of Behaviour* (1942) to his last posthumously published book *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964), Merleau-Ponty's main objective was to break out of these scientific and philosophical molds and blaze the trail towards an entirely new understanding of human and nonhuman animal beings as shaped primarily by their perceptual experience of and embeddedness in the world. Building on the phenomenological approach established by Husserl—who was responding to what he saw as the “crisis of European sciences,” or the European sciences’ subscription to the view that there was a unified, and entirely graspable, “objective” reality—Merleau-Ponty turned his philosophical attention “back to the things themselves.”⁷ He also focused on the way in which human (and nonhuman) subjects are inextricably linked with and grounded in an intimate, meaningful, and intentional relationship with the phenomenal world of objects and other subjects, but which nevertheless exist in their own right prior to any constituting consciousness.⁸

Merleau-Ponty also took idealist metaphysics (which he also called “extreme subjectivism”) to task. His chief grievance against idealist metaphysics, especially as postulated by Descartes and Kant, is that it artificially severs consciousness (mind) from embodied existence, and insists that the “real” (i.e. the world) does not exist without validation from (human) consciousness.⁹ Cartesian dualism and Kantian subjectivism are flawed because “the relations between subject and world are not strictly bilateral: if they

were, the certainty of the world would, in Descartes, be immediately given with that of *Cogito*, and Kant would have not talked about his ‘Copernican revolution.’”¹⁰ In other words, if there was a strict dichotomy between subject and object, and mind and body, Descartes would not have had to have gone to the trouble of doubting the existence of the world, for everything would have been immediately revealed to him in his consciousness, while Kant would not have had to have attempted to reconcile idealism and empiricism.

While Merleau-Ponty dispenses with idealism, his refutation of Descartes and Kant does not translate into a wholesale affirmation of empiricism (which he referred to as “extreme objectivism”). On one hand, as Thomas Baldwin points out, Merleau-Ponty accepts classical empiricist George Berkeley’s view that it is impossible to conceptualize anything that one cannot perceive or that is inherently imperceptible.¹¹ On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty rejects Berkeley’s view that thoughts are limited to sense experience—a principle upon which Logical Positivism later established its claim that all truth or falsehood can be ascertained on the basis of “objective” observation.¹² The main flaw of objective thought is that “it is unaware of the subject of perception.”¹³ Merleau-Ponty also notes that, ironically, empiricism closely resembles idealism inasmuch as like the latter it tends to place the subject at one remove from sensuous experience and treat the body as an object or as an “elemen[t] of a system of experience.”¹⁴ In other words, the idealist assumes that the subject is able to cognitively analyze its sensory experiences on the basis of a priori knowledge or categories, while the empiricist reduces perception to an event within a pre-fabricated world.¹⁵ As a result of these combined flaws, Merleau-Ponty contends that neither empiricism nor idealism will do. Rather,

to do justice to our direct experience of things it would be necessary to maintain at the same time, against empiricism, that they are beyond their sensible manifestations and, against intellectualism [i.e. idealism], they are not unities in the order of judgment, that they are embodied in their apparitions.¹⁶

As this indicates, Merleau-Ponty sympathizes with and builds on the Kantian attempt to find a middle-way between empiricism and idealism. As we know, Kant argued that both empiricists and idealists were correct in some ways: empiricists are right to contend that empirical concepts are acquired by way of experience, and rationalists/idealists are correct in assuming that a priori concepts create the conditions for the possibility of experience and thought. Merleau-Ponty did not disagree with Kant on these points.¹⁷ However, Merleau-Ponty is ultimately disappointed with the outcome of Kant's famous intervention. In particular, Merleau-Ponty was dissatisfied with the lingering dualism between thought and experience in Kant's analysis, and between (the conscious) subject and the objects it constitutes. In Kant's theory of the synthetic unity of apperception, the transcendental subject remains sovereign and arbitrarily removed from the objective world, which it organizes on the basis of the a priori categories of judgment.¹⁸

Merleau-Ponty not only rejects the inadequate and misleading accounts of human consciousness and subjective experience presented by both idealism and empiricism, but also takes issue with the inaccurate representation of nonhuman animal consciousness and subjectivity in mechanistic and behaviourist science. He is especially nonplussed by behaviourists' tendency to flatten animal experiences into "nothing other than the setting in motion of a very large number of autonomous circuits."¹⁹ Against this position, Merleau-Ponty retorts that "in its functioning the body cannot be defined as a blind

mechanism, a mosaic of causally independent sequences.²⁰ In viewing animal behavior thus, behaviourism fails to account for the nuances of animal consciousness and subjective experience—that is, for the intentionality and meaning which govern and imbue every action an animal subject undertakes. It also fails to account for the way in which the vicissitudes of the environment, such as the textures, colours, smells, shapes, and so on, weave together to form the multilayered fabric of perception, not to mention how other subjects within these environments influence and shape an animal's mood and attitude.

Although Merleau-Ponty did not necessarily take a stand against animal experimentation as such, he certainly challenged the validity of laboratory experiments conducted on animals precisely because they failed to account for the animals' intentional relationship with their lived environments and with the humans with whom they were in contact in the lab. Merleau-Ponty notes that when reflex theory in particular forms the framework for animal experiments, it necessarily distorts the truth. In his words,

The reflex as it is defined in the classical conception does not represent the normal activity of the animal, but the reaction obtained from an organism when it is subjected to working as it were by means of detached parts, to responding not to complex *situations* but to isolated *stimuli*. Which is to say that it corresponds to the behavior of a *sick organism*²¹—the primary effect of lesions being to break up the functional continuity of nerve tissues—and to 'laboratory behavior' where the animal is placed in an anthropomorphic situation since, instead of having to deal with those natural unities which events or baits are, it is restricted to certain discriminations; it must react to certain physical and chemical agents which have a separate existence only in human science.²²

This critique is deceptively understated. To suggest that all animals in the laboratory environment are always already "sick organisms" effectively disavows the entire practice of laboratory experimentation as a whole. As Merleau-Ponty sees it,

laboratory experimenters fail to recognize that there is a radical disjuncture between the objects, substances, and environment that are natural to animals and those they impose on them. As such, their findings are not entirely credible.

In *World of Perception* (1948), Merleau-Ponty makes a similar point but emphasizes that when animals are expected to perform tasks that are meaningless to them, the animals inevitably and unfairly come across as deficient and even ridiculous. If we truly wish to understand other animals, we must evaluate them on their own terms—that is by observing them engaging spontaneously and naturally with the world around them. Merleau-Ponty approvingly points out, for example, that German psychologist and phenomenologist Wolfgang Köhler

rightly observed that the originality of the animal world will remain hidden to us for as long as we continue (as in many classical experiments) to set it tasks that are not its own. The behavior of a dog may well seem absurd and mechanical if we set it the task of opening a lock or working a lever.²³

As this passage indicates, Merleau-Ponty rejects the mainstream philosophical and scientific tendency to measure all species' ability or character on the basis of a rigid set of criteria stemming from the experience of the human species.

Jacob von Uexküll, from whose work Merleau-Ponty borrowed heavily, was also dissatisfied with reflex theory, behaviourism, and mechanism and, like Merleau-Ponty, scoffed at the traditional approach to animal experimentation for its failure to account for animals' meaningful relationships with their surroundings and the subjects and objects therein. Although Uexküll was not a philosopher per se, his scientific phenomenology as laid out in his *Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (1934) and his *Theory of Meaning*

(1940) also established a framework for refuting objectivist, subjectivist, mechanist, and behaviourist accounts of human and animal life on one hand, and for re-establishing animals' status as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life, on the other. Uexküll contends that it is, or certainly ought to be, taken for granted that animals' behaviour cannot be reduced to "the mechanical progression of life forces," and that, to the contrary, even the most minute action such as blinking an eye "begins with perception and ends with effect."²⁴ He laments that behaviourists and "machine theorists," as he aptly calls them, ignore the fact that "every animal is bound to a certain dwelling-world," a self-contained environment defined by the contours of the animal's needs, aims, desires, and inclinations. In refusing to accept the possibility that "an animal could ever enter into a meaningful relationship with an object," their experiments typically fail to yield illuminating results.²⁵ If, for example, the experimenter places animals in front of the same objects or situations over and over again with slight variations added in here and there, and then expects to be able to decode their responses through mathematical calculations and measurements, more often than not she will be disappointed and/or misled by the results. The reason a rat may choose a particular pathway down a maze, for example, is not because it is too "stupid" to see that another, easier route has been introduced by the experimenter, but because she became familiar with and habituated herself within one route that took on a particular meaning for her.²⁶ Indeed, with this in mind, it is the experimenters who appear somewhat "stupid" in their refusal to acknowledge that the nuances of context and environment are as important to other animals as they are to humans, not to mention their attempt to force animals to conform to distinctly human behaviours.

In a similar vein, Merleau-Ponty chastises “classical thinkers” like Descartes for comparing nonhuman animals to human beings rather than evaluating them on their own terms. In the work of Descartes and other like-minded scientists, he complains, “Little attempt was made to understand the way that [animals] themselves lived; instead the emphasis fell on trying to measure how far their efforts fell short of what the average adult or healthy person was capable of accomplishing.”²⁷ When measured according to human standards, nonhuman animals almost always fall short. But, as we will see in a moment, phenomenology and ethology’s alternative conceptions of consciousness and subjectivity preclude characterizing animals as mere objects of control and/or *imperfect* subjects. Although other animals’ experience in the world is recognized for being markedly *different* from that of human beings, it is no less complex or valuable in the phenomenological (and ethological) account. When we acknowledge that even the slightest movement, gesture, or action on another animal’s part is profoundly significant *for that animal*, it is simply untenable to suggest that it is inferior.

Ethologists’ Critique of Traditional Scientific Accounts of Animal Consciousness

Ethology adds another dimension to the phenomenological account of the subject by supplying information about the emotional, social, cognitive, and psychological experiences of other animals. Although behaviourism underwent some reforms between the early and late twentieth century, we learn from Donald R. Griffin (1915-2003), a pioneer of ethology and the study of animal consciousness, that the question of whether or not animals could think and/or had conscious awareness was still hotly debated within

scientific circles until the 90s. For example, in his book *Animal Minds* (1922) Griffin points out that, although behavioural psychologists no longer necessarily adhered to a strict behaviourist mantra that all actions are simply automatic responses to external stimuli, and instead acknowledged that a number of “internal...cognitive processes,” including memory and anticipation, were integral to both human and nonhuman behaviour, they were still much more skeptical about the prospect that there was such a thing as animal *consciousness* or conscious *awareness* as such.²⁸ Griffin attributes this obstinacy to the “lingering residue of behaviourism,” and to the notion that animals live in a “closed world”—a world closed both to them and to us. He laments that “contemporary behavioral scientists tend to limit their investigations of animal cognition to patterns of information processing within the central nervous systems of the animals they study and ignore the possibility that subjective mental experiences may occur and may influence behaviour.”²⁹ Griffin surmises that scientists are so threatened by the prospect of attributing consciousness to other animals that, to avoid “allowing what seem like subversive notions of subjectivity to get a foot in the door,” they concoct a variety of alternative and wholly implausible explanations for animal behaviour.³⁰ He also observes that the majority of scientists deny animal consciousness, not only because they fear rocking the mainstream scientific boat, so to speak, but also because they find it difficult to “prove rigorously” how animal consciousness manifests itself.³¹ Instead of admitting that their frame of reference is too limited, they hastily conclude that animals are simply devoid of consciousness altogether. For Griffin, such a view is not only unconvincing but hinders scientific advancement as a whole. As he pointedly argues, “This antipathy to

consideration of consciousness threatens to become a sort of self-inflicted paralysis of inquiry, an obsolete hindrance to scientific investigation.”³² Unfortunately, this “antipathy” and “paralysis” still taint mainstream approaches to animal science today.

Contemporary ethologists following in Griffin’s footsteps have convincingly demonstrated that to suggest that consciousness is limited to a certain form of human consciousness is transparently motivated by a desire to keep the species divide and the corresponding structure of domination in place. As Jonathan Balcombe has observed, for example, “When scientists, legislators, ethicists or anyone else question the existence of consciousness in other animals it feels like the earnest quest for some elusive keystone with which to reinforce the crumbling wall dividing ‘us’ from ‘them.’”³³ Balcombe points to psychologist Euan Macphail’s denial of animal consciousness as a prime example of what Griffin aptly called “species solipsism.”³⁴ For Macphail, the inextricably linked capacities for language and abstract and logical reasoning are the key criteria for the existence of consciousness. While some animals can communicate with words, and indeed show other forms of intelligence comparable to the intelligence of humans, Macphail refuses to acknowledge that such capacities indicate the presence of consciousness. In his view, “it is possible to imagine computers that have been programmed to perform in a way that is just as ‘clever’ as some instances of animal cleverness, but still doubt whether the installation of cleverness alone is sufficient to guarantee consciousness.”³⁵ Although Macphail’s book *The Evolution of Consciousness* in which this passage appeared was published in 1998, these comments are chillingly reminiscent of Descartes’ unfounded claim that some animals’ ability to speak is a mere mechanical reaction.

Balcombe points to other theorists of consciousness such as philosopher Daniel Dennett for further examples of the anthropocentric account of consciousness which seems to be deliberately defined so as to exclude other animals from its purview. For Dennett, a conscious mind demonstrates “the ability to concentrate, to be distracted, to recall earlier events, to keep track of several things at once, and the ability to notice or monitor features of its own current activities.” Because nonhuman animals do not necessarily meet all of these criteria, they are at best capable of “unconscious thinking,” or making and using representations without being aware that they are doing so.³⁶ Balcombe, nor any other ethologist for that matter, would never deny that there are unique features to human consciousness. To the contrary, Balcombe fully acknowledges that human consciousness has its own specific characteristics: “The human brain, coevolving with our dexterous hands, allows us to excel at things—technology, architecture, textiles, literature and lasagna, for example—that set us apart from other animals.” Nonetheless, he properly insists that “ours is still just one type of brain among many. It is not the largest (some whales’ brains are much larger); nor are humans uniquely endowed with any special types of nerve cells.”³⁷ In short, contrary to popular opinion, our ability to bake cakes and fly to the moon does not make us superior to other animals.

Against the traditionally narrow and inadequate definitions of consciousness, ethologists take it for granted that both human and nonhuman animals are conscious beings, even if their consciousness takes on a slightly different quality or form depending on the creature in question. They point out that animal consciousness is varied and diverse, sometimes overlapping with and other times diverging from human

consciousness. As octopus researcher Jennifer Mather put it, “I think consciousness comes in different flavors...Some [animals] may have consciousness in a way we may not be able to imagine.”³⁸ Bekoff makes a similar point and argues, for example, that “dogs are dog-smart and monkeys monkey-smart. Each does what is required to survive in its own world.”³⁹ On this account, every species and every individual animal has a unique but equally valid form of intelligence and consciousness.

Griffin carved out a path for the investigation into animal consciousness. If it is taken for granted that “human conscious thinking is real and important, or that it sometimes influences our behaviour,” he asked, “why then is it out of the question to learn whether nonhuman animals think consciously?”⁴⁰ He notes that Darwin already recognized that much of animals’ communication is an expression of their emotional state. By the 80s and 90s some ethologists had begun to attribute “simple thoughts” to other animals which were also apparent in animals’ myriad forms of communication. But, for Griffin, the main indicator of consciousness is an animals’ behavioural versatility. As he put it “animals often behave in such a versatile manner that it seems much more likely than not that they experience simple conscious thoughts about their activities, even when these are not expressed by communicative signals that we can recognize.”⁴¹ In other words, the variations in their behaviour, whatever its specific contents, alone dispels the myth that animals are automata whose responses are predetermined by instinct or reflex. With this in mind, Griffin posited the following “working definition” of animal consciousness:

An animal may be considered to experience a simple level of consciousness if it subjectively thinks about objects and events. Thinking about something in this

sense means attending to the animal's internal mental images or representations of objects and events. These may represent current situations confronting the animal, memories, or anticipations of future situations. Such thinking often leads to comparisons between two or more representations and to choices and decisions about behavior that the animal believes is likely to attain desired results or avoid unpleasant ones.⁴²

On this definition, consciousness entails a degree of reflexivity, or the capacity to reflect on the past and anticipate the future, and also to strategize. While flexibility and reflexivity are clearly important indicators of consciousness, however, Griffin nevertheless exhorts his readers “to recognize that this working definition leaves open the possibility of more complex sorts of consciousness.”⁴³ Marc Bekoff echoes Griffin's emphasis on flexibility, and provides some examples to illustrate his point:

Animals display flexibility in their behavior patterns, and this shows that they are conscious and passionate and not merely ‘programmed’ by genetic instinct to do ‘this’ in one situation and ‘that’ in another situation. For example, monkeys will choose not to engage in an experiment if they think they'll fail. Research has shown that rats often take a moment to reflect on what they've learned when running a maze; they pause and play back the route in their heads in reverse order and edit their experiences.⁴⁴

While flexibility is clearly a key feature of animal consciousness, other ethologists have identified many other facets. Another indicator of animal consciousness, according to Balcombe, for example, is the fact “dreaming appears widespread among mammals” and birds.⁴⁵ Bekoff adds that dimensions of animal consciousness “include the integration of information from multisensory—visual, auditory, and olfactory—sources and language skills.”⁴⁶ Although Bekoff concedes that it is more difficult to prove that nonhuman animals are *self*-conscious or have a “sense of self” if we define self-consciousness along human lines, it is much easier to do so once we recognize that other animals' know

themselves in ways that are appropriate for their species.⁴⁷ He explains, for example, that “reactions such as surprise, embarrassment, and rapid learning,” especially in response to making errors, are indications of self-consciousness in other animals.⁴⁸ Emotional, social, sexual, and perceptual awareness are also present across the animal world and, at least in some cases, further point to their experience of self-consciousness.⁴⁹

A number of species such as chimpanzees, parrots, crows, and octopuses are known to share a similar kind of conscious experience and form of intelligence as human beings. This does not make them any *more* conscious or *more* intelligent than other animals, of course, it simply means that certain aspects of consciousness cross species lines. Alex the African Grey Parrot, who for thirty years until his death served as the experimental subject of animal psychologist Dr. Irene Pepperberg of Brandeis University, famously exhibited the intelligence of a five-year old child and the communication skills of a two-year old. Alex developed a vocabulary of one-hundred and fifty words with which he, *pace* Descartes and Macphail, was able to *communicate* feelings and ideas. He could also count to six, identify colours and understand a variety of concepts including “bigger” and “smaller.”⁵⁰ Recent research demonstrates that hens exceed toddlers below the age of four in “mathematical reasoning and logic, including numeracy, self-control and even basic structural engineering.”⁵¹ A gorilla named Koko, who was raised and trained by psychologist Penny Patterson, learned to communicate over one-thousand American Sign Language signs. Perhaps even more astonishing, a recent article in Orion Magazine, for example, notes that “recent research indicates that octopuses are remarkably intelligent,” that they “have developed intelligence, emotions, and individual personalities,” and that

researchers' "findings are challenging our understanding of consciousness itself."⁵² Among the signs of octopuses' intelligence—at least a kind of intelligence we humans can most readily recognize because it resembles our own—is their ability to come up with ingenious ways to escape their captivity and evade their captors. One escape plan involves, for example, bouncing off of nets used to trap them and leaping onto dry ground to run for shelter. Other features of octopus consciousness include: their development of lasting affectionate bonds or pronounced disdain for particular individuals (human and otherwise); their expression of affection and dislike by way of gestures (such as gently embracing a friend or spraying water at an enemy); their capacity for foresight, planning, strategizing, and complex tool use; their ability to perform activities such as opening Tylenol bottles with child-proof caps, to quickly master puzzles, to play with objects for fun, to taste and possibly even see with their skin, not to mention to *think with their arms* (even once their arms are cut off from their body!), among other things.⁵³ Leesa Fawcett highlights the impressive ability of certain octopus species to mimic other beings in their environment, such as flatfish, lion-fish, and sea snakes, among others, by radically adjusting their shape and style of movement.⁵⁴ To mimic is not simply to copy, Fawcett rightly insists, but “to extend one’s agency into changing environments and to participate in an ecology of relationships: making worlds along the way.”⁵⁵ Following from Karl von Frisch’s research into bee communication, Bekoff notes that “now there is evidence that honeybees can reason [and] that they know the concepts of ‘same’ and ‘different.’”⁵⁶

Such displays of human-like intelligence may seem remarkable indeed, especially when found in nonmammalian species such as birds, invertebrates, and insects. Of course,

they are only remarkable in the sense that animals have been viewed as automata for centuries. What is truly remarkable is that we have managed to ignore the glaringly obvious intelligence and conscious intentionality of so many creatures for so long, and now must rely on science to “discover” it for us.

Embodied Subjects-of-a-meaningful-life

Uexküll and Merleau-Ponty also help rescue other animals from the oblivion of objectified existence to which they have been condemned for hundreds of years by relocating consciousness in the body in general and the perceptual body in particular. Merleau-Ponty focuses primarily on the embodiment of human beings, but his insights are readily applicable to both humans and animals. As Elizabeth Behnke points out, “for Merleau-Ponty, the body is an ontological emblem that refutes, in its very being, the entire framework of Cartesian dualism.... The human animal is simply another way of being a body...another variant of sensing/sensible sentience with the sensible.”⁵⁷ In direct opposition to Cartesian dualism, Merleau-Ponty insists that the body is the seat of consciousness and that the embodied (conscious) being is always already in the world, and never set apart from it. As he puts it, “...rather than a mind *and* a body, man is mind *with* a body, a being who can only get to the truth of things because his body is, as it were, embedded in those things.”⁵⁸ The body positively oozes with meaning; it is “a nexus of living meanings.”⁵⁹ The body is not passive, inert, mechanical, and unthinking; it is not a composite of parts or a sensory receptor—which, through some kind of linear process, computes sensory data into something meaningful for the subject—nor is it extended

substance. The subject is not at one remove from its body: “I am not *in front* of my body, I am *in* it, or rather I *am* it.”⁶⁰ The subject is not mind, but a “body subject.”⁶¹

The subject’s grounding in the body does not close it off from the world and the beings that inhabit it. Rather, its embodiment opens the subject up to an infinite range of other worlds. The embodied subject is always already engaged in meaningful encounters with and in the world and the objects and beings it encounters.⁶² As Abram explains, for Merleau-Ponty, “far from restricting my access to things and the world, the body is my very means of entering into relation with things,” and of course with other subjects.⁶³ For example, human beings come to know each other through their bodies. As Merleau-Ponty explains further, “Other human beings are never pure spirit for me: I only know them through their glances, their gestures, their speech—in other words, through their bodies.” Likewise, it is through my own body that my own consciousness comes to life and is communicated to others. On one hand, “the other is a body animated by all manner of intentions, the origin of numerous actions and words,” but on the other, one “cannot detach someone from their silhouette, the tone of their voice and its accent.”⁶⁴ In short, it is through another’s body that one registers another’s anger, or any other emotion, as well as their intentions and ideas. On this view, it is less *what* a person says that makes a lasting imprint on another, than *how* they say it. One may not remember all the words that were exchanged between oneself and another, or be able to produce a catalogue of characteristics that define the other, but one will remember what it felt like to be in the presence of the other.⁶⁵

The implications of relocating consciousness and meaning in the body are enormous for both humans and other animals. Grounding subjectivity in the body and re-positioning the subject within the animate world re-animalizes the human subject. As Abram puts it, “ultimately to acknowledge the life of the body, and to affirm our solidarity with this physical form, is to acknowledge our existence as one of the earth’s animals, and so to remember and rejuvenate the organic basis of our thoughts and our intelligence.”⁶⁶ By the same token, with the body as the ground of subjectivity, it is no longer tenable to exclude animals, no matter what their proverbial species stripe, from membership in the community of subjects, or to hierarchize different creatures on the basis of their possession or lack of any given set of traits, qualities, or capacities (such as the usual anthropocentric combination of reason, verbal language, and/or soul). To put it into crude syllogistic form, if animals are bodies, and bodies are subjects, animals are subjects. Of course, animals’ historical designation as bodies qua sheer materiality, matter, and/or immanence, is part and parcel of their desubjectification and objectification. But, as we have seen, the body in Merleau-Ponty’s analysis means something very different than sheer materiality.

Given their relocation of consciousness in the body, it is not surprisingly both Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll explicitly refer to animals as subjects. Against the view that animals are a “mechanical assemblage[s],” for example, Uexküll adamantly and explicitly insists that like humans, other animals are “subjects whose essential activities consist in perception and the production of effects.”⁶⁷ Directly challenging objectivist science, Uexküll insists that “each and every subject lives in a world in which there are only

subjective realities and that environments themselves represent only subjective realities,” the specific contours and structure of which we will examine momentarily.⁶⁸

Although he spends much less time discussing the vicissitudes of animal subjectivity than his Estonian counterpart, as we glimpsed above, Merleau-Ponty is also committed to reintroducing meaning, multidimensionality and depth to other animals' re-embodied lives. For example, in opposition to the traditional metaphysical and scientific view—which, if it doesn't represent animals as things, represents them as overgrown children or developmentally delayed adults—Merleau-Ponty insists that just like the human subject, the embodied animal subject attempts to give shape to its world, that it struggles as the human does to make sense of and orient itself in the world into which it has been “thrown.”⁶⁹ He contends that “the rediscovery of the world of perception allows us to find greater meaning and interest” in animal life than hitherto acknowledged. He also maintains that not only human beings, but “all living things...endeavor to give shape to a world that has not been preordained to accommodate our attempts to think it and act upon it.”⁷⁰ Boldly, Merleau-Ponty asks us to be “prepared to live alongside the world of animals instead of rashly denying it any kind of interiority.”⁷¹ In response to those who limit other animals to the ontological category of substance or extension, Merleau-Ponty rejoins that “the animal...is certainly *another existence*.”⁷² Of course, the animal is not “another existence” in the sense of being just another passive and/or mechanical thing or object, but rather in the sense that it participates in the meaningful perceptual exchange that fuels subjective experience.

In *World of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty flat out rejects the Cartesian view that animals are automata and devotes an entire lecture to explaining how we share the world of meaning with other creatures.⁷³ He states expressly that “this world is not just open to other human beings but also to animals, children, primitive peoples and madmen who dwell in it after their own fashion; they too coexist in this world.”⁷⁴ This statement is obviously incredibly troubling to our contemporary ears for presenting the (and probably white and male) European as the norm. Merleau-Ponty goes so far as to refer to those who fall outside this norm represent “extreme” and “aberrant forms of life,” who, unlike “the healthy, civilized, adult human being” do not “striv[e] for...coherence.”⁷⁵ But he soon qualifies, and even subtly undermines, these prejudicial claims by pointing out that while the “normal” human being seeks a certain kind of coherence, it may not always find it, and therefore may be more like these “abnormal” forms of life than it might like to admit.⁷⁶

Phenomenology adds another dimension to embodied consciousness by emphasizing the role of perception, intentionality, and environment in shaping the experiences of human and nonhuman animal subjects. As we have noted, according to both Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll the subjective experiences of both human and other-than-human animal subjects are steeped in meaning, and the primary vehicle for a conscious meaningful embodied entanglement with and in the world is perception. For both thinkers, perception takes precedence over cognition as the intermediary between subject and world. Of course, like cognitive ethologists, in relocating consciousness and subjectivity in the perceptual body Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll do not deny the existence

or importance of cognition or of analytical reflection for human beings. The point is that, although cognition is certainly one key dimension of human subjective experience, the body subject is conscious of the world and itself *primarily* by way of perception.⁷⁷

Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll's similar accounts of the perceptual relation with other objects emphasizes the interconnectedness of the senses, the unity of the qualities of an object, and what Merleau-Ponty calls the "affective meaning" the object and its various qualities has for the subject.⁷⁸ Merleau-Ponty illustrates this aspect of perception by pointing to Sartre's famous discussion of a lemon in *Being and Nothingness*. The subject's perception of the yellow colour of a lemon cannot be severed from its perception of the sour taste of the lemon. As Sartre puts it, "It is the sourness of the lemon which is yellow, it is the yellow of the lemon which is sour."⁷⁹ The same goes for the perception of other foods and other objects. He continues, "The fluidity, the tepidity, the bluish color, the undulating restlessness of the water in a pool are given at one stroke, each quality through the others."⁸⁰ Uexküll makes a similar point when he suggests that "the sensation 'blue' becomes the 'blueness' of the sky, the sensation 'green' becomes the 'greenness' of the lawn, and so forth."⁸¹ The awareness of blueness and sourness stem neither from ideas, nor from responses to stimuli, but rather from perceptual experience.

On one hand, perception belies any claim to objective scientific truth. The yellow of the lemon is decidedly subjective—which is to say it is based on the subject's experience of the lemon in its mouth. The seeing, tasting, and touching of the lemon happen simultaneously in the subject and have a particular meaning for that subject. On the other hand, perception reaches the being of the object. Perception "is like a beam of light which

reveals the objects there where they are and manifests their presence, latent until then.”⁸² Objective analysis and cognition may highlight certain chemical components of the lemon’s skin and flesh, but it is only by way of each subject’s individual perceptual engagement with the lemon that what the lemon is, at least for that particular subject, is truly revealed.

Crucially, perception is something all animals partake of. Uexküll insists that both human and nonhuman animal subjects live in a “perception world” (*Merkwelt*), and everything they produce through their actions and labours constitutes the “effect world” (*Wirkwelt*).⁸³ Each subject also has its own set of “perception marks” (*Merkmal*), or qualities which perceptually engage the animal, “effect marks” (*Wirkmal*), or indicators of potential uses for object, and “carriers of meaning,” or signifiers in the environment that stand out to the subject in a particular way because they serve a particular purpose in its life and therefore have a particular significance for it.⁸⁴ The objects (and subjects) it encounters are extensions of the environment in which the subject is embedded. As Uexküll puts it, “Every subject spins out, like the spider’s threads, its relations to certain qualities of things and weaves them into a solid web, which carries its existence.”⁸⁵ The number of objects that stand out to an animal in a given environment correspond directly with the number of actions the animal is inclined to carry out.⁸⁶ Any object becomes “a carrier of meaning as soon as it enters into a relationship with a subject,” and every carrier of meaning in turn “becomes the complement of the animal subject.”⁸⁷ Indeed, animals (and humans) never actually relate to “objects” per se but only to carriers of meaning.⁸⁸ This last statement is particularly striking, for it once again underscores that other animals have as

conscious and intentional a relationship with the world they inhabit as humans do; there is no such thing as a neutral object or environment for an animal. But the complexity does not end there. These same carriers of meaning may not even be noticed by other subjects, let alone related to in the same way, for each subject has its own carriers of meaning.⁸⁹

If we accept Uexküll's analysis of perception marks, effects, and tones, it is very difficult to regard other animals' subjective experiences as pale imitations of our own, and/or to reduce their behaviour to mindless instinct or mechanical reaction. Uexküll's analysis suggests that while different subjects engage with carriers of meaning differently, no one experience is more valid than another, whether human or nonhuman. If one imagines the same living room, for example, with the same furniture in it (e.g. a dining table and a set of chairs, a sofa, a bookshelf, a cabinet, a stool, a lamp hanging from the centre of the ceiling), and imagines three different body subjects (human, dog, and fly) inhabiting the space, one must imagine three different sets of perceptual experiences taking place. Different objects will stand out and others fade into the background, or not even really exist at all, in a sense, depending on whether the subject in question is the human, the dog, or the fly. For human beings from the same cultural milieu, all the items of furniture will carry roughly the same effect tones. For the human being, the floor will have a walking effect tone, the bookshelf will have a reading effect tone, and the desk will have a writing effect tone. For the dog, on the other hand, the table is likely to take on an eating tone (it may have food on it), while the floor and couch will take on a sitting tone. The other objects in the room will either blend into the background or take on an obstacle tone. Meanwhile, for the fly, everything will have a "running tone" that is, will be

something the fly simply passes over, except for cutlery and dishes on the table which may have food on them, and also the lamp to which it is drawn for its heat and light.⁹⁰ To further illustrate the different meanings that different objects have for different subjects, Uexküll asks us to imagine an oak tree as it would be perceived by different people. A forester, for example, would very likely see an oak tree as wood, while a little girl might see it as some kind of magical figure, and discern demonic or phantasmagorical faces in the contours of the bark. An owl might notice only the protective wall provided by the oak's branches, while a fox may be concerned primarily with the oak's roots as a den in which it can build its home.⁹¹ One single object may also have different meanings for the same subject, depending on the context, the circumstances, and/or the subject's mood.⁹² For example, a pink sea anemone may have a "protective tone" for a crab who places the anemone on top of its shell as additional protection. But, Uexküll points out, if the crab loses its shell, the anemone may take on a "dwelling tone," and the crab may try (unsuccessfully) to crawl inside of it.⁹³ Likewise, for a human subject, a stone lying on a country road may have multiple meanings. It may simply blend into the background if the person is just strolling along for a leisurely walk, but if the person feels threatened by an approaching attacker, the stone may temporarily transform into a weapon and take on a protective tone. Although each subject perceives the objects it encounters differently, the point is that each one has an intentional experience of the objects it encounters in the first place, and that this perceptual experience is not merely incidental, but is integral to who and what the subject is.

Merleau-Ponty similarly insists that none of the objects with which the subject comes into contact are neutral or universal. The subject endows them with meaning. As Merleau-Ponty explains further,

The things of the world are not simply neutral objects which stand before us for our contemplation. Each of them symbolizes or recalls a particular way of behaving, providing in us reactions which are either favourable or unfavourable....Our relationship with things is not a distant one: each speaks to our body and to the way we live. They are clothed in human characteristics (whether docile, soft, hostile, or resistant) and conversely *they dwell within us as emblems of forms of life we either love or hate.*⁹⁴

In other words, the world is at once brought alive by us and brings us to life by receiving and giving meaning. Indeed, Abram aptly points out that perception is always already “participatory.” In contrast to the objectivist position, which regards the world as passive and inert, the phenomenological position insists that both perceiver and perceived are actively involved in an intentional co-constitutive exchange. This is not to attribute false agency to objects. But rather to emphasize that perception mediates and shapes the subject’s relationships with objects.

Echoing Merleau-Ponty’s rejection of subjectivism and objectivism, Abram maintains that perception is neither “in” me nor “in” the object alone, but between and among both. Abram eloquently describes this interactivity of subject and object in the following passage:

Where does perception originate? I cannot say truthfully that my perception of a particular wildflower, with its color and its fragrance, is determined or ‘caused’ entirely by the flower—since other persons may experience a somewhat different fragrance, as even I, in a different mood, may see the colour differently, and indeed since any bumblebee that alights on the blossom will surely have a very different perception of it than I do. But neither can I say truthfully that my perception is ‘caused’ solely by myself—by my physiological or neural

organization—or that it exists entirely ‘in my head.’ For without the actual existence of this other entity, of this flower rooted not in my brain but in the soil of the earth, there would be no fragrant and no colourful perception at all, neither for myself nor for any others, whether human or insect. Neither the perceiver, nor the perceived, then, is wholly passive in the event of perception.... Perception always involves, at its most intimate level, the experience of active interplay, or coupling, between the perceiving body and that which it perceives.⁹⁵

As a multi-party exchange, perception reconciles the perceiving subject and the objects of perception in a mutually enriching and reinforcing relation. Abram emphasizes the activity of both subject and object and also of the multiple ways a single subject can perceive and experience the same object, depending on the former’s mood. The subject and object are forever entangled in a dance, the steps of which are never quite the same with each passing moment. With the dynamism of subject-object relations in mind, Abram provocatively surmises that, “Prior to all our verbal reflections, at the level of our spontaneous, sensorial engagement with the world around us, we are all *animists*.”⁹⁶

Elaborating on the participatory nature of perception further, Merleau-Ponty explains that each being inhabits a “perceptual field” or a specific environment to which it relates as an extension of itself. He writes, “The perceptual ‘something’ is always in the middle of something else, it always forms part of a ‘field.’”⁹⁷ Uexküll calls this “something” the *Umwelt*. The *Umwelt* is like a perceptual “bubble” that “represents each animal’s environment and contains all the features accessible to the subject.”⁹⁸ As Merleau-Ponty explains,

The *Umwelt* makes the difference between the world such as it exists in itself, and the world of a living being. It is an intermediary reality between the world such as it exists for an absolute observer and a purely subjective domain. It is the aspect of the world in itself to which the animal addresses itself, which exists for the

behavior of an animal, but not necessarily for its consciousness; it is the environment of behavior, as ‘opposed to the geographical environment’ . . .⁹⁹

The *Umwelt* is not made of objective phenomena. Rather, it is the world each subject inhabits and relates to in a particular way depending on its perceptual idiosyncracies. As Uexküll put it, “each and every living thing is a subject that lives in its own world, of which it is the centre.”¹⁰⁰

Like objects, the *Umwelt* is never neutral, universal, or incidental. Rather it is species and subject specific. Echoing Uexküll’s discussion of carriers of meaning outlined earlier, Merleau-Ponty suggests that what shines forth in one *Umwelt* for one subject might fade into the background for another, depending on the subject’s mood.¹⁰¹ Each animal in fact mimics its optimal *Umwelt*. In Merleau-Ponty’s words, there is “a mysterious relation with the animal and the milieu it resembles,” a relation which is severed when the animal is ejected from its home, say the ocean, or the jungle, and placed in a foreign environment, say a small tank at a water park, or a cage in a laboratory, which, more often than not, is hostile for its foreignness.¹⁰² Overall, the concept of *Umwelt* is important for rethinking human-animal relationality because it points to the holistic nature of animals’ subjective experience.

In the phenomenological analysis the same subjective dynamism characterizes the way human and nonhuman subjects relate to the space and time they inhabit. As we already noted in chapter one, Merleau-Ponty insists that there is neither objective space nor objective time. Rather each animal subject dwells within its own spatial-temporal configuration which is shaped by its perceptual nuances, its specific emotional and biological needs, its bodily structure, shape, size, and so on. Uexküll notes that “we

comfort ourselves too easily with the illusion that the relations of another kind of subject to the things of its environment play out in the same space and time as the relations that links us to the things of the *human environment*.”¹⁰³ He also rejects “the widely held conviction that there must be one and only one space and time for all living beings,” and that this one and only space and time is that which is experienced by *human* beings.¹⁰⁴ Such an anthropocentric objectivist view is patently wrong. As Uexküll famously noted, a tick, which can lie in wait for nourishment for eighteen years, clearly has a different sense of time than a human who would die in agony after only a few weeks without food. For the human in such a situation the weeks and days would turn into an eternity, but for a tick, eighteen years might flash by in an instant.¹⁰⁵

The recognition of the participatory nature of perception is crucial to reconstituting the animal subject and reaffirming the richness and depth of animals’ lives. When we accept Merleau-Ponty and Uexküll’s characterization of human and animal subjects as embodied purveyors of meaning, ostensibly mundane or instinctual activities such as foraging for and consuming food, for example, are filled with what can be fairly called *existential* depth. Such activities are not just about ingesting food for the purpose of revitalizing the animal’s store of energy, but are expressions of the very essence of the animal. In the process of acquiring its next meal, the animal is not simply blindly rehearsing a set of pre-established behaviours, but is in fact becoming what it is. The animal’s sense of satisfaction upon achieving her goal is not solely a result of being sated, but also an indication that she has just expressed herself meaningfully to and in the world. When a bird flies through the sky it is not simply getting from point A to point B, but

inhabiting the sky, and fulfilling its telos as a flying-body-subject. It is dizzying just to think of complex perceptual experiences a bird is likely to have on its migration journey, or even flying from one tree to the next. What effect tone does the wind take on, or the sun, or other birds from the same and different species? How does a bird feel when it crosses the ocean in comparison to when it flies over the earth? What does the blue or black of the ocean mean to the bird? What does the smell of the salt mean, or the sound of waves? Does the bird notice these things at all? Turning to another example, in addition to taking on a dwelling tone, a hen's nest may take on a love tone, for she knows her young, who she is tending to so gingerly, will emerge from it one day. When she feels and hears the first pecks through their hard protective covers, the nest may take on a curiosity and excitement tone. And, of course, the same nest will take on an entirely different tone for each chick discovering it for the first time—the tone, perhaps, of the unknown. Perhaps the nest will feel strange, or perhaps it will feel cozy. We cannot say for sure, but we know that the nest, and the eggshells, and the shade, and the sunlight, and the sounds of other animals and insects, will all take on a specific meaning for each and every animal subject who encounters them. The same goes for lions, tigers, sheep, cats, goats, turkeys, chimpanzees, and all the other animals we abuse. Each moment of their lives in an optimal setting is a moment of self-fulfillment (and perhaps self-transcendence, depending on the animal) inasmuch as they are ensconced in houses of meaning alive with activity and dripping with affective substance. If we acknowledge that the objects in the world form tapestries of meaning for other animals, just as do they do for us, and that each animal inhabits its own multidimensional world, it is that much more incumbent upon us

to create the conditions for other animals to have free and unlimited access to these meaningful objects and worlds.

By the same token, when we recognize that animals' internal unity is born of their unity with their *Umwelten*, the cruelties we inflict on them in the animal industrial complex are magnified ten-fold. When we frame subjectivity phenomenologically, it becomes immediately and irrefutably apparent that to deprive animals of even one meaningful object (e.g. grass or sunlight) is already to strip them of several layers of meaningful experience, to say nothing of the devastation we cause when we deprive them of *all* their familiar carriers of meaning. New carriers of meaning undoubtedly present themselves in labs, factory farms, and other sites of violence. The white coat of the lab technician, for example, might be the white of terror, dread, fear, pain, and betrayal for a dog, cat, rabbit, macaque, or rat cowering in its cage. The smell of blood and gore emanating from the slaughterhouse is very likely the smell of desperation and anguish for the cow or pig waiting its turn. For the chimpanzee, the barren cage or crate very likely carries the effect tone, not of housing or protection, but of isolation, deprivation, boredom, and loneliness. For the circus elephant, the grey of its concrete cell is the grey of misery, while the grey of its fellow elephants, if only it could be reunited with them, would be the grey of security and contentment. For the self-mutilating mink in its outdoor cage on the fur farm, the white of snow is no longer the white of home and kin, but of hopelessness.

When examined phenomenologically, the horrors of institutionalized violence against animals are even worse than we hitherto imagined. Phenomenology reminds us that animals not only suffer physical pain and emotional anguish, but, as we saw in the

first chapter, they are also subjected to a process of total phenomenological distortion whereby every object in their environment, and indeed their own bodies, are a source of their own existential negation. Since the animal is irrevocably shaped and transformed by its environment, if the environment and the activities possible in that environment are out of synch with what comes naturally to that animal, the animal's life is stripped of the meaning that makes it worth living. Thus, to provide domesticated animals with spaces that are meaningful for them, and to protect the habitat of nondomesticated animals from destruction, is to create the conditions for these animals to be reconstituted as subjects-of-meaningful-lives.

Balancing Self-Unity and Co-Constitutionality

While it acknowledges the subject's embeddedness within its *Umwelt*, the phenomenological conception of the body subject also insists on the "internal unity" of the subject. As Merleau-Ponty explains, the subject is "gifted with an internal unity" which is characterized by a "kinetic melody gifted with a meaning."¹⁰⁶ Likewise, he contends that bodies "carry within themselves an immanent intelligibility."¹⁰⁷ To be a body subject means to be internally coherent, which puts the lie to any claim that the hybridization of humans, animals, and/or machines, whether in theory or practice, is desirable. Both human and nonhuman animal's perceptual bodies must remain in tact for them to thrive as subjects. Against the posthumanist conceit, then, from the phenomenological perspective, interference in the subject's "immanent intelligibility" and internal cohesion is not liberating but damaging because the subject relies on this coherence to navigate itself in the world. As we saw in chapter one, the embodied subject necessarily reacts

badly to any artificially imposed technological or genetic alterations, for these confuse and jumble the internal perceptual logic which carries its existence.

As we have also noted, the internal unity of each subject is defined by its unique style of being, or its very particular combination of desires, proclivities, preferences, tendencies, and so on. A creature's style of being and its mode of perception, rather than its cognitive capacities or physiological traits, is what distinguishes it from others. As David Wood points out, the subject's *sensual* attunement to the world—especially as expressed through seeing and touching, the two most important senses for phenomenologists—also defines its style of being and underscores its particularity and singularity. In his words, “Seeing (and hearing and touching) is a phenomenon of the differentiation of the world into discrete bodies, including ourselves, that occupy distinct places at particular times, bodies endowed with a mobility that reflects their needs and desires.”¹⁰⁸ Not only does a subject's style of being and mode of touching and seeing, or perceiving more generally, lend it an inexorable uniqueness, but it hurls into obsolescence any rigid hierarchization of beings on the basis of universalized capacities or skills. How similar or different other beings are to human beings is irrelevant in this case, for every being, every subject, is dignified by virtue of having a style that it claims as its own. The fact that there are myriad styles rather than just one is precisely what makes the world an interesting place to inhabit. How dull the world would be indeed, if every subject replicated every other subject's style of being!

Internal unity is at once specific to each individual animal and to their species. Once again, in contrast to hybridity theorists and those who turn their proverbial nose up

at the notion of species-integrity, Merleau-Ponty speaks of the phenomenological importance of *intraspecies unity*. For example, he observes that,

the perceptual relation gives an ontological value back to the notion of species. What exists are not separated animals, but an *inter-animality*. The *species is what the animal has to be*, not in the sense of a power of being, but in the sense of a slope on which all the animals of the same species are placed.¹⁰⁹

The notion of species interanimality as defined here is especially important for our purposes because it debunks atomistic accounts of animal life and emphasizes the fundamental “togetherness” or unity of animals from the same species, and also because it reaffirms the indisputable truth that animals of the same species share certain defining characteristics, all of which find expression through their particular perceptual bodies. As we have seen, if you remove an animal who belongs on one “slope” of being and place it on another, you traumatically disorient and discombobulate that animal ontologically, an unforgivable act phenomenologically (and ethically) speaking. The point is simply that every animal thrives when it is allowed to fulfill *both* its species entelechy and its individual entelechy—the latter of which is partially determined, but not delimited, by the former.

At the same time, as is by now obvious, the internal unity of the subject is never at the expense of its co-constitutionality with other subjects and with the world as such. While clearly asserting ontological distinctiveness between individual beings and species, phenomenology also teaches us that all subjects’ worlds are also ontologically *co-constitutive*, regardless of species. On one hand, each subject remains confined to and defined by its highly specific *Umwelt*. On the other hand, all living beings dwell in the broader

intersubjective world, or what Husserl called, the “life-world” (*Lebenswelt*). As Abram explains, the life-world is,

The life-world is the world of our immediately lived experiences, as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it. It is that which is present to us in our everyday tasks and enjoyments—reality as it engages us before being analyzed by our theories and our science.... *It is not a private but a collective, dimension—the common field of our lives and the other lives with which ours are entwined—and yet it is profoundly ambiguous and indeterminate, since our experience of this field is always relative to our situation in it.*¹¹⁰

In other words, the *Lebenswelt* is at once the world of shared intersubjective experiences and relationships—the pre-cognitive world of immediate but always meaningful sensuous activity and existence—and a world which cannot be universalized because each human and nonhuman animal subject that dwells within it lends it its own unique shape. Putting it another way, while we each live in our own perceptual bubbles, each being’s particular experience in the world impacts that of every other being with whom it comes into contact, and the richness of another being’s world lends a richness to our own.¹¹¹ There are no subjects without their worlds, and there is no world without other subjects. As Brett Buchanan observes, Uexküll’s theory of *Umwelten* is important because his ideas converge to express a unified view that accounts for the significance of all intermeshing environments.... When framed in this way, an organism is never just one. Instead, each organism has a context, an *Umwelt* in which it lives, and, in being so, the organism is always already more than itself. It is the notion of the animal as ‘subject’ then, that is precisely at issue. To know the organism requires knowing its other(s).¹¹²

As we have already seen, the appropriateness of an animals’ environment is a matter of life and death, at least phenomenologically and existentially speaking. If you cut

a string of the subject's proverbial web, you undermine the subject's existence and, indeed, initiate or perpetuate the heartless process of desubjectification.

Merleau-Ponty similarly insists on the co-constitution of the human subject and the world and thereby militates against the solipsism of Kantian idealism. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty maintains that the subject does not dwell in some kind of solipsistic transcendental dimension from which it “emerges” to sense and experience the world, and into which it then recedes in order to analyze and unify those experiences and sensory impressions into a set of universal representations. Nor, as Merleau-Ponty contends, is the phenomenological subject “a *fully-formed man* whose vocation is to be ‘lord and master’ of nature.”¹¹³ Rather the subject is deeply immersed in the latter. Also against the idealist position, Merleau-Ponty argues that the subject is not some kind of invisible spirit that conceptually organizes the world “before” or “after” experiencing it sensually and perceptually, but rather that it understands and makes sense of the world *as* it lives and breathes it. In Merleau-Ponty's words, “Truth does not ‘inhabit’ only ‘the inner man’, or more accurately, there is no inner man, *man is in the world*, and only in the world does he know himself.”¹¹⁴ And, of course, the body is the ground of the subject's intimate interconnection or blending with the world. The body is in the world “as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system.”¹¹⁵ The unity Merleau-Ponty describes is not dominated by one side (*viz.*, the sovereign subject) or the other (*viz.*, the object); it is also not a false unity which undermines the autonomy of the subjects and objects which constitute it. The validation of the real (*i.e.*, the world), and our perceptual engagement

with and in it, do not rely on some kind of synthesizing process that unites sensuous impressions into coherent “representations” on the basis of pre-existing categories of judgment, as Kant maintains.¹¹⁶ Far from being constituted *by* the subject, Merleau-Ponty insists that,

The world is always ‘already there’ before reflection begins—as an inalienable presence. . . The world is there before any possible analysis of mine, and it would be artificial to make it the outcome of a series of syntheses which link, in the first place sensations, then aspects of the object corresponding to different perspectives, when both are nothing but products of analysis, with no sort of prior reality...¹¹⁷

These assertions not only restore to the world its independence from human consciousness, but also open up the *human* subject to a much more “organic”—which is to say unmediated—relationship with the world. In other words, before reflection can take place, there is a more direct relation with or immersion in the sensuous world of objects, things, and other subjects.

That said, phenomenology would never admit of an unconscious engagement with the world, but, as we have seen, insists that the engagement is always intentional. In metaphysical terms, this means that humans are removed from their awkward and artificial position as that which presides over and above the world of things and other beings, and are returned to a comparatively more comfortable position in and among the beings of the world. The human subject is no longer the sovereign constituting subject, but one that engages in a dialectical exchange with other co-constituting subjects and objects who are, like it, at the same time always already autonomous and distinct one from the other. The body, the world, and the things and beings in it form a whole without compromising each subject’s ontological integrity. While the subject blends in with its

Umwelt, and is always already in contact with other beings and other subjects, the idiosyncratic contours of its subjective life are paradoxically cast into sharper relief as a result of its *presence* within a particular environment.

In his last writings before his untimely death in 1961, Merleau-Ponty was working out a philosophy of “flesh” that brought the earth and its human and nonhuman inhabitants into even closer contact than in his earlier work. In his final work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty explains that “The thickness of the body, far from rivalling that of the world, is on the contrary the sole means I have to go unto the heart of things, by making myself a world and by making them flesh.”¹¹⁸ Flesh is not a physical substance but an “‘element’ of Being,” that every being both is and inhabits. As he puts it, “To designate [flesh], we should need the old term ‘element,’ in the sense that it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of *incarnate principle* that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being.”¹¹⁹ Flesh is the element that brings to life the predominant phenomenological senses mentioned above: vision and touch. As flesh, the subject touches and is touched, sees and is seen. While it is by touching and seeing that the subject makes its particular mark on the world, it is also by touching and being touched or seeing and being seen that subjects are infolded in each other. There is a “‘thickness of flesh’ between the seer and the thing” that is “constitutive for the thing of its visibility as for the seer of his corporeity; it is not an obstacle between them, it is their means of communication.”¹²⁰ For Merleau-Ponty this thickness of flesh permeates the lifeworld as such and is the lifeline between subject and object and subject and subject,

but, importantly, it does not collapse the two into an indiscriminate mess. Rather, flesh is the life force, the incarnate principle, of the lifeworld. Through flesh, beings and objects communicate with, transform, and shape each other. The movements of the hand, for example, “incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange.”¹²¹ Phenomenologically speaking, touch can be understood in many ways; we do not only touch bodies, but also worlds.

Certainly touch is especially important for rethinking human and other-than-human animal intersubjective communication and sociality beyond the framework of domination.

Alphonso Lingis captures this fleshy co-constitutionality between human and nonhuman animal subjects beautifully in the following passage:

The movements and intensities of our bodies compose with the movements and intensities of toucans and wolves, jellyfish and whales.... The hand of the child that strokes the dolphin is taking on the surges of exuberance that pulse in its smooth body while the dolphin is taking on the human impulses of intimacy forming in close contact with the child’s face.¹²²

What Merleau-Ponty calls flesh, Lingis calls “intensity,” which sizzles with a kind of electromagnetic energy between and within beings. This intensity is not mechanical, of course, but is permeated with emotion. The child feels exuberance, while the dolphin, Lingis posits, revels in a moment of intimacy with a strange creature.

In his later work, Merleau-Ponty also refers specifically to human and animal intersubjectivity and co-constitutionality. In notes published in *Visible*, for instance, Merleau-Ponty proposes writing a book that would include a discussion of or “a

description of man-animality *intertwining*.”¹²³ In *Nature*, Merleau-Ponty posits what he calls “interanimal flesh,” a phenomenon he first attempted to capture with the term “interanimality,” mentioned above. Interanimal flesh is constituted by “humanity that grounds the animal as animal, and animality that grounds man as man.”¹²⁴ In other words, interanimality is a concept that recognizes the humanity of animals and the animality of humans and vice versa. According to Smyth, such claims were primarily transcendental and lack “ontological import.”¹²⁵ But such a contention is, in my estimation, entirely off the mark. Merleau-Ponty’s entire phenomenological project, at least as we have outlined it here, is *expressly* geared towards developing an entirely new and decidedly non-transcendental ontology that re-situates consciousness in the perceptual body, and eventually in the flesh of the world. Smyth himself notes that in his work on interanimality, “Merleau-Ponty was developing a view that revised the traditional hierarchical distinctions between human and non-human life and redrew them laterally as so many ways of being bodily with the common element of ‘flesh.’”¹²⁶ How can this be anything other than the beginnings of a radical ontology of human-nonhuman intersubjectivity?

As we will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, there are also important ethical implications of the philosophy of co-constitutive perceptual embodiment. According to Ralph Acampora, for example, Merleau-Ponty’s recognition of nonhuman beings’ presence in our perceptual universe steers us towards the possibility of meaningful “cross-species exchange.” Specifically, affirming embodied perception as the universal ground of subjectivity compels us to ask,

how is it that some species' bodily modes of address to their world are similar enough to others' to allow and account for an overlay of what we might call *intersomaticity*, a characteristic of animal experience in which felt senses of bodiment are shared and potentially in dynamic relation.¹²⁷

This universal felt-consciousness-with-others is of course nontalizing, and is always constrained by a not-knowing, which necessarily accompanies the phenomenological encounter with the other, especially, though by no means exclusively, the nonhuman other. As Abram points out, "We cannot know, with the same familiarity and intimacy, the lived experience of a grass snake or a snapping turtle; we cannot readily experience the precise sensations of a hummingbird sipping nectar from a flower or a rubber tree soaking up sunlight." However, he rightly adds, "we do know how it feels to sip from a fresh pool of water or to bask and stretch in the sun," and so we can make an educated guess as to what it feels like at least for some other animals, even if their perceptual make-up is otherwise very different from ours.¹²⁸ Certainly, while the specific content of another being's subjective experience may often elude us, and while we must embrace and even cherish this unknowability for the way it enriches our lives, we share enough as fellow sensuous beings, no matter how distant our species, to empathize with other beings' pleasures, terrors, disappointments, and fears, or at least with the fact that they have these and other emotional experiences in the first place. When this humble relationality is framed ethically, we are compelled to promote the other's well-being, regardless of whether the other is a human or a nonhuman animal body subject.

Also pointing to the ethical potency of a theory of embodied intersubjectivity as laid out by Merleau-Ponty, Behnke suggests that, although Merleau-Ponty was not particularly concerned with the fate of nonhuman animals as such, his theories of

intercorporeality, interanimality, and *Ineinander* (i.e. “intertwining” or “interpenetration,” a concept first introduced by Husserl) and flesh clear the path for an “exploration of an intercorporeal/interspecies practice of peace.” She defines this practice of peace as the

particular shift in bodily comportment [that] simultaneously transforms this situation from a spectacle I confront (and attempt to dominate from the outside) to a co-situatedness, a situation of which I myself am a part and in whose dynamics I am always already participating, whether I realize it or not.¹²⁹

The human-animal relationship thus manifested is not hierarchical, Benkhe adds, “but a lateral relation of kinship, *Einfühlung* [empathy], and *Ineinander* among living beings.”¹³⁰ Although Merleau-Ponty did not develop the ethical implications his own conception of *Ineinander*, he certainly demonstrated that his iteration of phenomenology is mutually exclusive with species prejudice.

The Language of the Body: Touch and Interspecies Companionship

The participatory and co-constitutional nature of embodied subjectivity is further highlighted by phenomenological and especially ethological explorations into intra- and interspecies communication. Both phenomenology and ethology point to another dimension of animal consciousness by bringing to light the myriad ways human and nonhuman animals communicate using a plethora of gestures, sounds, and expressions to interact. While he emphasizes the importance of verbal language for human beings (and points to the way “words, vowels, and phonemes are so many ways of ‘singing’ the world,” for example), Merleau-Ponty also suggests, as we glimpsed above, that physical comportment, tone of voice, and facial expressions, are equally, if not more important for conveying meaning among human interlocutors.¹³¹ For body subjects, the linguistic

exchange does not register only on a cognitive level, but on a perceptual one; their intentions reverberate through their bodies.¹³² During a communicative encounter, “It is as if the other person’s intention inhabited my body and mine his.”¹³³ In Merleau-Ponty’s formulation, then, verbal language exceeds the limits of its own traditional definition as the product or expression of rational thought alone. Another founding figure in ethology, primatologist Frans de Waal, points to the infectiousness of laughter as one example “of our primate sensitivity to others” and the way human and animal “bodies talk to bodies.”¹³⁴ Once again, this move re-establishes human beings as one species among many in the community of other animal beings. By emphasizing the nonverbal element of verbal language, the notion that humans are metaphysically set apart from and superior to other creatures because of their alleged monopoly on *logos*, is no longer tenable.

By the same token, this partial relocation of language in the body means that the world of language—and therefore the formerly uniquely human world—is open to other animals. As Abram suggests,

If language is always in its depths, physically and sensorially resonant, then it can never be definitively separated from the evident expressiveness of the birdsong, or the evocative howl of a wolf late at night. The chorus of frogs gurgling in unison at the edge of a pond, the snarl of a wildcat as it springs upon its prey, or the distant honking of Canadian geese veering south for the winter, all reverberate with affective, gestural significance, the same significance that vibrates through our own conversation and soliloquies, moving us at times to tears, or to anger, or to intellectual insights we could never have anticipated. *Language as a bodily phenomenon accrues to all expressive bodies, not just to the human.*¹³⁵

Other animals do not only speak through their voices, of course, but through their eyes, faces, wings, arms, legs, tails, paws, noses, ears, fur, and feathers. One look with wide

or slanted eyes, or a quick flick, wiggle, or slow and sultry undulating curl of the tail from our dog or cat companions can convey very clearly what s/he is thinking and feeling.

Ethology has provided reams of evidence and detailed analyses of the complexity, variety, and depth of other animals' intra and interspecies communication. Balcombe notes, for example, that while it is obviously easier for humans to recognize certain forms of nonhuman animal communication that most resemble our own, all sorts of creatures communicate in all sorts of diverse ways by way of physical gestures and signals, complex vocalizations, and even cellular manipulation.¹³⁶ For instance, "cuttlefish use a large repertoire of body patterns for camouflage and communication with others of their kind" including manipulating pigment cells to "produce mesmerizing patterns and rhythms of metallic colour pulsating across their bodies."¹³⁷ Panamanian golden frogs use a visual signalling system that resembles our own Semaphore system, which includes flashing pale patches of skin on their limbs or between their toes.¹³⁸ Female barking tree frogs use a complex form of "triangulation" to identify desirable (i.e. in their case, larger) mates.¹³⁹ Elephants also employ sophisticated and remarkable acoustic techniques in their *feet* to locate other elephants who may be several miles away (!).¹⁴⁰

According to Michael Philips and Steven N. Austad, animal communication takes place when "an animal transfers information to an appropriate audience by use of signals" and also when "an animal gains information that another animal intends to convey by means of signs."¹⁴¹ But this is only part of the story: animals do not only communicate to "transfer information." They also communicate to *relate* to each other more generally. And, as these examples suggest, they do so in a variety of ways. Many

animals from one species (e.g. rabbits) learn how to read the signals of animals from other species (e.g. chickens) especially when those signals indicate danger.¹⁴² And, of course, some animals can communicate verbally. Research demonstrates that prairie dogs have a vocabulary of approximately one-hundred “words” that they use to identify predators, including humans with guns.¹⁴³ Some animals actually learn to speak or communicate using *human* language—not just parrots, or chimpanzees, but, it turns out, elephants too. An Associated Press article features Koshik, a twenty-two year old African elephant imprisoned in a South Korean zoo, who *taught himself* how to articulate five Korean words including, the article reports, “‘annyeong’ (hello), ‘anja’ (sit down), ‘aniya’ (no), ‘nuwo’ (lie down) and ‘joa’ (good).”¹⁴⁴ It is very likely Koshik taught himself these words, one scientist suggested, “because he was lonely,” and was trying desperately to get the attention of his negligent human captors.¹⁴⁵ Koshik was so miserable that he felt compelled to reach out to his oppressors by communicating with them on *their* terms, because they otherwise remained oblivious to his uniquely elephant form of *nonverbal* language. Should they have listened to him from the beginning, they would have known that he was hurting and longed for his freedom. Perhaps this is why they ignored him until he figured out how to get their attention.

Touch is arguably one of the most universal of languages, at least between and among humans and a variety of other domesticated mammals with whom we are in the closest contact, and onto whom we inflict the most egregious cruelties. It goes without saying that in the context of our personal and familial lives, we express love, affection, and tenderness to our human and nonhuman animal companions by way of touch. Caressing,

cuddling, kissing, massaging, embracing, holding hands (or paws), stroking, rubbing, tickling, and so on, all form part of the vast repertoire of tactile expression among human and nonhuman animal companions. Indeed, as we all know from our own intra- and interspecies relationships, touching often communicates love and affection much more powerfully and with more immediacy and accuracy than verbal language. In a passage equally evocative as the one cited earlier about a child and a dolphin, Lingis captures the emotional dimensions and subtleties of human-animal tactile communication in the following scenarios in which a child interacts with a kitten and cockatoo:

The curled fingers of an infant ease into tenderness from holding the kitten but not tight, and rumble into contentment from stroking its fur with pressure and periodicity that are responded to with purring. In contact with the cockatoo—who, though he can clutch with a vice-grip around a perch while sleeping and chews up his oak perch in the course of a month, relaxes his claws on the arm of an infant and never bites the ear he affectionately nibbles at, and who extends his neck and spreads his wings to be caressed in all the softness of his down feathers—the infant discovers that her hands are not just retractile hooks for grabbing, but organs to give pleasure.¹⁴⁶

And in discovering that her hands are organs to give pleasure, she discovers that pleasure in this context is reciprocal. The sounds and feel of the kitten's purrs fills her with delight, and the cockatoo's ear nibbles reassure her. In this example, touch forms the fundamental medium for social-emotional-corporeal intertwining.

Among animals touch is also of paramount importance. According to Balcombe, in the world of other animals, touch “conveys messages akin to ‘I trust you,’ ‘I accept you,’ and ‘I like you.’...Close contact with others helps maintain group integrity in social mammals,” including mongoose, iguanas, and zebras.¹⁴⁷ As Lingis' example suggests, touch is also of course very much tied up with pleasure. Balcombe reports that “Dolphins

seem to enjoy simply moving closely in one another's company, quietly touching and exploring together. Orcas' skin is known to be exquisitely sensitive in some areas, being richly endowed with nerve endings around the eyes and face, the blowhole, and both male and female genitals."¹⁴⁸ Dogs and cats kiss their human companions, and each other, to express affection. Cats companions may even "spoon" together and, like so many other animals, groom each other frequently by tenderly licking each other's heads and faces. Mutual grooming (cleaning, removing parasites, preening, etc.) is widespread among other species, not only because it is an important means of maintaining good hygiene, but also undoubtedly because it simply feels good and offers a sense of belonging, security, friendship, and love to both the groomer and the groomee.¹⁴⁹

Acknowledging the variety of ways that other animals touch each other's lives and our own—in all senses of the word—reveals the profundity of other animals' lives, and shrinks the species divide yet further. Regardless of their precise mode of interaction, humans and other animals' have an intricate repertoire of modes of communication and expression that reach across species boundaries. While other creatures such as octopuses may remain "alien" to us because their bodies are so different than ours, and because we cannot speak to them in their language and they cannot speak to us in ours, and while we may not be able to understand everything every creature such as a bat is saying to us or to its neighbours, the knowledge that these creatures communicate their concerns, joys, fears, goals, preferences, needs in their *own way* helps to shrink the metaphysical gulf between "us" and "them." Other animals communicate in ways that are meaningful to and for them, and we communicate in ways that are meaningful to and for us. Sometimes

we understand each other within and across species lines. Sometimes we don't. But what matters is not that every word or gesture is comprehended, cognitively or otherwise, but the fact that someone is *trying* to convey something. An animals' very attempt to communicate indicates that it is a conscious being whose relationships matter to it. We are all body subjects with something important to "say." Unfortunately, in the animal industrial complex, interspecies communication is overwhelmingly one-sided: while mice, cows, dogs, horses, and chickens are forced to "listen" attentively to us, we so often refuse to listen to or even look at—which is to say, regard—them. We are certainly adept at covering our ears to block out their cries of anguish, and covering our eyes to block out the misery and desperation written all over their faces.

In the phenomenological account, even the *elements* "speak." In Merleau-Ponty's words, "...the essence of water...and of all the elements lies less in their observable properties than in what they say to us."¹⁵⁰ In emphasizing the unsuppressible vitality and subjectivity of the water and the wider world, phenomenology brings the earth and the beings that populate it back to life from centuries of paralysis under the objectivist microscope. As such it offers a healing balm to human beings too. That said, in my view, the importance of re-animating all of nature as part of the emancipatory project notwithstanding, there is marked difference between animal language and the language of rocks, trees, water, and so on—or beings who do not possess the forms of consciousness outlined by ethologists and phenomenologists. While our aim is to develop an ecological ethos and phenomenological animism, this cannot be done at the expense of *individual conscious animals*, or beings whose consciousness is tied to an enfolded body and an active

perceptual apparatus tied to that body. This is not the place to discuss the merits and flaws of an ecological, vitalistic, and/or materialist versus an animal liberation perspectives, but suffice it to say that the stakes of violent domination are much higher for conscious embodied beings than they are for unconscious beings, no matter how much the devastation of the latter is tragic in and of itself, not to mention hugely injurious to humans and other animals. Certainly, the creatures in need of most urgent attention are the mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish used for agricultural production, biomedical research, fashion, cosmetic testing, and entertainment, for the violence committed against them is the most extreme, and effects the greatest numbers. Nevertheless, as will become clearer in our discussion of re-enchantment, the animistic undertones of phenomenology are part of its ethico-political potency and are integral to the nonrepressive ethos we are attempting to develop.

The Emotional Vicissitudes and Moral Sensibilities of Animal Subjects

The reconstitution of animal subjects as subjects-of-a-meaningful life also involves simply recognizing that they are emotionally and psychologically complex. Animal emotionality has been a well-known scientific fact at least since Charles Darwin's investigations into animal life came to light. Darwin's studies revealed that mammals "experience (to greater or lesser degrees) anxiety, grief, dejection, despair, joy, love, 'tender feelings,' devotion, ill-temper, sulkiness, determination, hatred, anger, disdain, contempt, disgust, guilt, pride, helplessness, patience, surprise, astonishment, fear, horror, shame, shyness, and modesty."¹⁵¹ Many animals also experience "grief, excitement, anticipation, bliss, rapture, embarrassment, esthetics, comfort" as well as terror, boredom,

depression, psychosis, loneliness, ecstasy, betrayal, curiosity, and a host of other complex emotions and mental states attributed to humans.¹⁵²

Despite the promising path that Darwin laid for the exploration of animals' emotional complexity over two centuries ago, Jeffrey Moussaif Masson and Susan McCarthy point out that the mainstream scientific community still resists examining animal emotions on the animals' terms or outside the confines of behaviourism. Sadly, "so persistent are the forces that militate against even admitting the possibility of emotions in the lives of other animals that the topic seems disreputable, almost taboo."¹⁵³ But there is a double standard at play in scientists' denial of animals emotionality. If animals' emotional complexity is pointed to in order to protest their abuse, the ire of the scientific community may be aroused. Yet, countless animals are used as research models for behavioural experiments into *human* depression, anxiety, and even empathy. Nevertheless, even while scientists acknowledge that animals have emotions in such experiments, they often frame the expression of emotions in behaviourist or mechanistic terms (e.g. as responses to stimuli).

On rare occasions, members of the scientific community pause to consider the impact that their actions are having on other animals' mental health. A recent article in *Scientific American*, for example, discusses how retired chimpanzees used for HIV, hepatitis, and behavioural experiments are being formally diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress disorder, anxiety disorder, and depression. The animals are so traumatized from years, often decades, of repeated "darting" (injection), confinement, perpetual boredom, lack of stimulation, social isolation, fear, loneliness, premature separation from mothers, among

many other torments, that even once they are removed from labs and housed in sanctuaries, they cannot be integrated with other chimpanzees. Martin Brüne, who is heading this research into laboratory primate trauma reports that,

Some of the animals engaged in self-mutilating behaviors such as scratching wounds and keeping them open, and others showed stereotypic movements like constant body rocking. Others smeared their feces everywhere and engaged in coprophagy [eating their feces]. Such behaviors have never been observed in wild populations, so we can be quite sure to assume that these are abnormal behaviors.¹⁵⁴

Unfortunately, despite this overwhelming evidence of chimpanzees' emotional depth (and agony, in this case), Brüne finds himself able to concede nothing more than the fact that he gets “the *impression* that they have a personality.” Nevertheless, at least the scientific community has finally recognized that subjecting great apes to invasive experiments is unethical and unacceptable. In 2010, research on chimpanzees was banned in the European Union, and in 2013 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommended (though did not order), the transfer of the six hundred and fifty of the seven hundred chimpanzees who were being held in labs to sanctuaries.¹⁵⁵ The unlucky ones who did not make the proverbial cut, however, recall the death camp inmates who did not make it past the “selections” and were forced to go to the gas.

Of course, emotional complexity is not limited to great apes. All kinds of animals express a wide array of emotions. Grief, for example, is experienced by numerous species, and provides a window into the profundity of other animals' inner worlds. As Bekoff has observed, many other animals display almost identical grieving behaviours to those of human beings:

Like humans, animals can suffer monumentally over a separation or loss. Grieving animals may withdraw from their group and seek seclusion, resistant to all attempts by others to draw them out. They may sit in one place, motionless, staring vacantly into space. They stop eating and lose interest in sex. Sometimes they become obsessed with the dead individual. They may try to revive him or her, and failing that, remain with the carcass for days on end.¹⁵⁶

Dairy cows will struggle desperately to prevent their calves from being taken from them, and will grieve for days once their babies are gone (having since been turned into veal calves, or future dairy cows and hamburger meat). Other cows will often attempt to console a grieving mother by encircling her.¹⁵⁷ As Masson points out, not without a tinge of irony, “even Temple Grandin, the academic expert on killing cows ‘more humanely,’ has looked at a cow and admitted, ‘that’s one sad, unhappy, upset cow. She wants her baby. Bellowing for it, hunting for it. It’s like grieving, mourning—not much written about it. People don’t like to allow them thoughts or feelings.’”¹⁵⁸ The expression of grief points to myriad other complex emotions and needs, such as friendship, attachment, love, loyalty, devotion, and so on.

Partly because so much emphasis has been placed on animals’ capacity to suffer, however, Balcombe is particularly interested in other animals’ experience of pleasure. Recognizing that other animals actively seek enjoyment in life, rather than simply avoiding harm (as Peter Singer typically emphasizes), adds another layer of complexity to their subjectivity and casts into even sharper relief the degree of injustice committed against them in the current exterminationist system that strips them of everything *but* their suffering. According to Balcombe, “the evidence supports overwhelmingly the notion that pleasure is woven deeply into the fabric of animals’ everyday experiences.”¹⁵⁹ Bekoff makes a similar point and contends that “Animals experience immense joy in a wide

range of situations: when they play, greet friends, groom one another, and freed from confinement, sing, and perhaps even when watching others having fun.”¹⁶⁰ As we have indicated, sex, food, touch, and love are all sources and areas of pleasure for other animals.¹⁶¹ Balcombe describes the jubilation dolphins express when they manage to disentangle themselves from fishing nets. They “leap repeatedly into the air, as though in joyful celebration.”¹⁶² Likewise, “Cattle, when first let out into the fields following a long winter confinement, tear about the field, kicking their legs into the air. They seem literally to be full of the joy of spring, and look for all the world like excited toddlers released into the playground after hours sat behind their desks.”¹⁶³ And such glee, like so many other emotions, is infectious. He continues, “Joy is so contagious, it’s essentially an epidemic. One researcher tells of watching a female chimpanzee give birth, after which her closest friend screamed and embraced two other chimps. The friend tended the mother and her offspring for several weeks.”¹⁶⁴ When human beings observe other animal subjects experiencing joy, they are very likely to experience it vicariously as well. Every dog lover knows how uplifting it is to behold one’s dog companion bounding about in the park, in and out of the trees and bushes in some outdoor area, with pure unadulterated delight, their whole body abuzz with sheer gaiety. It is very difficult not to smile along with them, not to participate, if only indirectly, in that mirth. To behold a flock of birds soaring above, revelling in “flight for flight’s sake,” to use Balcombe’s phrase, is to revel in the sheer delectation of existence along with them. Flight for birds is much more than simply a form of transportation but is also a source of enjoyment, pure and simple. Vicarious pleasure can be recuperative and can transform into first-hand pleasure. It is integral to

the reawakening of the senses and the perceptual body to the wider world around us, and to our own yearnings for bliss, exaltation, and cosmic connection.

Apparently a number of other animals such as parrots laugh uproariously. Bekoff recounts stories told to him by well-known filmmaker and writer Michael Tobias about his companion macaw. “The macaw giggles, chuckles, and roars with laughter.... If the macaw lobs a small Frisbee at Michael with his enormous beak and hits Michael in the face, or if Michael misses it, the macaw nearly falls over in hysterics.”¹⁶⁵ It is hard not be envious of Michael’s opportunity to laugh (and be laughed at by) a creature so otherwise ostensibly “other” than himself. How magical it would be to giggle with a bird! Balcombe describes “thrill-seeking” animals who chase after sheer exhilaration. “Orangutans in Tanjung Putting, Borneo, play a sport that human observers call ‘snag riding,’ which involves hanging onto a falling dead tree, then grabbing a vine or other vegetation before the tree hits the ground.”¹⁶⁶

There is also increasing evidence of many nonhuman animals’ profoundly moral sensibilities that extend not only to members of their own species but to others as well. Bekoff and Jessica Pierce enumerate several examples in which animals go to great lengths to offer aid and assistance to other animals in need:

Eleven elephants rescue a group of captive antelope in KwaZulu-Natal; the matriarch undoes all of the latches on the gates of the enclosure with her trunk and lets the gate swing open so the antelope can escape. A rat in a cage refuses to push a lever for food when it sees that another rat receives an electric shock as a result. A male diana monkey who has learned to insert a token into a slot to obtain food helps a female who can’t get the hang of a trick, inserting the token for her and allow her to eat the food reward.¹⁶⁷

I have seen footage of a crow caring for, feeding, playing with, and protecting a stray kitten for months, a piglet jumping into a river to help usher a terrified, drowning goat to safety, and a dog nurturing and protecting orphaned goslings.¹⁶⁸ Jennifer S. Holland tells the story of a macaque who adopted a stray kitten in Indonesia, a papillon dog who adopted a squirrel into her litter, pitbulls and a bulldog who consoled and cared for a grieving ferret, among many other touching stories.¹⁶⁹

Examples such as this abound in ethological literature, and demonstrate that nonhuman animals are compassionate, empathic, altruistic, and caring, and have a strong sense of justice, fairness, forgiveness, and trust.¹⁷⁰ What drives their relationships is a basic orientation towards giving and receiving care and solicitude. A recent article in the Washington Post describes a horrible experiment in which one rat was confined in a tiny jar to see if the other one would come to its aid (and thereby demonstrate empathy). Not only did the “free” rat help its lab mate “escape,” it also saved treats for it, (exceeding the bounds of the experiment). As David Brown explains,

The free rat, occasionally hearing distress calls from its compatriot, learned to open the cage and did so with greater efficiency over time. It would release the other animal even if there wasn't the payoff of a reunion with it. Astonishingly, if given access to a small hoard of chocolate chips, the free rat would usually save at least one treat for the captive—which is a lot to expect of a rat.¹⁷¹

Brown may think that saving food for its tormented companion is “a lot to expect of a rat,” but this is only if one adopts the status quo view of rats. (And, it should be noted, Brown's sarcastic quip at the end of this passage is yet another example of wrong laughter.)

While these examples only scratch the surface of animal emotionality in general and moral sensibility in particular, evidence of animals' caring relationships with and solicitude towards each other underscores yet further the complexity of their inner lives, and hammers the last nail in the mechanist and behaviourist coffin. Those animals who reach out to animals from different species overcome each other's radical otherness precisely because they are *not* beholden to mere instinct, nor do they seem to adhere to any prejudicial system of judgments for or against any particular species—a tendency that has plagued human relations for millennia. As such, they provide inspiration for a new humanity.

Most importantly, the recognition of animal emotionality serves as a fierce indictment of the outrageous cruelties to which we subject these exquisitely sensitive creatures. Indeed, there is often a direct link between the recognition of animal emotionality and consciousness more broadly, and the repudiation of systemic violence against them. Try as they might to quell their sense of empathy with their animal slaves, some farmers are nonetheless irrevocably moved by the revelation that other animals actually have feelings.¹⁷² Harold Brown and Howard Lyman, for example, were both cattle-farmers-turned-vegan-animal-activists who now work with rescue and advocacy organizations like the Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glenn, New York to raise awareness about the cruelties of both large and small-scale animal farming. Brown and Lyman were both conditioned from a young age to regard other animals as milk and meat-machines, but the moment they discovered the emotional depth of their victims, they abandoned their careers and renounced the violent subjugation they were involved in. Both Brown

and Lyman now spend their days educating others about the sensitivity and magnificence of the creatures they once regarded as raw material for exploitation.

The Subject of Wonder and Awe

We have thus far been exploring what we *do* know or can surmise about other animals' embodied subjective experiences, and how such insight can foster reconciliation. Recognizing overlaps and similarities between humans and other animals—if not in terms of the contents, then least in the general structure, of embodied perceptual experience—is integral to shattering the human/animal binary and the species hierarchy more generally once and for all. If other animals grieve, for example, and if other animals' worlds are as bursting with meaning as are ours, they become, as Abram notes, more familiar, even familial.¹⁷³ However, “it is, paradoxically, this perceived kinship or consanguinity that renders the difference, or otherness [of other animals], so eerily potent.”¹⁷⁴ This paradox between familiar and the strange, this productive tension underlying interspecies and indeed intrahuman relationships, is at the heart of the project of ethical and politically important project of re-enchantment. To claim to fully know another is to claim ownership over it, to dominate it, and to disenchant the world. To recognize and appreciate the other's radical otherness, on the other hand, its ultimate *uncontainability*, *unknowability*, is to preserve the other's freedom and the magic of existence. Re-enchantment creates the conditions for a nontotalizing unification of human and nonhuman beings in an intimate and mutually reinforcing bond, paradoxically strengthened by an acknowledged insurmountable remoteness and radical alterity the other. As such it is a powerful antidote to the onto-epistemological extermination of

animal subjects. Acknowledging and embracing other animals' unknowability is also part and parcel of Behnke's interspecies practice of peace. By renouncing the claim to total knowledge about an animal other, one becomes more "responsive" to what it might be communicating to us. As she puts it, "adopting an interrogative attitude that relinquishes the project of knowing in favor of a responsive comportment... contributes to improvisational comportment in general and to the practice of peace in particular."¹⁷⁵ The "improvisational comportment" is critical to creating peaceable relations because it allows both parties to break out of the moulds into which they have been cast based on incorrect and prejudicial, but nevertheless widespread, assumptions. Thus, while phenomenology inspires us to learn more, it also inspires us to take a proverbial step back, to relate to the nonhuman through a kind of humble disengagement, a letting-go and a letting-be.

For Merleau-Ponty, and Abram, perception is as much a gateway into greater knowledge of other beings and their worlds, as it is a gateway into the recognition and appreciation of their "strangeness." Uexküll's project was to unearth the truth about the as yet unknown or misunderstood nonhuman world, but at the same time to revel in its mysterious resplendence. He suggests, for example, that his phenomenological biology is meant to lead us on "a walk into unknown worlds," not only to try to know those worlds, but also to inhabit the unknown.¹⁷⁶ Towards the start of *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty points us in the direction of the phenomenological reduction and the sense of wonder it arouses by urging us to abandon our usual "practical and utilitarian attitude" and amble down the phenomenological path, as it were, so that we can "rediscover the world in which we live, yet which we are always

prone to forget.”¹⁷⁷ We will gain a new perspective on the world as we go on this journey. But our experiences will leave many questions unanswered, and that is part of its appeal. To explain this further, Merleau-Ponty suggests, with reference to a poem by Paul Valéry, that through phenomenology we are able to see “the ‘flaw’ in this great diamond,” that is, we are introduced to the unique, unquantifiable, incalculable, and uncategorizable features of the world. The phenomenological reduction introduced by Husserl in particular opens the door to the “inexhaustible richness” of the things around us.¹⁷⁸ The reduction “does not withdraw from the world towards the unity of consciousness,” but rather, “steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire.”¹⁷⁹ In breaking free from the confines of objectivism, the phenomenological reduction uncovers the “magic,” the nuances and unbridled vitality, of the phenomenal world.¹⁸⁰ In subjecting her impressions to “analytical vision” the classical artist, for example, “controls the movement of their unfolding yet also *kills their trembling life*.”¹⁸¹ The subjectivist and the objectivist philosopher share this tendency. But, like modern artists such as Paul Cézanne, for example, the phenomenologist brings the world and the sensory perception of it back to life so that we are newly “*filled with wonder*” at the world. From this novel vantage point, the world appears “strange and paradoxical,” not in a derogatory sense, but rather in the sense of producing a feeling of *rapture*.¹⁸²

Echoing Merleau-Ponty, Abram contends that the noncommodified world (or what’s left of it) is a magical world inhabited by an infinite number of beings we might (or might not) be able to *perceive*, but may not necessarily ever truly *know*. For Abram, magic does not necessarily consist in contacting the supernatural or spirit-world per se, but rather in acknowledging that the world is inhabited by “multiple intelligences” whose

intelligences are obvious, but not entirely accessible.¹⁸³ Magic also involves the “intuition that every form one perceives—from the swallow swooping overhead to the fly on a blade of grass, and indeed the blade of grass itself—is an experiencing form, an entity with its own predilections and sensations, albeit sensations that are very different from our own.”¹⁸⁴ In short, simply by virtue of being world populated by other perceiving subjects, the world is a magical place. This magical world is not a world projected in fantasy, but the world in its thick materiality. The task is simply to open ourselves up to appreciating its splendour on its own terms.

Idealism, empiricism, and the prevailing forms of science rob the lifeworld of this vitality, spontaneity, and variety in their respective attempts to force it to conform to certain fixed laws and/or principles. Technological rationality is, as we know, geared towards eliminating all otherness in the world and its inhabitants. It achieves this in part through mass production, which is anathema to enchantment. “The mass-produced artifacts of civilization, from milk cartons to washing machines and computers,” Abram explains, “draw our senses into a dance that endlessly reiterates itself *without variation*.”¹⁸⁵ As we have seen, the repetition of form and content is the hallmark of late capitalist modernity, which spews forth not only identical inert objects, but also, (barely) living beings. As mass produced objects in biotechnological laboratories, factory farms, and so on, nonhuman animals are condemned to a torturous uniformity and a ceaseless and repetitive tedium. The re-enchanted world, on the other hand, is infinitely variegated and constantly surprises she who beholds it: “The patterns on the stream’s surface as it ripples over the rocks, or on the bark of an elm tree, or in a cluster of weeds, are all composed of

repetitive figures that *never exactly repeat themselves*.”¹⁸⁶ This unrepeatability and unpredictability of which Abram speaks, breaks every rule of rationalization. Certainly, for animals’ to flourish as subjects, they must have the opportunity to engage with the world spontaneously and creatively.

The recognition of the other’s unknowability is constitutive of deep intimacy between human beings. One loves and respects one’s beloved, for example, not only for the things one can understand about them, intellectually, emotionally, physically or otherwise, but also for what always remains remote, undiscovered, partially, or even entirely hidden from view. That thing which eludes the lover holds the secret, the divinity, the “infinity,” of the beloved’s being. If we allowed ourselves to recognize the same quality of divinity, the same alluring mystery, in lowly chickens, pigs, cows, and goats, in mice, rats, and guinea pigs, the hand that strikes and maims, cuts, and burns, would become the hand that caresses; the eye that examines the severed parts, that observes with total detachment the specimen writhing in agony on the table, would be the eye that beholds the actuality of the animals’ suffering and the potentiality of their joy. Our feline and canine companions, who are in some ways so familiar to us, also possess this ineluctable elusiveness. It reverberates through our fingertips when we stroke their fur, the texture of which we know so well, but that nevertheless remains alien. In the grace of their physique, in the stealth and speed of their gait, in the murmurs, meows, purrs, grunts, growls, and groans, in all these things and more the undiscoverable truth of their being is at once disclosed and concealed.

The re-enchantment of the nonhuman world and its inhabitants is also integral to human flourishing. To permit ourselves to actually listen to the animals speaking to us and each other, rather than regarding them as automatons or emotionally and mentally monodimensional objects of exploitation, is to open up a vast new range of possible experiences for *us*. Such a view of the world nourishes the imagination, which in turn, nourishes the body because, as we have seen, the two are of a piece. In injecting life back into the cosmos, the phenomenology of re-enchantment also helps to fulfil human beings' own irrepressible urge for sensuous interaction with the other-than-human world. Even in the universe governed by technological rationality, the alienated human subject is still drawn into "dialogue" with, and is excited by a sense of wonder and awe at many aspects of the nonhuman world—say at beholding the Grand Canyon for the first time, or a beautiful sunset, or catching a fleeting glimpse of a deer bouncing alongside the highway before disappearing into the brush. Despite the thick walls that industrial civilization has erected between human animals, their own animality, and nonhuman life, Abram insists that human beings carry within them an "indigenous soul" and are driven by "animistic inclinations," which engender admiration for the "enigmatic cosmos."¹⁸⁷ It is precisely this enigma that is potentially the most transformative.¹⁸⁸

Importantly, it is not only human beings who can appreciate the enigmas of worldly and creaturely life but, as Bekoff explains, other animals "marvel at their surroundings," too. As he points out, "wild animals spend upward of 90 percent of their time resting: What are they thinking and feeling as they gaze about?" Though we can never know for sure, and may never develop the scientific tools necessary to accurately

“measure” other animals’ responses (as if that would be desirable in a non-behaviourist framework anyway), “anecdotal evidence and careful observation indicate feelings akin to wonder may exist.”¹⁸⁹ He points to “chimpanzee waterfall dances” as one example, in which “a chimpanzee, usually an adult male, will dance at a waterfall with total abandon.”¹⁹⁰ Jane Goodall explains that “After a waterfall display the performer may sit on a rock, his eyes following the falling water.” Perhaps, she muses, he is asking himself, “What *is* it, this water?”¹⁹¹ Bekoff goes so far as to suggest that the chimpanzee might be engaging in proto-spiritual and religious ritualism. Chimpanzees also dance and even enter into what appears to be a kind of trance when a heavy rain or windstorm is underway.¹⁹² Balcombe argues that many animals experience “transcendent pleasures.” As one example, Balcombe points to the plight of mining mules in Darwin’s time. Darwin remarked that when these wretched creatures, kept deep under the earth’s surface for years at a time, had a rare glimpse of the earth’s surface they become delirious with exaltation. In Darwin’s words, “the mules tremble at the earth radiant in the sunshine. Later, they almost go mad with fantastic joy. The full splendor of the heavens, the grass, the trees, the breezes, breaks upon them suddenly. They caper and career with extravagant mulish glee.”¹⁹³ The scene Darwin is describing here is one of almost religious frenzy. These creatures, on Darwin’s account, are not only happy to be in their “natural habitat” after years of brutal confinement and deprivation, they are positively overcome with rapture at the earth’s bounteous gifts.

As we noted above, re-enchantment and the recognition of another’s unknowability is ethically powerful because it evokes and requires a renewed sense of

humility from the human subject in the face of the not-fully-knowable nonhuman other. Merleau-Ponty notes, for example, that, “The philosopher [viz., the phenomenologist]...is a perpetual beginner, which means that he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know.”¹⁹⁴ In a similar vein, “The encounter with other perceivers,” Abram suggests, “continually assures me that there is more to any thing, or to the world, than I myself can perceive at any moment.”¹⁹⁵ What assures me that there is more to the other than meets the eye, is that it existed “before,” or exists “outside” and beyond, my encounter with it, and also that others perceive it too in ways that are meaningful for them, but not necessarily for me.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, if we are “carnally embedded within the sensuous field,” we are bound by the limits of our own corporeality, and therefore “we have only a partial view of each entity or situation that we encounter; there is no aspect of this world that can be fathomed or figured out in its entirety.”¹⁹⁷ The acknowledged limits of the phenomenological reduction and the perceptual experience are indication enough that there is much more to the world than we can grasp at any given moment.

The Subject-in-Excess: Relationality beyond Totalization

Levinas’ ethical phenomenology and Theodor Adorno’s critical theory of the other’s “exteriority” or the object’s “nonidentity” with the subject and its object or concept, add another important dimension to our conception of a nontotalizing ethical intersubjective relationality tempered and governed by humility. Levinas and Adorno seek to undermine the potentially tyrannical dynamic between subject and object-other by insisting that something always remains *in excess of* the subject’s possessive onto-

epistemological grip. Although Levinas rejects characterizing his ethical metaphysics as either “negative” or “dialectical,” his “ethics of infinity” is strikingly similar to Adorno’s in its aims, and both projects have far-reaching implications for how nonhuman animals are treated, conceptually and actually.

For Levinas, the “face” of the other is “ineffable” “infinite,”¹⁹⁸ “uncomprehensible,” “exterior,” “transcendent”—it is inherently that which *cannot* be contained in the same.¹⁹⁹ The face is that which is “present in its refusal to be contained,” which “resists possession, resists my powers,” and “in its epiphany, in expression, the sensible, still graspable, turns into total resistance to the grasp.”²⁰⁰ Or, as he puts it elsewhere, “the gleam of exteriority of transcendence in the face of the Other” is what breaks up totality, while “infinity overflows the thought that thinks it.”²⁰¹ Levinas’ characterization of the other as exterior, infinite and so on, means that the other defies thematization, that it is impossible to perfectly and completely define, classify, or subsume it into existing ontological or epistemological categories. This excess and exteriority of which Levinas speaks is not equivalent to Kant’s *noumena* or the “thing-in-itself,” which is inaccessible through the operation of the subject’s categories of judgment, its only means of access to the world of *phenomena*.²⁰² The acknowledgment of the *noumena* has no ethical import. It is, by its very nature, unrecognizable and therefore moot and of no consequence—metaphysically, ethically, or otherwise. For Levinas, the recognition of the other’s exteriority is the catalyst for ethical comportment. One does not ignore that which is ungraspable—rather, its irreducibility is precisely what troubles the subject’s smug sense of entitlement; it “disturbs

the being at home with oneself” and, as we will discuss in more detail in chapter five, *compels* it to engage in positive ethical action on behalf of the other.²⁰³

As with Levinas’ analysis of the nontotalizable other, the “negative” of Adorno’s “negative dialectics” is the affirmation of the unrevealable aspect of the object. Specifically, for Adorno, in every judgment a subject makes of an object, there is always something in the object that escapes judgment, classification, and conceptualization. For example, Adorno explains that “the name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a *remainder*, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy.”²⁰⁴ Adorno elaborates further and insists that contradiction “indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived.”²⁰⁵ Thus, for Adorno, dialectics is not a neutral philosophical exercise, but rather is eminently ethical and political. For example, although he is highly critical of Hegel’s resolution of the dialectic between subject and object in the Absolute, he applauds Hegel nonetheless for recognizing that “the individual is not flatly for himself [and that] in himself, he is otherness and linked with others [and that] what is, is more than it is.”²⁰⁶ In even more explicitly ethico-political terms Adorno states that negative dialectics “does not begin by taking a standpoint. My thought is driven to it by its own inevitable insufficiency, by my *guilt* of what I am thinking.”²⁰⁷ Adorno’s claim here suggests that a sense of conscience is tied up with the recognition of the literal inadequacy of one’s own thought to fully grasp the object. One’s epistemological insufficiency is also one’s ethical insufficiency—and therefore provides the motivation to keep striving. One is “guilty” because one initially assumes too much, or because one unfairly attempts to

conflate the object with one's own narrow concepts. The guilt is constructive, however. If taken seriously it can lead to the sense of humility that is integral to any nonidentitarian, nototalitarian structure of thinking (and being), especially with regards to human and nonhuman relationality.

The more we recognize the fact of a nonhuman animal's exteriority to *nonidentity* with a given concept or classification, the more difficult it will become to subject the animal to violence on the basis of its containment therein. Just as the human "individual is more or less than his general definition" so is the nonhuman individual.²⁰⁸ In metaphysical terms, this could mean that an ethics of infinity or a negative dialectics protects a particular being, say another animal, from being swept into a universal category such as "Animal," the homogenizing term which, as we have noted, can and does lead to animals' physical annihilation. Both the offending human subject and the animal objects of its experience are freed, at least conceptually, in this way. The human subject is no longer enslaved to the general concepts it imposes on the other, while the latter escapes the "englobing" net of these concepts.

While we have seen the important liberatory potential of the negative conception of the other and the description of its defiant relationship with the subject or the same, the efficacy of the negative account is also arguably limited in scope, precisely to the extent that it remains wholly *negative*. As Asher Horowitz has pointed out, referring to critical theory more generally, "the ethical relation is referred to negatively, in terms of those instances in which the logic of identity defeats itself."²⁰⁹ When defined solely in negative and abstract terms—as that which defies the subject's total grasp—one might argue that

the other is threatened with ontological uncertainty. That is, without a positive characterization of *who* or *what* the other *is*, the other becomes a kind of ontological absence, a no-thing. Therefore, while Adorno (along with Horkheimer) sought to “prepare a positive concept of enlightenment which liberates it from its entanglement in blind domination,” it is fair to conclude that he ultimately leaves the terms of a truly liberatory enlightenment undefined.²¹⁰ To some extent, Levinas also refers to the ethical relation negatively, but Levinas ultimately avoids the risks of the negative account by defining the subject and other, not through a kind of negative mutual exclusivity, but through a *positive mutual inclusivity*. Most importantly, Levinas describes the other and the self not merely as transcendent absence, as it were, but as *embodied physical presence*.

Of course, while both Levinas and Adorno insist on the nonidentity or infinity of the other (and the autonomy of the subject) they do not dispense with onto-epistemological identity or relationality between subject and object-other altogether. Quite the contrary—for this would risk reinforcing dualist or other reified conceptions of subject/object-other relations, which, as we know, are often mobilized to justify violence (by, for example, imposing a total and utterly irreconcilable ontological incompatibility between two beings). Indeed, the glorification of irreconcilable strangeness could amount to the glorification of *estrangement* or alienation, the very thing that critical theory and ethical phenomenology are attempting to challenge. Rather, Levinas and Adorno insist that nontotalizing subjectivity requires that mutual nonidentity is co-constitutive with *partial* identity and *qualified* relationality. In Adorno’s analysis, for example, the other’s nonidentity is ironically *affirmed* through the process of identification, which itself requires

the recognition of that which cannot be contained in any given definition at one time: “The nonidentical element in an identifying judgment is clearly intelligible insofar as every single object subsumed under a class has definitions not contained in the definition of the class.”²¹¹ The elimination of identity is in fact impossible since identifying is a natural human impulse: we understand by identifying concepts and objects. As he puts it, “the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself.”²¹² In short, while, as we saw in previous chapters, this identifying tendency has been harnessed to domination, it does not *necessarily* have to serve this end.

In a similar vein, Levinas argues that while on one hand the subject and other are mutually ontologically (or metaphysically) independent, their *encounter* radically and irreversibly transforms both—again, without compromising the autonomy of either. In Levinas’ words, “the subject as I is defined by its primary, and primal, encounter with the other.”²¹³ In other words, the self-identity, the ipseity of the I in its “pre-original anteriority,” is *limited* and qualified, but never *jeopardized*, by its inevitable meeting with the other. And, of course, for Levinas not only is the ego not an “in-itself” or a “for-itself,” but it is also always already a “for-the-other.” That is, it is not susceptible to totalizing tendencies where it “coincides” with itself at the expense of the other. Rather, the subject and its “freedom” are continually put into question by the other.²¹⁴ In brief, the new “humanist” subject in Levinas’ “an-archival” humanism of and for the other, therefore, is one that finds and frees itself, not by escaping the confines of the *arché* by withdrawing into the isolation of consciousness or the ecstatic and solitary finitude of “being-towards-death,” as Heidegger would have it, but by *renouncing* its unbridled freedom and replacing

it with unflinching solicitude toward the other—by gently stepping aside and offering the other one’s “place in the sun.”²¹⁵

Reconciling identity and non-identity demands a radical humility in our pursuit of knowledge about other animals. In concrete terms, adopting Adorno’s negative framework of identifying requires giving up on the violent enlightenment project to conquer nature and the nonhuman by “knowing” it. French essayist Michel de Montaigne already gestured in this direction in the sixteenth century. Reacting to the growing human hubris of his time, Montaigne retorted that, in the face of other animals, one should not claim, “*Je sais tout*” (“I know everything”), but rather should admit, “*Que sais-je?*” (“What do I know?”).²¹⁶ By admitting there will always be something in the other animal that resists our grasp, which we simply cannot know, there is less incentive to subject animals to cruel experiments in an attempt to extract every last iota of information we can about them in our mad rush for increasing rational, scientific and technological progress.

Finally, Adorno and Levinas’ notions of nonidentity and exteriority pose a direct challenge to dualism and hybridity theories, as well as to the positivist and mechanistic views. The dualist framework dissolves because the infinite and nonidentical refuse to be contained within the terms of a simple onto-epistemological bifurcation, a containment already cancelled by the dialectical nature of the relation. As Horowitz observes with reference specifically to Adorno’s analysis, “a dialectics of subject and object, in its rejection of monism, is not to be taken as a dualism. As between subject and object there is no ultimate duality.”²¹⁷ At the same time, the recognition of the other animal’s

exteriority and nonidentity precludes any claim that it can be integrated into or contained within a newly formed whole of previous opposites.

Reconciliation on the Horizon

To sum up what we have discussed in this chapter, by redefining consciousness beyond the strict parameters of human reason and language, by situating consciousness in the body and/or in perceptual, sensuous, emotional, and social experience, among other things, and by shedding light on animal emotionality and morality, ethologists and phenomenologists jointly help to reconstitute animals as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life on one hand, and to restore animality to human beings on the other. Although the experiences of humans and other animal are markedly different—as of course they are among individuals within every species—they are fundamentally united by the basic structure of subjective existence.

Phenomenology and ethology thus help liberate human beings from the tiny metaphysical cell in which they have been trapped for centuries, cancel human and nonhuman animal subjects' mutual estrangement, and usher in the era of reconciliation. and usher in the era of reconciliation. These traditions introduce the possibility of imagining human and nonhuman animals as being bound up in a mutually fecund phenomenological embrace of disparate but overlapping bodies and worlds. If humans once again recognize themselves as being one among many beings in the world, the modern call to mastery and domination over nature is revealed not only its offensiveness to other animals, but its impoverishment of human life as well.

As Levinas and Adorno have also shown, central to the reconciliatory project is the cultivation and mobilization of humility as antidote to the excesses of human supremacism. If the other is entirely knowable, predictable, and controllable, not to mention mass-produceable, it can easily become an object of contempt, scorn, and subjugation; onto-epistemological containment is concomitant with totalization, which is, in turn, a central feature of domination. But when the other is at one remove from oneself, when it dazzles and delights the senses, when it escapes one's intellectual and physical grasp, it commands unwavering respect and solicitude.

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- ¹⁴⁹ Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 129.
- ¹⁵⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *World of Perception*, 49.
- ¹⁵¹ Cited in Bekoff, *Emotional Lives of Animals*, 31f.
- ¹⁵² Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 33.
- ¹⁵³ Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy, *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1995), 1f.
- ¹⁵⁴ Kelly Servick, "Psychiatry Tries to Aid Traumatized Chimps in Captivity," *Scientific American*, April 2, 2013, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=psychiatry-comes-to-the-aid-of-captive-chimps-with-abnormal-behavior>.
- ¹⁵⁵ Servick, "Psychiatry Tries to Aid Traumatized Chimps in Captivity."
- ¹⁵⁶ Bekoff, *Emotional Lives of Animals*, 63.
- ¹⁵⁷ See "The Hidden Lives of Cows," People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, accessed May 19, 2013, <http://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/hidden-lives-of-cows.aspx>. See also Harold Brown, *Peaceable Kingdom: The Journey Home*, directed by Jenny Stein (Ithaca: Tribe of Heart, 2012).
- ¹⁵⁸ Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals* (New York; Toronto: Random House, 2003), 139.
- ¹⁵⁹ Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 33.
- ¹⁶⁰ Bekoff, *Emotional Lives of Animals*, 53.
- ¹⁶¹ See Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*.

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- ¹⁶² See Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 166.
- ¹⁶³ See Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 166.
- ¹⁶⁴ Bekoff, *Emotional Lives*, 53.
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- ¹⁶⁶ Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 86.
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- ¹⁶⁸ “Miracle Pets,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JjJzqXxgxo>, accessed December 22, 2012; “Hero’ Pig Rescues Baby Goat from Drowning,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLV5Lr5pauc>, accessed December 22, 2012, “Dog adopts Orphaned Goslings,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E70kQHvacNU>, accessed December 22, 2012.
- ¹⁶⁹ Jennifer S. Holland, *Unlikely Friendships: 47 Remarkable Stories from the Animal Kingdom* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2011), 91; 131; 47.
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- ¹⁷² Masson, *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon*, 139.
- ¹⁷³ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 16.
- ¹⁷⁴ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 16.
- ¹⁷⁵ Behnke, “Merleau-Ponty’s Concept of Nature,” 107f.
- ¹⁷⁶ Uexküll, *Foray*, 41.
- ¹⁷⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *World of Perception*, 31f.
- ¹⁷⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Structure of Behavior*, 185.
- ¹⁷⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xv.
- ¹⁸⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *World of Perception*, 39.
- ¹⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty, *World of Perception*, 40.
- ¹⁸² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xv. Author’s italics.
- ¹⁸³ Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 269.
- ¹⁸⁴ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 10.
- ¹⁸⁵ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 64.
- ¹⁸⁶ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 64.
- ¹⁸⁷ David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York; Toronto: Random House, 2010), 264; 266-277.
- ¹⁸⁸ Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 264.
- ¹⁸⁹ Bekoff, *Emotional Lives*, 60f.
- ¹⁹⁰ Bekoff, *Emotional Lives*, 61.
- ¹⁹¹ Jane Goodall cited in Bekoff, *Emotional Lives*, 62.
- ¹⁹² Bekoff, *Emotional Lives*, 61-62.
- ¹⁹³ Charles Darwin cited in Balcombe, *Pleasurable Kingdom*, 165f.
- ¹⁹⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xv.
- ¹⁹⁵ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 39.
- ¹⁹⁶ Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 39.

¹⁹⁷ Abram, *Becoming Animal*, 269.

¹⁹⁸ Levinas derives his notion of the infinite from Descartes conception of Infinity. He explains that “This relation of the same with the other, where the transcendence of the relation does not cut the bonds a relation implies, yet where these bonds do not unite the same and the other into a Whole, is in fact fixed in the situation described by Descartes in which the “I think” maintains with the Infite it can nowise contain and from which it is separated a relation called ‘idea of infinity.” See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 48.

¹⁹⁹ Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, and Alison Ainley, “The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas,” translated by Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. by Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London; New York: Routledge, 1988) 170. See also Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 195-197.

²⁰⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.

²⁰¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 24; 25.

²⁰² See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 347.

²⁰³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

²⁰⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York; London: Continuum, 2007), 5. Italics added.

²⁰⁵ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

²⁰⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 161.

²⁰⁷ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5. Italics added.

²⁰⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 151.

²⁰⁹ Asher Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill: History and Subjectivity in Levinas and the Frankfurt School* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), xii.

²¹⁰ Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xviii.

²¹¹ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 150.

²¹² Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

²¹³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.

²¹⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 52.

²¹⁵ Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, 53.

²¹⁶ Michel de Montaigne, *An Apology for Raymond Seybond*, trans. M. A. Screech (London; New York: Penguin Classics, 1993), 13.

²¹⁷ Horowitz, *Ethics at a Standstill*, 190.

Chapter Five

The ‘End of Powers’: Towards an Interspecies Ethics of Empathic Being

In the beginning is the relation.

Martin Buber¹

The Other, whose exceptional presence is inscribed in the ethical impossibility of killing him in which I stand, marks the end of powers.

Emmanuel Levinas²

Building on our insights into embodied subjectivity in the last chapter, this chapter argues that human and nonhuman animal subjects are further reconciled through the former’s development of a comportment of ethical attentiveness, aid, love, and care towards the latter. I draw on the ethical phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas, feminist care ethics (/ecofeminism), and the “metaphysical” ethics of Arthur Schopenhauer, among other traditions, to construct the outline of what I am calling an “interspecies ethics of empathic being.” Although it is centred around a single absolute principle—Do Not Kill or Harm Other Embodied Beings—the interspecies ethics of empathic being is distinct from deontological ethics because it is based on the notion that lasting ethical transformation can ultimately only occur through the transformation of the very “instinctual” structure, the very *being*, of human beings. The ingredients for this transformation are already present in the form of the sympathy, empathy, love, and admiration human beings naturally harbor for other animals. The problem is that repressive civilization has actively curtailed the development and expression of such

feelings of kinship in order to further its productive (which is to say, destructive) aims. One of the main tasks at hand for ethicists and animal studies scholars is to clear a path for those inherently ethical proclivities to emerge. By and large, despite their attempts otherwise, traditional animal ethicists including Steven Wise, Peter Singer, and Martha Nussbaum, and to a lesser extent Tom Regan, provide inadequate foundations for achieving this goal. As I argue in the first section, among the most problematic of their mis-steps is that they all inadvertently posit a relatively impoverished conception of the subject of ethical concern, rights, and/or justice. In Singer and Nussbaum's case, their accounts of the subject compel them to permit, if only tentatively, the instrumental use and/or killing of nonhuman animals. I go on to suggest that although Levinas was ambivalent about the ethical status of nonhuman animals, his conception of the "face-to-face" relation nevertheless provides a more suitable framework for re-imagining ethical interspecies intersubjectivity primarily because, on his account, the other is owed ethical protection solely on the basis of its fragility as a corporeal being. Next, I turn to feminist care ethics to discuss the importance of developing what I call a "critical emotional rationality," or a reason informed by and (re)integrated with ethical emotions such as sympathy, empathy, and compassion, as the basis for ethical theory and practice. Although one must not profess to love every other animal in order to advocate on its behalf, I suggest that universal ethical love is another important dimension of any interspecies ethics. I go on to argue that the interspecies ethics of empathic being is necessarily mutually exclusive with the violent domination of other species, and therefore, in positive terms, requires an active and unwavering commitment to veganism. After

outlining some of the leading arguments for veganism within animal studies literature, I make a “metaphysical” argument for veganism based on Herbert Marcuse’s contention that nonrepressive civilization depends on the “biological” transformation of the subject into someone who is “instinctually” repulsed by the instrumentalization of and violence towards all living beings. Finally, I conclude by arguing that Donna Haraway’s conception of companion species, and her call for benign instrumentality and “responsible” killing is based on a perversion of Levinasian ethics, fosters ethical irresponsibility, and is therefore anathema to an interspecies ethics of empathic being.

Lingering Anthropocentrism in Animal Ethics

Wise, Singer, Regan, and Nussbaum have all gone to great lengths to justify other animals’ inclusion in ethical sphere. However, despite their genuine wish to do away with arbitrary species boundaries and extend ethical consideration to nonhuman animals, they inadvertently perpetuate what we might call a *strategic* anthropocentrism. They all attempt to circumvent the landmine of restrictive anthropocentric criteria in a variety of ways, but in the end, to greater and lesser degrees, resort to asserting animals’ moral worth on the basis of certain capacities they share with human beings. As Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams, among others, have noted, the ascription of ethical concern, rights, justice and so on to nonhuman animals typically requires “an assumption of similarity” between them.³ Of course, acknowledging similarities between human and nonhuman animals is not in and of itself a problem; the problem arises when the human is established as the norm and nonhumans are measured up against it.

Wise is compelled to concede that the closer an animal's consciousness is to (traditional rationalist conceptions of) human consciousness, the more likely the animal in question is to gain membership into the political and moral community—that is, to be accorded the status of “legal personhood,” and the protections and rights this entails, especially the basic rights to bodily integrity, liberty, and equality. Wise explicitly states that we ought to extend rights to chimpanzees and bonobos on the basis of “how similar their genes and brain structures are to ours.”⁴ To be sure, Wise is not untroubled by the latent anthropocentrism of his rights theory. But he justifies this limitation by arguing that if rights are accorded to nonhuman primates, a precedent will be set for the extension of rights to other creatures. Wise explains that he “accept[s] that the law measures nonhuman animals with a human yardstick,” and that change can happen only incrementally.⁵ While this is true to some extent, one must also ask, if it has taken this long to accord rights to nonhuman primates, how long will it take to accord them to crustaceans, fish, or birds? Most importantly, by approaching “reform” in this way—that is, within the conceptual framework that is itself one of the main sources of animals' degradation, the conceptual framework that posits a certain definition of human subjectivity as the norm and as the only one deserving of rights—Wise risks potentially derailing the struggle to advance rights to all animals, regardless of their type or degree of consciousness or resemblance to human beings.

Singer attempts to avoid the “like us” problem by arguing that the so-called “principle of equality” he advances is based on the idea that factual equalities in abilities between beings—such as degrees of intelligence, physical strength, or moral capacity—is

of no importance in determining whether they are worthy of equal moral consideration. “Equality is a moral idea,” he aptly points out, “not an assertion of fact.”⁶ With cognitive capacity dismissed as irrelevant, Singer follows argues, following Jeremy Bentham, that the only legitimate criterion for ethical protection is a being’s “sentience,” which Singer defines principally as the capacity to suffer. “If a being suffers,” Singer explains,

there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being, the principle of equality requires that is suffering be counted equally with the like suffering—insofar as rough comparisons can be made—of any other being. If a being is not capable of suffering, or of experiencing enjoyment or happiness, there is nothing to be taken into account.⁷

On these grounds, Singer rejects the Kantian position that, for a being to be worthy of moral consideration, it must at least be potentially capable of exercising ethical agency. Nonhumans, whom Kant wrongly assumes to be utterly devoid of this capacity, are immediately excluded from the Kingdom of Ends, and are instead reduced to means to human ends. Kant does contend that nonhuman animals ought not to be treated cruelly, but this is only because such treatment would be an obstacle to the development of an upstanding rational, autonomous moral agent and would undermine human beings’ performance of their “duties” to one another. In Kant’s words, “Cruelty to animals is contrary to man’s duty to *himself*, because it deadens in him the feeling of sympathy for their sufferings, and thus a natural tendency that is very useful to morality in relation to *other human beings* is weakened.”⁸ While, as we saw in chapter three, it is certainly true that a person who engages in cruelty to animals causes psychic injury to themselves, and could therefore be inclined to act violently towards other human beings, this should not be the

sole or primary basis for abjuring violence against animals. Rather, as Singer rightly argues,

we ought to consider the interests of animals because they have interests and it is unjustifiable to exclude them from the sphere of moral concern; to make this consideration depend on beneficial consequences for human beings is to accept the implication that the interests of animals do not warrant consideration for their own sakes.⁹

At first glance, the elimination of all other criteria save sentience as the basis for equal moral consideration is a radical move in the history of Western moral philosophy. If pigs, chickens, rats, and monkeys' capacity to suffer were actually taken into consideration as not one, but *the* determining criterion for ethical consideration, the entire factory farming, experimentation, fur, and animal entertainment industries would have to be shut down immediately to put an end to the interminable suffering they inevitably cause. However, while it is of course crucial that rationality, moral capacity, and so on are rejected as immaterial to whether a being counts ethically, Singer's emphasis on sentience in general and the capacity to suffer in particular ultimately provides a diminished and incomplete portrayal of nonhuman animals' profoundly complex subjectivities. Suffer does allow that other animals also pursue pleasure, but their main distinguishing feature, or the one that is most morally relevant, is their capacity to experience pain. The capacity to suffer is, without question, one of the reasons we should include animals in the moral sphere, especially given the fact that the exterminationist system subjects billions upon billions of animals to what can only be described as pure, relentless, and interminable suffering. However, it is also important to recognize that their suffering is grounded in the fact that they are multidimensional subjects with a vast array of needs, wants, capacities,

talents, sensitivities, desires, and so on. As we saw in the previous chapter, nonhuman animals are much more than suffering beings—they are infinitely perceptually, emotionally, and socially variegated. Even more troubling, however, is the fact that Singer’s utilitarianism compels him to reduce the sentient subject, not only to a suffering being, but a being defined by the basic pursuit of “interests,” namely the interests to avoid harm (and pursue pleasure). Of course, just like their human counterparts, nonhuman animals do have an interest in avoiding harm (and pursuing pleasure). But Singer presents this pursuit of interests as though it were the *sole*, or at least the primary, motivating factor in animals’ lives. As such, he implicitly reinforces impoverished accounts of animal subjects as simply struggling to stay afloat in the stormy seas of the evolutionary and biological struggle for survival.¹⁰

The most disturbing implication of Singer’s utilitarian conception of the subject as reducible to its basic interest in avoiding harm, is that it does not account for what Regan rightly recognizes is human and other animals’ “inherent value,” or the value of their lives *as such*. This in turn, means that the principle of equality does not translate into the protection of all sentient beings from killing. On the question of killing, Singer objects to how the bigoted “species-line” typically provides ample justification for killing animals. Against this bigotry, he contends that species membership is an illegitimate basis for determining whether or not a being has a right to life or not—a convincing point, and one that is consistent with what we have agreed is his appropriate denunciation of arbitrary species prejudice.¹¹ As he explains, “to avoid speciesism we must allow that beings who are similar in all relevant respects have a similar right to life—and mere membership in

our own biological species cannot be a morally relevant criteria for this right.”¹² However, he soon contradicts his earlier claim that sentience ought to be the principal criterion for ethical protection, when he begins to enumerate very specific capacities that have nothing to do with sentience and that are typically associated with a “normal adult human,” as potentially relevant for determining whether a being has a “right to life.” Having abandoned speciesism, “we could still hold,” he maintains, “that it is worse to kill a normal adult human, with a capacity for self-awareness and the ability to plan for the future and have meaningful relations with others, than it is to kill a mouse which presumably does not share all of these characteristics.”¹³ In his unquestioning acceptance of the scientifically dubious claim that mice do not have meaningful relationships with others, Singer reinforces the speciesist assumptions he seeks to dispel. Granted, Singer refers to these characteristics because they are commonly pointed to as the basis for deeming human life more valuable than nonhuman life, and later suggests that we might choose a whole different set of criteria all together.¹⁴ Nevertheless, if we are to build a species-inclusive ethics, and nonrepressive society more generally, the goal is not to decide *who* can be killed and *how*—the basis of an exterminationist ethos—but to eliminate killing altogether (except in the form of euthanasia performed as a last resort, on solely compassionate grounds to alleviate otherwise irreversible suffering). Once we grant one group the right to determine the worth of the lives of members of another group, we re-establish the gross imbalance of power that undergirds any genocidal or zoocidal regime.

To be sure, in *Animal Liberation* Singer calls for a boycott against all practices that violate the principle of equality and interfere with animals’ interests to avoid harm (i.e.

factory farming, animal experimentation, and so on).¹⁵ However, the preference utilitarianism within which Singer develops his moral philosophy prevents him from objecting to killing other animals as a matter of principle. If most animals' primary "interest" is in avoiding harm, and if they do not have an interest in a continued existence per se, Singer surmises, then a "painless death" is not necessarily violating animals' interests. Because pain and suffering are evils unto themselves, he explains, "the application of the principle of equality to the infliction of suffering is, in theory at least, fairly straightforward" however, "the wrongfulness of killing a being is more complicated."¹⁶ In short, if animals' are seen as primarily seeking the limited interests of avoiding harm and seeking pleasure, but are otherwise not regarded as having meaningful interior lives, it is theoretically still possible to justify exploiting them as long as one does not violate those basic interests. Singer attributes self-awareness only to some animals, and suggests that those that lack it do not necessarily have an interest in living out their lives in full.¹⁷ As a result, as Francione aptly notes, "Singer regards most nonhumans as living in a sort of eternal present that precludes their having an interest in a continued existence."¹⁸

Although Nussbaum claims to avoid what she calls the "homogenizing" tendencies of Singer's utilitarianism, and instead posits a more versatile and multidimensional conception animal subjectivities as comprised by a wide variety of capacities, she ultimately redraws the strict demarcation between human beings and all other animals.¹⁹ In an ostensibly progressive move, Nussbaum flatly rejects the Aristotelian proposition that, in her words, "there is a natural ranking of forms of life, some being intrinsically more worthy of support and wonder than others."²⁰ Having abandoned Aristotle's

hierarchical metaphysics, Nussbaum instead follows Singer and argues that “it seems plausible to consider sentience a threshold condition for membership in the community of beings who have entitlements based on justice.”²¹ However, as Nussbaum goes on to argue, to characterize the subject as sentient alone is too limiting. Rather, to develop a sound theory of interspecies justice, we must, she maintains, take account of different animals’ multifaceted and diverse “capabilities,” the expression of which leads to its flourishing, and the stifling of which leads to its injury and harm. Only when animals’ capabilities are recognized, will justice and ethics be truly applicable, for it is only then that we will have a more nuanced understanding of what leads to their flourishing and injury. In her words, “the capabilities approach finds ethical significance in the flourishing of basic (innate) capabilities—those that are evaluated as both good and central” and “it will also find harm in the thwarting or blighting of those capabilities.”²² She explains further that the “basic moral intuition” of the capabilities approach “concerns the dignity of a form of life that possesses both abilities and deep needs. Its basic goal is to address the need for a rich plurality of life activities.”²³ Thus, Nussbaum adds yet another important dimension—dignity—to the conception of the subject that Singer does not address or acknowledge. Though she admits that dignity is a vague concept, it is clear that at least animals confined to “cramped, filthy cages, starved, terrorized, and beaten, given only the minimal care that would make them presentable in the ring the following day,” as in the case of circus animals, for example, are subjected to total indignity. And this, she properly insists, is not a minor concern, but an “issue of justice.”²⁴ So far, the capabilities approach proves to be a helpful way to affirm the importance of recognizing the moral import of

each species' and each individual's particular set of potentialities and needs, without hierarchizing them.

With different creatures' capabilities in mind, Nussbaum distances herself from Singer on the question of whether particular species membership has any moral relevance. For Nussbaum, species is important inasmuch as different species flourish in different ways. While, for instance, a mentally challenged child might share some capabilities and needs with a chimpanzee, and while both are certainly sentient, the conditions for their flourishing are in fact are very different.²⁵ This is an important distinction, and one that is not present in Singer's more sweeping criterion of sentience. In theory, acknowledging that different members of different species have different capabilities and needs would require that each being is ensured access to the necessary conditions for their *particular* form of flourishing. This could at least potentially translate into the eradication of all or most forms of domination over other animals (save perhaps "pet" ownership), which unequivocally undermine their flourishing by subjecting them to outrageous indignities, and depriving them of, not just one, but effectively all the necessary conditions for their development as healthy subjects.

Nussbaum is also properly critical of the "elusive" nature of the specifically utilitarian conception of pleasure. Singer fails to note that there are some pleasures that are "good"—in the sense that they advance a being's health and well-being—and some that are "bad"—in the sense that they curb a being's health and well-being.²⁶

Furthermore, Nussbaum maintains that, unlike utilitarianism, the capabilities approach demands that "animals are entitled to world policies that grant them political rights and

the legal status of dignified beings, whether they understand that status or not.”²⁷ On the basis of the capabilities approach, Nussbaum lays out a detailed list of entitlements that animals should be guaranteed—entitlements that loosely correspond to those afforded to human beings—including “life,” “bodily health,” “bodily integrity,” “sense, imagination, and thought,” “emotions,” “practical reason,” “affiliation,” “play,” and “control over one’s environment.”²⁸ Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to critically examine the contents of each entitlement in detail, suffice it to say that, at least on the surface, they are comprehensive enough to allow for a variety of forms of flourishing, and certainly to protect animals from the most brutal forms of violence to which they are now routinely subjected. Nussbaum boldly calls for the entrenchment of these entitlements in national and international constitutions and agreements.²⁹

The problem is that, as one examines her argument more closely, Nussbaum’s conceptions of animals’ capabilities and corresponding entitlements ultimately lead, at least in practical terms, to little more than meagre welfarist reforms. While Nussbaum insists that she regards nonhuman animals as “agents” and “subjects,” she also suggests that their flourishing is possible within some of the most egregiously cruel forms of domination, including invasive and lethal biomedical research and agricultural production.³⁰ While “life” is the first guaranteed entitlement, it appears that for Nussbaum it is not universally applicable and only protects against certain kinds of killing, namely, “gratuitous killing for sport” and “killing for luxury items such as fur.”³¹ “The question of killing animals for food,” however, is in her estimation, “very difficult” to resolve. “The reason these cases are so difficult,” she maintains, “is that animals will die

anyway in nature, and often more painfully. Painless predation might well be preferable to allowing the animal to be torn to bits in the wild or starved through overpopulation.”³² Who says predation is necessarily “painless”? Indeed, such a claim is completely unfounded and indeed patently false. Her statement appears to be based on a deliberate (and disappointingly common) form of evasion of the real issue at hand—humans’ ruthless predation of other animals. Certainly, animal liberationists who advocate the end of industrialized animal production do not advocate releasing pigs, chickens, cows, and other animals into the wild where they would become targets of predation. Such a move would be irresponsible and negligent. Rather the end of factory farming would involve transferring animals to sanctuaries or intentional interspecies communities, where it would be incumbent upon the animals’ human friends to protect them from predation.³³ And to suggest that institutionalized killing does animals a favour by providing them with a comparatively less violent death is nothing short of perverse given how brutal their lives and deaths are in the animal industrial complex. Rather than claiming to help other animals by killing and eating them, it is clearly much more consistent with Nussbaum’s own conception of justice to provide safe and comfortable living environments in sanctuaries and intentional communities designed specifically to protect animals’ entitlement to life and flourishing.

Tom Regan posits a much richer conception of the subject than Wise, Singer, and Nussbaum, which therefore promises to accord animals more comprehensive ethical protection from injury and death than the other thinkers’ accounts. Regan rejects the utilitarian position and instead aligns himself with the Kantian tradition, but only

inasmuch as he appropriates the notion that beings with inherent value should never be considered means to an end, or “resources for others,” but should only ever be regarded and treated as ends-in-themselves. Regan argues that whether or not a being can be an ethical “agent,” in the Kantian sense, is irrelevant as to whether or not it can be an ethical “patient.” Although he contends that other beings must “resemble normal humans in morally relevant ways” to be accorded such rights, this resemblance is, at least on the surface, very general and in no way reducible to the rational Kantian moral agent capable of universalizing maxims.³⁴ Ultimately, what counts ethically in Regan’s view, is whether an animal qualifies as a subject-of-a-life.

To recap from the general introduction, Regan defines a subject-of-a-life in refreshingly broad terms so that it at least potentially includes a wide swath of beings. Regan’s definition of a subject acknowledges many other animals’ emotional complexity, their sense of self, and their particular relationship to their own life trajectory. All beings who “see, hear, believe and desire, remember and anticipate, plan and intend,” have a sense of the future, who care about what happens to them, who experience “fear and contentment, anger and loneliness, frustration and satisfaction, cunning and imprudence,” who exhibit “preference- and welfare-interests,” and who have “psychophysical identity over time” constitute subjects-of-a-life. Some of these characteristics, such as having a sense of the future, could be considered anthropocentric, but other characteristics, such as caring about what happens to them, are not. On this definition, a variety of animals, from humans to raccoons to rabbits to beaver, bison, and chipmunks, as well as pigs, cows, and goats, among others, constitute subjects-of-a-life.³⁵

Crucially, he explains that, “those who satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion themselves have a distinctive kind of value (i.e. inherent value) and are not to be viewed or treated as mere receptacles,” or tools for others’ use, regardless of their “perceived utility” for others.³⁶ Thus, as we will see below, Regan argues in favour of universal veganism.³⁷ Whereas, as we have noted, Singer and Nussbaum’s respective subjects of interests and capabilities apparently lack the fundamental worth required to be protected from being killed, Regan’s subjects-of-a-life are immune to harm and killing alike because their lives are meaningful in and of themselves.

However, as one examines it more closely, Regan’s conception of the subject of rights is narrower than it might have originally appeared. Regan potentially undermines the potency of his ethical theory by redrawing an arbitrary species line just after dissolving it, ostensibly in order to solve the “endless disputation” as to whether amoebae and paramecia among other organisms can be deemed subjects-of-a-life. As noted in the general introduction, the line he draws is between “mentally normal mammals of a year or more” and all other creatures. Those that are positioned “above” this line qualify as “moral patients,” and those that fall below it do not.³⁸ This line therefore excludes birds, fish, and insects, among others, and thereby contradicts Regan’s adamant assertion that one must simply qualify as subject-of-a-life—the characteristics of which are clearly *not* limited to mammals of a year or more—to be considered a subject of rights.

Even if we resolve that problem, we are faced with another. Shortly after providing an eloquent picture of nonhuman animal subjectivity, Regan effectively reasserts human exceptionalist presuppositions by claiming that “human life contains

within it the possibility of a richness not to be found in the life of other animals because, for example, of our advanced cognitive, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual capacities.” He does at least concede that this superiority has no *moral* weight and “provides no basis whatsoever for our exploitation of other animals.”³⁹ Overall, however, his deferral to prejudicial notions about other animals is disappointing. While Regan’s theory of rights is clearly designed expressly to extend moral consideration to as many animals as possible, irrespective of their putative deficiencies, his assertion above nonetheless still gives humans a metaphysical edge, so to speak. Although he is resolutely abolitionist, his diminution of nonhuman animals could inadvertently create the conditions for a slippage into their systematic degradation and exploitation. As long as one species is considered somehow superior to all the rest, there is always the possibility that it will claim more moral, legal, and other entitlements for itself at the expense of the others.

Animal Subjects, Animal Faces

Although, unlike Wise, Singer, Nussbaum, and Regan, Emmanuel Levinas was not devoted to developing an interspecies ethics, or even in anyway concerned with the plight of nonhuman animals, his ethical phenomenology is ironically more conducive to developing a more robust interspecies ethics than theirs primarily because of its emphasis on the corporeality, vulnerability, and co-relationality of ethical subjects. For Levinas, to be counted as an ethical subject one must simply be an embodied, corporal being. Types and degrees of consciousness, capacities, interests, and other attributes are completely irrelevant in determining who is worthy of ethical response and responsibility. As Ralph Acampora aptly notes, a philosophy of embodiment such as Levinas’ avoids the problems

outlined above in part by reversing the terms of the debate regarding animals' entitlement to ethical protection. If we begin by acknowledging that we are

always already caught up in the experience of being a lived body thoroughly involved in a plethora of ecological and social interrelationships with other living bodies and people," we "effectively transfe[r] the burden of proof from what has been denigrated as ethical 'extensionism,' or expansion [i.e. the attempt to extend ethical concern to other creatures on the basis of any variety of arbitrary criteria] to, instead, what we should rightly refer to as ethical isolationism or contraction (i.e., homo-exclusive anthropocentrism).⁴⁰

In other words, in the framework of a philosophy of embodiment it is no longer a question of proving why other embodied subjects should be *included* in the ethical circle, but rather of proving why they ought to be *excluded* from membership in the first place.

Unlike Merleau-Ponty, and Husserl before him, Levinas posits ethics at the *centre*, rather than the *periphery*, of the phenomenological intersubjective encounter—that is, he maintains that the intersubjective relation is always already ethical. He insists, contra Heidegger, that ethics is more fundamental than ontology and that, *pace* Husserl, ethics is the ground, not the result or effect, of intersubjective being-in-the-world. For Levinas, the subject's autonomy and self-sufficiency are radically and permanently disrupted by its encounter with the other—not in the sense that the subject becomes disoriented and destabilized ontologically, but rather in the sense that once it encounters the other, it no longer exists for itself, but only and always *for the other*. This radical altruism extended towards the embodied other is especially attractive for the development of an interspecies ethics.

In the previous chapter we discussed at length the importance of reframing both human and nonhuman animal subjectivity within the discourse of phenomenology, which

has no truck with rationalist and anthropocentric definitions of consciousness, and instead defines the subject first and foremost as a perceptually and emotionally attuned body. Levinas offers a slightly different conception of the subject, but one that is nevertheless fundamentally consistent with our own. He is not concerned with perception per se, but with embodiment more generally, and the ethical dimension of embodied finitude in particular. The face, in Levinas' account, is primarily defined as a corporeal being who is vulnerable to the vicissitudes of mortality. As Christian Diehm points out, the face is the body for Levinas. Seeking to uncover the applicability of Levinas' ethics to nonhuman animals, Diehm explains, "What I want to argue is that when Levinas says 'face' what he really means is 'body,' and that it is on the basis of this understanding that we can speak of the 'face' of the other-than-human other."⁴¹ As an embodied presence the other cannot be ignored or forgotten, or consigned to metaphysical, epistemological, and, therefore, ethical oblivion.

Indeed, for Levinas the body of the embodied other is the locus of ethics itself. This is because, for Levinas, the body of the other is not merely another, neutral body as such, but is always a body *in need*. The other is a helpless corporeal being who is struggling to survive in a world in which it is exposed to the constant threat of injury and death. The nape of the neck that hangs low in hopelessness and that is susceptible to another's fatal blow epitomizes the face and the vulnerability that defines it.⁴² As a mortal being, the face is exposed, "menaced," "naked" and marked by, among other things, "destitution" "hunger," and "poverty." In Levinas' words, "The skin of the face is that which stays most naked, most destitute. It is the most naked, though with a decent nudity. It is the most

destitute also: there is an essential poverty in the face...the face is exposed, menaced, as if inviting us to an act of violence."⁴³ Since the other is constantly at risk of physical deprivation, one's ethical responsibility to it is principally oriented around the negative requirement of not harming it on one hand, and the positive requirement of providing it material aid on the other. Thus, Levinas often refers to "tearing the bread out of one's mouth" and offering it to the other.⁴⁴ As Alphonso Lingis explains, in a Levinasian framework, "The other's wants are first of all material; they make claims on my own sustenance and on my own substance, made wholly of the substance of the sensuous element."⁴⁵ Lingis' observation here is corroborated by Levinas' assertion that incorporeal beings such as angels, who are by nature immune from material want and mortal danger, have no need of assistance from others.⁴⁶ Rather, ethical attention should be paid to those who are threatened by the imminent possibility of injury and death: beings who undeniably constitute not just humans, but also, and indeed *especially*, nonhuman animals whose very existence in the animal industrial complex is comprised of nothing other than agonizing injury and merciless death.

While insisting on the corporeality of the face, Levinas also crucially asserts that *alterity* should not be confused with *difference*, and that the *physical face* should not be conflated with the *ethical face*. As he explains,

Alterity is not at all the fact that there is a difference, that facing me there is someone who has a different nose than mine, different colour eyes, another character. It is not difference but alterity. It is alterity, the uncompassable, the transcendent... You are not transcendent by virtue of a certain trait.⁴⁷

In other words, alterity is by definition that which cannot be grasped through sensory perception and/or classification on the basis of certain criteria. It is not reducible to physical (or any other) features. Rather, it remains beyond the reach of the senses and familiar categories of knowledge. As alterity, the ethical face defies the totalizing, “englobing,” or “appropriating” violence of “knowledge” (*savoir*), “familiarity” (*connaissance*), and “comprehension.”⁴⁸ This simple distinction between phenomenal difference and alterity suggests that any fundamental physical or biological differences among or between humans and other animals cannot serve as criteria for denying the latter an ethical face. In fact, as we have noted, other animals are perhaps the greatest victims of the violence of totalizing knowledge.

Most importantly for our purposes, the other’s vulnerability and potential subjection is precisely what forbids one to harm or kill it. Mortality itself, in Levinas’ view, is the basis of being-for-the-other. For Levinas the finitude of existence is not, as it is for Heidegger, the ground of solipsistic ontological resoluteness, of being-towards-my-own-death, but the opposite. Indeed, according to Levinas, the ethical relation is defined by the struggle for the “postponement” of death. As Richard Cohen explains, “embodiment, for Levinas, is not the inevitable closure of the mortality of each; rather, it is openness to the mortality of others. Suffering and dying are not private affairs but solicit the concern of the human community, calling for aid and compassion.”⁴⁹ It is precisely the other’s corporeal vulnerability and mortality that lends it its “authority” over oneself in the asymmetrical ethical relation, and requires one to “respond” to and take ethical “responsibility” for it. Although the vulnerability of the other is what may tempt one to

exploit it, the defenselessness emanating from its face is, in the ethical equation, also precisely what “forbids [one] to kill” it, and, conversely, what requires one to fulfill one’s ethical responsibility to it by offering it assistance.⁵⁰ As Levinas puts it, the face is “the extreme precariousness of the other” and “peace [is] awakens to the precariousness of the other.”⁵¹

Crucially, whether or not the other can reciprocate and respond ethically is immaterial. “I am responsible for the Other without waiting for his reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is *his* affair. It is precisely insofar as the relationship between the Other and me is not reciprocal that I am subjection [sic] to the Other.... It is I who support all.”⁵² Therefore nonhuman animals cannot be denied ethical attentiveness on the basis of their (assumed) inability to reciprocate it. The subject is always already more responsible than the other. Indeed, Levinas argues that one is not only responsible for the other, but one is also responsible for the other’s responsibility. In his words, “I am responsible for a total responsibility, which answers for all the others and for all in the others, even for their responsibility. The I always has one responsibility more than all the others.”⁵³ In the Levinasian formulation, the mother is the epitome of the ethical subject thus described because, as having brought the other forth into the world, she is also responsible for its persecution by others: “Maternity, which is bearing par excellence, bears even responsibility for the persecuting by the persecutor.”⁵⁴ When presented this way, the ethical burden is that much greater. The ethical subject is not only expected to fulfill its own ethical obligation to the other, but to take on the responsibility the other may or may not be able to fulfill. This means, remarkably, that even if another (human or

animal) *can* reciprocate, one must nevertheless assume that it cannot, and act accordingly on its behalf. In concrete terms, this suggests that in seeking to fulfill both one's own and the other's ethical responsibility, one can never become complacent or inactive, or ignore the rampant ethical violations taking place around oneself. The aim is not for one to martyr oneself to the other because of the latter's potential ethical insufficiency, but to *remain forever alert and attuned to the potential insufficiency of one's own ethical response*, and to deepen and strengthen one's ethical commitments accordingly.

In being responsible for the other's responsibility, one is held "hostage" by the other. One is held hostage not by coercion or force, but by the strength of one's unconditional willingness to "substitute" oneself for the other in its abjection. "*Toward another culminates in for another*, a suffering for his suffering, without light, that is, without measure..."⁵⁵ Unless the one submits to the other and assumes perpetual guilt, the former is always at risk of doing violence to the latter. Thus, the ethical subject is motivated by "*mauvaise conscience*," which is "passive" and "accused."⁵⁶ Looking at the back of the other's neck is what inspires the ethical response, for it is there that the other's (potential or actual) abjection is most clearly exposed. As the other's hostage, one's own freedom is challenged.⁵⁷ But the freedom that is put into question is the freedom of total permissiveness, the freedom-to-do-whatever-one-wants.⁵⁸ In Levinas' words, "To approach the Other is to put into question my freedom, my spontaneity as a living being, my emprise over the things, this freedom of a 'moving force,' this impetuosity of the current to which everything is permitted, even murder."⁵⁹ It is this reckless, selfish freedom that fuels humans' sense of entitlement over, and heartless torture and murder of

other animals. This kind of rapacious freedom that human beings so stubbornly claim for themselves is false not only because it perpetuates and revolves around the denial of others' freedom, but because it ultimately injures human beings too by psychically mutilating them. As we saw in chapter three, this violent freedom that is wreaking havoc across our civilization at the moment is a freedom grounded in humans' estrangement from their animality, and the sense of kinship, connection, care, and affection an unrepressed animality, and a good or ethical freedom, would engender. Ethical freedom is a freedom grounded in "guilt" and "shame" for the other's actual or potential suffering; it is a freedom tempered by responsibility; it is the opening up of oneself to and for the other.⁶⁰ Freedom of either party need not be destroyed in order for the proverbial ethical call and response to take place, but must be reconstituted. That is—it must be characterized by the embrace of responsibility.⁶¹ By eschewing irresponsible freedom, the freedom of tyrants, and instead embracing responsible freedom, one comes into one's own as an ethical subject, and takes another step towards reconciliation with other animals.

While Levinas' ethics is clearly conducive to an interspecies ethical model, there is at least one potential problem that requires addressing. Levinas insists that "discourse" is the basis for ethical relationality. Levinas maintains, for example, that "the face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse."⁶² This emphasize on discourse might raise alarm bells and suggest that animals are excluded from the ethical relation after all. However, for Levinas ethical discourse is decidedly distinct from verbal language. Wishing to distinguish his concept of discourse from the Heideggerian claim that language is the house of Being, Levinas often describes ethical discourse as a kind of intimate

preverbal or *nonverbal* communication with the other—the point at which one can feel the other’s breath on one’s skin and the point at which one can feel its vulnerability as an embodied being. Levinas points out, for example, that ethical language “does not belong to the movement of cognition.”⁶³ Ethical “proximity,” not *logos*, is the condition of the ethical dialogue.⁶⁴ In fact, the “call and response” of the ethical dialogue are literally “incarnate,” or enacted through the body, not through language.⁶⁵ Perhaps language can *develop* into words, but once again, Levinas insists that the primary form of communication in the ethical relation is *preverbal* or *nonverbal* and even manifested in *silence*. These various features of Levinas’ novel, and decidedly anti-rationalist, conception of language are encapsulated in the following passage:

I think that the beginning of language is in the face. In a certain way, in its silence, it calls you. Your reaction to the face is a response. Not just a response, but a responsibility. These two words [*réponse, responsabilité*] are closely related. Language does not begin with the signs that one gives, with words. Language is above all the fact of being addressed... which means the saying much more than the said.⁶⁶

If language does not begin with words but is above all the fact of being addressed, if language is in the face, then surely nonhuman animals “speak” in the ethical sense. Although unlikely thinking of nonhuman animals here, Levinas underscores the “animality” of signification when he writes, “Signification, the one-for-the-other, has meaning only among beings of flesh and blood.”⁶⁷ Just as a human in a state of abjection will call out to us for assistance with her eyes, hands, neck, and shoulders, so a nonhuman animal pleads for mercy with her body, too. If we accept Levinas’ conception of ethical discourse as an exchange between bodies, we cannot justifiably ignore other animals’ repeated calls for assistance on the grounds that they are “unintelligible.” A cry of pain is

certainly universally recognizable irrespective of whether it is coming from a human or from another animal. Animals are constantly, desperately, addressing us. And we know this. Their anguished pleas are written all over their faces and bodies, and are impossible not to see and hear. We know the contents of their calls all too well:

Please stop hurting me! Please help me! Get me out of here! My eyes are burning from the toxic fumes and chemicals! My wings are broken! I am starving! I miss my baby! Why did you take him away from me? I want to swim with my pod! I want to play with my friends! Where is the sunlight? It's so noisy in here! Everyone's crying! I don't want to do these stupid tricks! I need some space to move around! I can't even turn around! I need some exercise! Take this chain off my foot! I'm going crazy in this cage! I am terrified! Please don't cut me open again! Please don't skin me alive! Please don't burn me! It hurts! Please don't humiliate me! What did I ever do to hurt you?! Please don't shock me and prod me! I am so bored! I am so lonely! I can't stand it anymore! I am sick! I need water! It's too hot in here! I'm boiling to death in this this truck! Where are you taking me?! I'm freezing cold! Help! I can't breathe! My legs are broken! I have sores and lesions all over my body! They sting so badly! Help me! I can't move! My body is broken! My heart is broken! I want to be your friend! Why are you torturing me? Why do you betray me? Please don't kill me! I am in agony! I am dying! HELP!

These desperate pleas for mercy reverberate through the sterile corridors of the animal industrial complex. They pierce through the very heart of our civilization. Shamefully, we ignore them most of the time, and even laugh in the faces of the animals begging for the tiniest respite from the agonies we inflict on them. Our refusal to respond to their calls for assistance and care signals the depth of our moral depravity and decrepitude.

Although Levinas' ethics is decidedly nonprogrammatic, the Levinasian conception of ethical subjectivity, responsible freedom, and perpetual ethical striving can be translated into a crucial intervention into unbridled animal exterminationism. Our

whole concept of what ethical attentiveness constitutes requires a radical overhaul, beginning with the Levinas-inspired notion that if our ethical engagement with the other is insufficient in the most ideal conditions, it is unconscionably inadequate at the current juncture. It is not other animals who fail to reciprocate ethically, but it is we who fail to fulfill our most basic obligations to them. Worse, we systematically inflict the most outrageous cruelties upon them. As we will see below, the abstention from all active and complicit participation in violence against animals—in short, veganism—is one of the practical outcomes of the extension of Levinasian ethics to human-animal relations.

To be sure, Levinas is at best ambivalent about whether or not nonhuman animals can be recognized as having or being faces. In some cases, Levinas is overtly anthropocentric. For example, Levinas argues that “the human breaks with pure being, which is always a persistence in being,” while nonhuman animals are apparently caught-up in “a struggle for life without ethics.”⁶⁸ In short, while the animal is bound to biology, the human is capable of transcending biology and entering the heightened sphere of ethics. As the only beings who can transcend the merely biological and enter into the realm of the ethical, Levinas concludes that humans are “a new phenomenon.”⁶⁹ At the same time, as David Clark has noted, in making such claims Levinas “reinscribes” the ethico-biological conflation he elsewhere denounces. In Clark’s words, Levinas, “proceeds as if the distinction between the ‘ethical’ and the ‘biological’ was itself not consequentially ethical in nature, a sealing off of one neighbourhood from another, and a ghettoizing of the animal in the abiding space of the ‘biological.’”⁷⁰ Indeed, through the above statements Levinas seems to betray a triumphalist speciesist bias that humans are not only

at the top of the evolutionary scale and the culmination of the evolutionary process, but surpass the limits of evolution altogether. Levinas explicitly states that the ethical face “differs from an animal’s head, in which a being, in its brutish dumbness, is not yet in touch with itself.”⁷¹ Thus, as Matthew Calarco’s points out, for Levinas “...the human and ethics are something like miracles in Levinas’s philosophy. They mark a rupture in the order of being and point toward the ‘otherwise than being,’ which could easily be rewritten as the ‘otherwise than animality.’”⁷² According to Carrie Rohman, “Levinas can be situated within a long tradition of Western metaphysics that sustains the privileging of human consciousness and being by abjecting the animal.”⁷³

However, towards the end of his life Levinas appeared to warm to the possibility of attributing a face to nonhuman others. For example, in 1986 he explained to a group of graduate students in an interview that “one cannot entirely refuse the face of an animal.”⁷⁴ When asked by these students whether the capacity to speak is essential for ethical communication, and therefore whether or not other animals are ruled out from the possibility for this kind of interaction and for having a face in general, Levinas admits, “I cannot say at what moment you have the right to be called ‘face.’ The human face is completely different and only afterwards do we discover the face of an animal. I don’t know if a snake has a face. I can’t answer that question. A more specific analysis is needed.”⁷⁵ Although Levinas does not affirm that other animals *do* have a face, neither does he assert that they do not. Far from dismissing the prospect that animals might have faces, Levinas admits that “a more specific analysis is needed,” and thus opens up the door for others to take up this task. Irrespective of Levinas’ apparent uncertainty and

contradictory claims about the ethical status of other animals, we have already seen that the central components of his ethical philosophy preclude rejecting animals' claim to ethical attentiveness. Were Levinas to conduct the "more thorough analysis" he himself admits is needed, he would undoubtedly find it difficult to reject nonhumans from ethical consideration on the grounds of their lack of *logos*, for this would betray the very essence of his own ethics, which is, at its core, to be attentive to the call for aid coming from the *body* of the suffering other, whatever shape or form that body takes. With this in mind, Calarco correctly surmises that, "...although Levinas is for the most part unabashedly and dogmatically anthropocentric, the underlying logic of his thought permits no such anthropocentrism."⁷⁶ A Levinasian ethics of face is, fundamentally, an interspecies ethics, and one from which animal ethicists have much to learn.

Critical Emotional Rationality, Empathy, and the 'Feminization' of Ethics

As is by now clear, an ethics of embodiment rejects traditional conceptions of rationality as having any relevance in the ethical relation. As a number of ecofeminists have pointed out, traditional animal rights theorists such as Singer, Regan, and Nussbaum tend to glorify a specifically patriarchal conception of rationality as the sole foundation for ethics, and concomitantly diminish the importance of emotion in informing ethical thought and practice. In his detailed examination of the legal literature dealing with the foundation of rights and their potential attribution to nonhuman animals, Thomas Kelch notes, for example, that "an essential strand...that is ignored in [animal rights] law and literature is an emotive element of sympathy and caring, or more simply,

‘compassion.’”⁷⁷ Although traditional rights theorists clearly care about animals, they are anxious to purge their theories of any emotional content, partially for fear that any reference to emotions will dampen their credibility. While Singer’s status as an Oxford-trained moral philosopher was especially helpful in first legitimizing the animal question within the academy in general and within the field of philosophy in particular—both of which were, of course, traditionally hostile to according moral status to animals—one of his strategies for gaining this legitimacy was to dispel any myth that emotion played any role in extending ethics to nonhumans. For example, Singer is quick to point out early on in the preface to the first edition of *Animal Liberation* that his concern for nonhuman animals does not stem out of “love” for them. He recounts his and his wife’s experience at a dinner party around the time he was writing the book, where the hostess—both a meat-eater and a professed lover of companion animals—assumed that Singer and his wife must have a special fondness for animals if they were concerned with their mistreatment and rights. He had to explain to her that, “We didn’t ‘love’ animals. We simply wanted them treated as the independent sentient beings that they are, and not as a means to human ends—as the pig whose flesh was now in our hostess’s sandwiches had been treated.”⁷⁸ Singer makes a very important distinction in his rebuttal. People often refer to those advocating for rights or justice for animals as “animal-lovers,” as though concern for animals was merely a personal whim that had nothing to do with larger ethical issues. Such an attitude is, as Singer notes, “an indication of the absence of the slightest inkling that the moral standards that we apply among beings might be extended to other animals.” Worse, as Singer also aptly points out, the concept of “animal-lover” is

reminiscent of the term “nigger-lovers” that was used to denigrate abolitionists in the slave era.⁷⁹ Also seeking to assert the philosophical legitimacy of his argument for animal rights, Tom Regan too assures his critics that,

It is not an act of kindness to treat animals respectfully. It is an act of justice. It is not ‘the sentimental interests’ of moral agents that grounds our duties of justice to children, the retarded, the senile, or other moral patients, including animals. It is respect for their inherent value.⁸⁰

It is true that treating animals respectfully is an act of justice. But why must kindness or sentiment not inform or even be constitutive of justice? Reason too, he argues, cannot abide emotion. In his words, “reason—not sentiment, not emotion—reason compels us to recognize the equal inherent value of these animals, and with this, their equal right to be treated with respect.”⁸¹

In drawing such a thick line between emotion or sentiment and reason, Singer and Regan are clearly attempting to rid their opponents and critics of the prejudice that the struggle for animal rights is reducible to emotional excess. They seek to demonstrate that, on the contrary, the argument for animal rights is philosophically sound and based on rigorous rational analysis. Given the fact that concern for animals has been historically reduced to (weak, feminine) sentimentality, their derogation of emotion as ethically irrelevant is understandable. However, as Luke crucially points out, while Singer, Regan, and others are clearly seeking to disassociate themselves from the sexist stereotypes that are invoked to denigrate the movement, they ultimately reinforce those stereotypes by reinscribing the strict binary between (masculine) reason and (feminine) emotion. As Luke reminds us,

A central patriarchal ideology is the elevation of the 'rational/cultural' male over the 'emotional/biological' female. Women's rage (labeled 'sentiment,' 'hysteria,' etc.) is thus divested of political significance by interpreting any female reaction against the established order not as a moral challenge to that order, but as a bisexual phenomenon to be ignored or subdued.⁸²

While Singer and Regan are clearly aware of this problem, neither actually questions its legitimacy, and only seeks to avoid being associated with the wrong side of the binary.

Martha Nussbaum too rejects on "compassion" and "humanity" as the grounds for justice, but for a slightly different reason. In her view, "compassion involves the thought that another creature is suffering significantly, and is not (or not mostly) to blame for that suffering." The problem is that, on her definition, compassion "omits the essential element of blame for wrongdoing." "Humanity," she claims, operates in much the same way. To avoid placing blame where blame is due is incompatible with justice, which she insists is at least partially defined as the recognition and retribution for wrongdoing.⁸³ Nussbaum's principle objective in highlighting the distinction between justice and compassion/humanity is to disassociate her theory of justice from John Rawls' contractarianism. Rawls calls for "duties of compassion and humanity" to other animals, but otherwise deems them unworthy of participation in the fictional social contract and the justice it guarantees because of their supposed lack of essential properties.⁸⁴ However, Nussbaum fails to recognize that an argument for a justice based on compassion could still be made without resorting to a specifically Rawlsian model. Nussbaum is not interested in doing so and chooses instead to abandon compassion/humanity as a valid ground for

justice. Nussbaum's highly limited and rather ungenerous definition of compassion also militates against it having much ethical weight.

Another problem with bifurcating reason and emotion, and privileging the former, is that such a move fails to account for the massive role a certain conception of reason has played in promoting the domination of animals. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer have shown that the specifically positivist form of rationality that prevails today is largely responsible for the subordination of both animals and women. A scientific and mathematical or "enlightenment" way of thinking enables men to detach themselves from the natural world in order to better dominate it.⁸⁵ As such, there little evidence that reason is a more reliable source for ethical decision-making than emotion. As Lori Gruen argues, "Certainly it is possible that a decision based on emotion alone may be morally indefensible, but it is also possible that a decision based on reason alone may be objectionable as well."⁸⁶ Indeed, enlightenment or instrumental reason dictates that it is entirely reasonable to continue to subject animals (and others) to ongoing violence, for such violence is central to the smooth functioning of the productive apparatus. Therefore, as Luke notes, "To cut off our feelings and support animal exploitation *is* rational, given societal expectations and sanctions."⁸⁷ As we saw in chapter three, some emotions are sanctioned in repressive society, but only those that serve the system of domination, especially aggression, and a certain kind of delirious, sadistic hilarity. For those who have not managed to gain a critical distance from enlightenment rationality, Adorno and Horkheimer point out, feelings that foster mutual wellness are rejected as "passé." To

express *genuine* feelings is considered regressive, bizarre, embarrassing even. In Adorno and Horkheimer's words,

What repels [those under enlightenment's spell] as alien is all too familiar. It lurks in the contagious gestures of an immediacy suppressed by civilization: gestures of touching, nestling, soothing, coaxing. What makes such impulses today repellent is their outmodedness.... Any emotion is finally embarrassing; mere excitement is preferable. All unmanipulated expression appears like the grimace which the manipulated expression—of the film actor, the lynch mob, the *Führer's* speech—always was.⁸⁸

The unmanipulated expression of solicitude toward nonhuman animals is especially off-putting inasmuch as it contrasts directly with the patriarchal mandate of heartless domination. Today, the expression of horror on a person's face at animals' brutal subjugation is anxiously regarded by the state, and many members of the public, as the twisted grimace of a misanthrope.

Ecofeminists seek to challenge this distortion of both reason and emotion by re-integrating them in a coherent whole. With the dangers of promoting an obdurate and totalizing patriarchal-enlightenment rationality in mind, feminist care ethicists posit in its place a "feminized" ethics that restores legitimacy to emotions typically regarded as "feminine" such as sympathy, empathy, and compassion on one hand, and reconciles emotion and reason on the other. They argue that by claiming that sympathy, empathy, and compassion for animals are unreliable as a basis for ethics or rights, animal rights theorists inadvertently naturalize exploitation and reinforce the Hobbesian misconception that we are inherently antagonistic towards each other and other animals.⁸⁹ While humans clearly do have a proclivity for self-interest, malice, and cruelty, feminist care ethicists maintain that we also have a proclivity for kindness and care. As we have seen, a

number of ideological forces have done their best to squelch those tendencies in order to produce more efficient and more detached workers and consumers and animal-torturers and animal-killers. Empathy and compassion in general and attention to other animals' suffering in particular are especially ridiculed and rejected by patriarchal, late capitalist society. Adams points out that if it is considered "unmanly" to feel or acknowledge one's own pain, it is even more unlikely that someone will allow themselves to feel another's pain. Suffering is regarded as a "female experience," while to "deny its existence is seen as admirably manly personal stoicism."⁹⁰ Because identity with those who are suffering is considered a sign of weakness, many people, especially men, opt to identify with those who *cause* the suffering, a choice that will also very likely guarantee "certain hedonic rewards" such as permission to consume the flesh of murdered animals.⁹¹ While patriarchal and capitalist ideology have been relatively successful in diminishing empathic responses to other animals, however, Gaard reminds us that "the fact that enormous amounts of social energy are expended to forestall, undermine, and override our sympathies for animals is itself a measure of how strong these sympathies truly are."⁹² With this in mind, feminist care ethicists urge us to create the conditions for the *healthy* expression of emotions.

As noted, by emphasizing that emotional responsiveness fuels the ethical relation, ecofeminists do not simply seek to invert the reason/emotion dichotomy so that emotion prevails, rather they suggest that the dichotomy is itself false.⁹³ To view reason and emotion as oppositional is fallacious. Emotional rationality turns out to be a much stronger basis for developing an interspecies ethics than a masculinized rationality crudely

stripped of feeling. In Greta Gaard's words, "vegetarian ecofeminists argue that it is not reason alone, but rather the combination of sympathy and a reasoned analysis of cultural and political contexts that provides a more reliable guide to ethics and action."⁹⁴ As Luke explains further, to oppose animal exploitation is also a decidedly rational act, especially when we remind ourselves of the damage our violent estrangement from animals has done, not only to other animals, but also to ourselves. "To assert our feelings and oppose animal exploitation is also rational, given the pain involved in losing our natural bonds with animals."⁹⁵ In short, opposing violence is an important part of the process of redefining rationality along nonrepressive lines—something the Frankfurt School of course has long argued, and something we will examine in more detail in chapter six—and this includes integrating it with the emotionality from which it had been severed.

The ecofeminists' chief forerunners, including nineteenth-century feminists, abolitionists, animal welfarists, and classical sympathy theorists within the Western philosophical tradition such as Arthur Schopenhauer, David Hume, Max Scheler, Simone Weil, and Iris Murdoch, among others, also argued that sympathy, empathy, and compassion are considered highly *rational* responses. As Donovan points out,

All of [the above] theorists are saying in answer to Kantian charges that sympathy is irrational that, on the contrary, it involves an exercise of the moral imagination, an intense attentiveness to another's reality, which requires strong powers of observation and concentration, as well as faculties of evaluation and judgment. It is a matter of trying to fairly see another's world, to understand what another's experience is. It is a cognitive as well as an emotional exercise.⁹⁶

Building on these and other earlier conceptions of compassionate rationality, contemporary ecofeminists argue that certain emotions, especially those that tend to arise

in most people when they bear witness to violence, are instrumental in making rational ethical choices. Marti Kheel observes, for example, that it is often a primarily emotional and visceral response to another's suffering that leads to the clearest understanding of ethico-political injustices taking place and inspires a commitment to ending them. As she puts it, "If we *think*, for example, that there is nothing morally wrong with eating meat, we ought, perhaps, to visit a factory farm or slaughterhouse to see if we still *feel* the same way."⁹⁷ This does not account for the desensitization that often occurs after repeated exposure to or participation in extreme violence against animals—as in the case of "kill floor" workers, discussed in chapter three, lab technicians, circus animal "trainers," and so on, but otherwise seems to apply to most people's experience. According to Gaard, "Most people who are not born into a vegetarian culture but become vegetarians by choice do so based on their sympathy for other animals."⁹⁸ Linda Vance makes a similar point and notes that empathy, or a sense of "intuitive kinship" with other animals is what compelled her to become vegetarian.⁹⁹ Overall, the point is that it is often some kind of encounter with violence against animals that spurs people to think and act differently, especially when they contrast the brutality and suffering they have witnessed with the love they lavish on their companion animals. The discrepancy is so vast that it highlights the injustice that much more poignantly. Thus, as Donovan notes, "sympathy precedes justice" not the other way around.¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, as Luke has observed, Regan's own turn to abolitionism is a case in point: it turns out that it his affection and love for his dog are what originally inspired him to construct a rigorous theory of animal rights.

Unfortunately, for the reasons outlined above, he ultimately tries to diminish the importance of emotions in his work.¹⁰¹

Although Levinas keeps emotion out of the ethical equation, in his ethical universe a detached, objectifying, and totalizing rationality is also explicitly expelled from its position as *arché*, or the foundation of human life and subjectivity. Indeed, ethics for Levinas is entirely *unreasonable*.¹⁰² It is not unreasonable in the sense of being irrational, but rather in the sense of being fuelled by respectful bafflement at the paradox of the other's simultaneous abjection and transcendence, vulnerability and authority, its mortal finitude and its infinitude. Levinas' ethics is also "unreasonable" because it prioritizes the other, even as it recognizes the egoistic tendencies of the "same." In the context of an interspecies ethics, what could be more "unreasonable" than tearing the bread out of one's mouth and offering it, not just to the human other, but to the nonhuman other? What could be more unreasonable than replacing the will-to-power-over-the-other with the will-to-help-the-other, *especially* if that other is not human and so easily abused to one's advantage?

Ethically Being-with-and-as-the-Other

An interspecies ethics grounded in embodiment and critical emotional rationality is also grounded in metaphysics and revolves around the question of being.

Schopenhauer's metaphysical ethics is especially helpful for our purposes because of its emphasis on the function of emotion in forging ethical relationships. For Schopenhauer ethics is metaphysical inasmuch as it involves total identification with the other through the cultivation of one's latent but innate capacities for compassion and "loving kindness."

The very definitions of compassion (technically, “suffering-with”) and empathy, (“the projection of one’s own personality onto the personality of another in order to understand him better”) point to the metaphysical basis for ethics.¹⁰³ Schopenhauer rejects Kant’s reason-based ethics on the grounds that rationality purged of emotionality produces atomized egos. Compassion, on the other hand, brings two egos together as one. In his words, “the faculty of reason...absolutely separates one being from another,” but through the felt experience of compassion “the non-ego has to a certain extent become the ego.”¹⁰⁴ By expressing compassion for the other, in other words, one becomes united with other—one feels her pain as one’s own at the core of one’s being. It is in this sense that morality is “a problem...of metaphysics.”¹⁰⁵

Crucially, for Schopenhauer, this compassionate identification with the other extends to nonhuman animals. Schopenhauer rails against “Christian morality” for “leav[ing] animals out of account,” and thereby setting a precedent for thinkers like Kant to make the “revolting and abominable” claim that kindness to animals is significant only insofar as such behaviour is beneficial for humans.¹⁰⁶ To exclude animals from our moral purview as Kant does is “revoltingly crude.”¹⁰⁷ This moral “barbarism” is the result of a metaphysical error: the creation of “a vast chasm, an immeasurable gulf between man and animal in order to represent them as fundamentally different, in spite of all evidence to the contrary.¹⁰⁸ Not mincing words, he exclaims, “Shame on such a morality that...fails to recognize the eternal essence that exists in every living thing...!”¹⁰⁹ Schopenhauer seeks to eliminate or at least radically shrink this arbitrary and unfounded metaphysical rift by insisting that all living beings are united by this eternal essence. The

compassionate person sees herself reflected in the essence of others, human or nonhuman. The compassionate man is the one who “sees his own inner nature, his own true self, in all others, in fact in every living thing.”¹¹⁰ Authentic moral feeling and action are only possible when one identifies with the other so much that one experiences its suffering (and pleasures) as one’s own. The possibility of another’s misfortune or fortune becoming one’s primary concern “requires that I am in some way *identified with him*, in other words, that this entire *difference* between me and everyone else, which is the very basis of my egoism, is eliminated, to a certain extent at least.”¹¹¹ While one relies to some extent on one’s knowledge and mental representation of the other in order to make this identification, the identification between self and other is not “imagined” or “invented,” Schopenhauer insists. Rather, “it is the everyday phenomenon of compassion, of the immediate *participation*, independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the *suffering* of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; for all satisfaction and all well-being consist in this.”¹¹² It is only through this radical metaphysical-emotional identification, that one is inspired to act on the other’s behalf. Schopenhauer’s conception of compassion and empathy as total identification with and as the other is instructive because it suggests that species difference as such has no bearing on whether or not who one can empathize with. Schopenhauer plainly states that “The moral incentive advanced by me as the genuine, is further confirmed by the fact that *the animals* are also taken under its protection.”¹¹³ Unfortunately, Schopenhauer does not advocate vegetarianism, and indeed rationalizes the ongoing consumption of animals as necessary for human survival.¹¹⁴ But the logic of

his own metaphysical ethics of compassion and identification militates against such a position.

Martin Buber also frames ethics in terms of metaphysical “participation” with, in, and as the other. Clearly building on Hegelian dialectics, Buber explains that,

Whoever stands in relation, participates in an actuality; that is, in a being that is neither merely a part of him nor merely outside of him. All actuality is an activity in which I participate without being able to appropriate it. Where there is no participation, there is no actuality. Where there is no self-appropriation, there is no actuality. The more directly the You is touched, the more perfect is the participation.¹¹⁵

For Buber, the upshot of the dialectical exchange is that one comes into one’s own only through this ethical-metaphysical participation in the other. The relationship with the other is far from instrumentalizing. Rather, it is only through this metaphysical intimacy that the other is transformed from an “it” to a “You.” Although less dismissive of objectifying knowledge overall, like Schopenhauer, Buber regards objectifying knowledge as “it” producing, not “You” producing—it regards beings as though they were objects, and in the meantime fails to recognize them as subjects, and it squashes feeling as such and fellow feeling in particular.¹¹⁶ The man of (instrumentalizing) reason recognizes the particular, but only as isolated parts, not as singular beings or as elements of a larger whole. In the I/You relation, by contrast, the You’s singularity is never compromised as a result of the I’s identification with it. Rather, the opposite is the case:

When I confront a human being as my You and speak the basic world I-You to him, then he is no thing among things nor does he consist of things. His is no longer He or She, limited by other Hes and Shes, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition that can be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. Neighbourless and seamless, he is You and fills the firmament. Not as if there were nothing but he; but everything else lives in *his* light.¹¹⁷

The You, in short, takes on an element of transcendence, much as it does for in Levinas' account. Its singularity as a non-thing is not jeopardized, but rather enhanced by its position as a kind of source of being itself. Of course, Buber is referring to God or a divine being here, but the You is also very much one's fellow creatures, human and otherwise. He reports that when he looks "into the eyes of a house cat" for example, he sees not an It, but a You:

Undeniably, this cat began its glance by asking me with a glance that was ignited by the breath of my glance: 'Can it be that you mean me? Do you actually want that I should not merely do tricks for you? Do I concern you? Am I there for you? Am I there?'"¹¹⁸

The cat demands an answer from her human interlocutor, demands that the latter takes responsibility for how he regards her. Through these very demands, the You-ness of the cats is revealed.

Whereas Buber only hints at ethics in his discussion of I/You relation, Levinas of course frames the identification between the one and the other *as* ethics. Like Schopenhauer, Levinas explicitly grounds the ethical in the metaphysical, but leaves emotions out of the equation. He is, like Schopenhauer, however, preoccupied with the notion of identity. As we have seen in previous chapters, Levinas is especially concerned with balancing identity and alterity. Whereas "ontology," as Levinas defines it, "reduces the other to the same," by failing to account for the other's alterity, for example, "metaphysics" balances distance and proximity between subject and other, and maintains a "respect for exteriority." Ethics qua metaphysics "precedes ontology" because, whereas ontology asserts the primacy of the "same," or the ego in its ipseity, metaphysics

understands that the ego is always already “called into question” by the other.¹¹⁹ For Levinas, ethics is metaphysical because it involves the destabilization of the ego in its ipseity to make way for the other. Thus while ethics concerns “being,” it is at the same time a calling into question of the tyranny of being, and as such is “beyond” or “otherwise than being.” As Levinas explains, ethics “is not a question of assuring the ontological dignity of man, as though essence sufficed for dignity, but of contesting the philosophical privilege of being, of inquiring after what is beyond or on its hither side.”¹²⁰ In our extension of Levinasian thought, one finds the face of the animal on the other side of human being.

In Levinas’ account, both the one and the other are necessarily self-contained subjects—selves—in their own right. Indeed, even though, we saw above, Levinas posits an ethics based on radical altruism, he also recognizes an “egological” stage in the development of the ethical subject. There must be an “I” firmly established in its I-ness, its independence, who *enjoys* its lived experiences—the basic activities that constitute life, such as eating, drinking, labouring, and so on—before it can provide shelter to the other who wanders into its dwelling, “hungry” and “destitute.”¹²¹ However, as we saw in chapter four, while Levinas insists on the nonidentity or infinity of the other (and the autonomy of the subject), he does not dispense with onto-epistemological identity or relationality between subject and object-other altogether. Quite the contrary—for this would risk reinforcing dualist or other reified conceptions of subject/object-other relations which, as we have noted, are often mobilized to justify violence (by, for example, imposing a total and utterly irreconcilable ontological incompatibility between subject and other).

Indeed, the glorification of irreconcilable strangeness could amount to the glorification of *estrangement* or alienation, the very thing that critical theory and ethical phenomenology are jointly attempting to challenge. Rather, as we have seen, Levinas insists that nontotalizing subjectivity requires that mutual nonidentity is co-constitutive with *partial* identity and *qualified* relationality. To demonstrate this further, Levinas argues that while on one hand the subject and other are mutually metaphysically independent, their encounter radically and irreversibly transforms both—again, without compromising the autonomy of either. In Levinas words, “the subject as I is defined by its primary, and primal, encounter with the other.”¹²² In other words, the self-identity, the ipseity of the I in its “pre-original anteriority,” is *limited* and qualified, but never *jeopardized*, by its inevitable meeting with the other.

Levinas’ use of pregnancy and motherhood as an analogy for the ethical relation illustrates this nontotalizing with-ness nicely. Like the mother, the ethical subject “cores” itself out from its own ipseity and fills itself with the other whom it shall “bear.” Ethics *qua* sense and sensibility “is being torn up from oneself, being less than nothing, a rejection into the negative, behind nothingness; it is maternity, gestation of the other in the same.”¹²³ Maternity arguably involves the most radical identity that can take place between two beings: mother and unborn child are literally one body. Through the analogy of mother and child, Levinas precludes the risk of over identifying the self with the other in an “identitarian” manner. Although made of the same stuff and thus fundamentally bound together, the child will always be distinct from the mother, just as the other will always remain distinct from the one.

Importantly, in the Levinasian framework, there is never any risk of confusion of subject and other. In a statement that flies directly in the face of solipsism, hybridity theory, and other totalizing accounts of subject/other relations all at once, Levinas writes,

Transcendence designates a relation with a reality infinitely distant from my own reality.... this relation does not become an implantation in the other and a confusion with him, does not affect the very identity of the same, its ipseity, does not silence the apology, does not become apostasy and and ecstasy.¹²⁴

In other words, in relating to the infinite other, one is neither wholly merged with it in some kind of quasi-ecstatic but ultimately damaging union (or hybrid), nor does one abandon it in the betrayal of apostasy. Rather, one approaches it with a gentle intimacy, the intimacy of mother and child, while at the same time holding back and respecting its space so that one does not smother it. Thus, while Levinas' ethics, like Schopenhauer's, calls for metaphysical identification with the other, "the relation with the Other does not nullify separation. It does not arise within a totality nor does it establish a totality, integrating me and the other."¹²⁵ Ethics dwells in this irreconcilable tension between identity and non-identity.

Other thinkers in the Continental tradition such as Jean-Luc Nancy have also attempted to reconcile autonomy and relationality or being-oneself and being-with-others. For Nancy, being-with is not being-one-plus-another (or others). Rather, the plurality of beings is the foundation of Being. In other words, one is always already with-others—and not just human others of course, but crucially, more-than-human others too. As Nancy puts it, "Being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singularly plural co-existence."¹²⁶ He adds that "existence is with:

otherwise nothing exists.”¹²⁷ The impact of the violent loss of human and nonhuman others—through war, genocide, or extinction, for example—and the phenomenological “worlds” they inhabit, worlds that, as we have seen, give texture and shape to our own worlds, is that much more pronounced. For Nancy the silver lining of the consciousness of the loss of worlds is that it can inspire compassion: understood not as pity or altruism, but rather as “the disturbance of violent relatedness.”¹²⁸ In other words, compassion (part of any meaningful ethics) emerges out of but is also the reversal of totalizing identification over and against others. Compassion is the fundamental “withness”—amongst and between human and nonhuman beings—that lies at the core of subjectivity. However, while Nancy purports to balance singularity and plurality, he subtly prioritizes the latter over the former. Upon closer examination, there is less singularity than plurality in Nancy’s ontology. As he puts it, “*the plurality of beings is at the foundation [fondmont] of Being.*”¹²⁹ This does not necessarily suggest that the subject is always already a “we,” for a plurality could be made up of singularities, but it risks privileging the plurality of all at the expense of the singularity of each. If there is no subject prior to its being-with others, how can there be singularity in any meaningful sense? Levinas is clearly more successful than Nancy at striking this balance. As we have seen, for Levinas, the same and the other are co-constituted, and always already in relation, and therefore “plural,” but in order for the asymmetrical ethical relation to take place, they must also be resolutely singular.

Ethical Love

In addition to emphasizing the role of a metaphysically grounded sympathy, empathy, and compassion, our interspecies ethics of empathic being is also based on

cultivating ethical and metaphysical *love* for the other. For ecofeminists “attentive love” is other-oriented, and other-reinforcing. The term was coined by Simone Weil and later developed by Iris Murdoch. For Weil, attentive love is essentially a careful solicitude and concern for the other not as a type, e.g. “an unfortunate,” but as an individual. Weil rejects the generic application of the edict to “love thy neighbor” and instead calls for an individualized application directed at a particular person.¹³⁰ According to Donovan, Murdoch added to this the idea that attentive love “is a moral reorientation that requires developing one’s powers of attention.”¹³¹ One focuses one’s attention on what Murdoch calls an “individual reality.”¹³² And, as Donovan notes further, for Murdoch the orientation towards the other’s individual reality is inherently unsolipsistic. It redirects attention from oneself to the other.¹³³

For Ludwig von Feuerbach, feelings are the house of truth and love is the key to Being: “In feelings—indeed, in the feelings of daily occurrence—the deepest and highest truths are concealed. Thus, love is the true ontological proof of the existence of an object apart from our mind; there is no proof of being but love and feeling in general.”¹³⁴ Although Feuerbach frames love as “ontological” here, his notion of love can be deemed “metaphysical” in the Levinasian sense, inasmuch as it is one’s sense of identification with the other that paradoxically reinforces the other’s alterity and transcendence. For Feuerbach, love *announces and reaffirms the particularity of the other*. “Only in feeling and in love does ‘this’—as in ‘this person’ or ‘this object,’ that is, the particular—have absolute value and is the finite the infinite.”¹³⁵ Thus, while love is potentially “universally” applicable to

all beings, love is always directed to a particular being, and therefore never loses substance or meaning.

Like feminist care ethicists, Feuerbach also rejects the reason/emotion binary. Feelings (including love) and reason are not mutually exclusive but of a piece, seamlessly integrated. In his view, the claim that abstract thought is divorced from “feeling” and “passion” is a form of onto-epistemological violence for it “cancels the difference between being and nonbeing.”¹³⁶ Love is precisely that which clarifies this crucial difference—for, as we saw above, it is through love that the other’s particularity, its being-something-other-than-oneself comes into focus. Love, Feuerbach continues, “only affirms in reason and with reason what every man—the real man—professes in his heart. It is the heart made into mind.”¹³⁷ While love is “elevated to consciousness,” however, Feuerbach reminds us that love is never directed toward ideas, concepts, or abstractions, but always towards embodied beings. “The heart does not want abstract, metaphysical, or theological objects; it wants real and sensuous objects and beings.”¹³⁸ Love described in these terms is not necessarily limited to human beings but potentially extends to all creatures. To be sure, it may be hard to imagine “loving” a tick, or a mosquito, or a fish in the more conventional sense of the term. But when understood as caring attentiveness, as attention to and respect for the other as a sensuous being, love for a whole variety of nonhuman subjects is quite plausible.

For Buber love is also an ethical and metaphysical concern inasmuch as it engenders the responsibility of an I for a You, and balances intimate or particularized love with a universal love:

Love is a responsibility of an I for a You: in this consists what cannot consist in any feeling—the equality of all lovers, from the smallest to the greatest and from the blissfully secure whose life is circumscribed by the life of one beloved human being to him that is nailed his life long to the cross of the world, capable of what is immense and bold enough to risk it: to love *man*.¹³⁹

The particular love one has for a particular being can also be translated into love for humanity more generally. Although Buber does not mention whether or not nonhuman animals can be objects of love, we can certainly apply his message here to human-animal relations. For example, the love we might have for our companion animals can be universalized into “love” for all nonhuman animals. Though the quality and the content of the love we have for our canine companions might be very different than the love we extend to creatures we have never met, it is equally potent in ethical terms. To love, in an ethical sense, is to be responsible for the other, to promise to protect the other, and to keep that promise. The stranger the object of love is, the greater the “risk” one takes, and the more advanced person is ethically. Imagine the risk involved in “loving” anonymous cows, pigs, elephants, chickens, bears, and rats?

One might interject here with the quibble that unlike sympathy, empathy, and compassion, love has an insurmountable egoistic dimension and therefore cannot possibly be considered ethically meaningful. To be sure, in Levinas’ view, romantic love can lead us astray. On one hand, romantic love is geared towards assisting the other and is the source of tenderness and solicitude.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, Levinas cautions that erotic love is especially ill suited to ethics, because while it may begin with the recognition of the other’s otherness, and therefore elicit ethical responsibility, it can quickly dissolve into the conquest, usurpation, possession, and consumption of the other, and is therefore

ultimately egoistic. “Love does not transcend unequivocally,” he explains, “it is complacent, it is pleasure and dual egoism.”¹⁴¹ Romantic love can potentially derail ethical attentiveness because it desperately seeks to achieve satisfaction.

Levinas therefore prefers to characterize the ethical relation as being driven by “desire.” Whereas both hunger and love can be sated, desire is by definition interminable and insatiable.¹⁴² Moreover, whereas love can produce complacency because it provides satisfaction, desire that can never be fulfilled, in part because the other is by definition the *ungraspable*, inspires ongoing attentiveness and action. Fuelled by desire, one constantly strives to encounter the other—not in order to claim it for oneself, of course, but to offer it gestures of solicitude and care while always affirming its alterity. It is the other *as other* that one desires to assist. The subject cannot consume it and rest satisfied, but must continually seek it out in an infinite process of perpetual aid. In ethical terms, which are of course always Levinas’ terms, this suggests that one’s responsibility to the other is without end. Levinas’ philosophy therefore precludes complacency.

Whether we call it love or desire, our ethical commitment to nonhuman animals is infinite, and we are already way behind schedule.

The ‘Biological’ Transformation of the Subject and the ‘New [Vegan] Sensibility’

As our discussion has already evinced, the interspecies of empathic being requires a commitment to veganism. It demands the universal renunciation of violence against all living beings in general and abjures the exploitative instrumentalization and/or killing of nonhuman animals in particular.¹⁴³ Despite their other shortcomings, most contemporary

animal rights ethicists, with the exception of Singer and Nussbaum, properly call for an end to both the instrumental use and the killing of animals. Tom Regan, for example, is an avowed abolitionist. As we glimpsed, it is other animals' inherent value alone that warrants their protection from all use, harm, and killing. In Regan's words,

Since the utilization of nonhuman animal for purposes of fashion, research, entertainment, or gustatory delight harm them in the process of treating them as our resources; and since, given the rights view, such treatment violates their right to be treated with respect; it follows that such utilization is morally wrong and ought to end. Merely to reform such institutional injustice (by resolving to raise only 'happy' cows or to insist on larger cages for lions in circuses, for example) is not enough. Morally considered, abolition is required.¹⁴⁴

Whereas Singer and Nussbaum's respective subject of interests and capabilities apparently lack the fundamental worth required to be protected from being killed in principle, Regan's subjects-of-a-life are immune to harm and killing alike because their lives are meaningful in and of themselves. Veganism is also central to Gary Francione's theory of rights, which, for reasons of scope, we have not addressed in this chapter. In brief, for Francione, the main obstacle to animals' emancipation is their status as property. The main goal, therefore, is to fight for their recognition as persons.¹⁴⁵ As persons, they can no longer be subject to instrumental use and abuse. As he puts it, "If we ever hope to shift the paradigm away from the speciesist hierarchy that currently informs our thinking about nonhumans, we must develop a political and social movement in favor of abolishing animal use, with veganism, as both a logical and moral matter, being the clear baseline of the movement."¹⁴⁶ On one hand, he advocates veganism as an instance of "incremental change" that individuals can bring about by changes in their daily diet, lifestyle, and consumption patterns. On the other hand, Francione insists that veganism is

more than just a strategic boycott. It is a matter of principle. For example, making an analogy between animal exploitation and human slavery, Francione maintains that veganism “is a personal commitment to nonviolence and the abolition of exploitation. A person who agrees that animal use is not morally justified but who continues to consume animal products is similar to those in 1830 who opposed slavery but continued to own slaves.”¹⁴⁷ Likewise, for Gary Steiner veganism is a matter of principle and is a crucial and indispensable element of any theory and practice of “cosmic holism” and “cosmic justice,” both of which are based in part on the recognition of humans’ kinship with other sentient creatures.¹⁴⁸ It is fundamentally *unjust* to injure, kill, and consume other creatures simply because they are helpless and unable defend themselves. We should not confuse, as we so often conveniently do, ability with entitlement.¹⁴⁹ Crucially, Steiner insists that veganism is not simply a lifestyle choice, but is a “strict moral imperative.”¹⁵⁰

Feminist care ethicists also typically advocate veganism. As Linda Vance explains, “the ideology of ecofeminism demands opposition to domination in all its forms, and a rejection of the notion that any part of the world, human or nonhuman, exists solely for the use and pleasure of any other part.”¹⁵¹ Other ecofeminists emphasize the fact that harming, killing, and consuming other animals is incompatible with an ethics and politics based on critical emotional rationality, and the sympathy, empathy, and love that are constitutive of it. If one empathically identifies with other creatures, it follows that one harms oneself by harming them. Although we have not addressed this issue directly in our discussion, ecofeminists point out that because women and animals’ subjugation is structurally, symbolically, and materially linked in late capitalist society, to continue to

consume animal flesh and by-products, and to support institutional violence against animals in any other way, is to do a disservice to both women and animals. As Gruen has observed, since “meat-eating is a form of patriarchal domination” women who eat meat are implicitly supporting their own domination.”¹⁵²

These are all important arguments for veganism. But there is another, “metaphysical” dimension to veganism. According to Marcuse, society cannot transform unless the human being itself undergoes a radical “biological” transformation. By “biological transformation” Marcuse means “the process and the dimension in which inclinations, behavior patterns, and aspirations become vital needs which if not satisfied, would cause dysfunction of the organism.”¹⁵³ In short, what is needed is a change at the level of being, at the level of the most basic needs, drives, inclinations, desires, wants, and tendencies. As Marcuse explains further, a

*qualitative change... must occur in the needs, in the infrastructure of man (itself a dimension of the infrastructure of society). Such a change would constitute the instinctual basis for freedom... Freedom would become the environment of an organism which is no longer capable of adapting to the competitive performances required for well-being under domination, no longer capable of tolerating the aggressiveness, brutality, and ugliness of the established way of life. The rebellion would then have taken root in the very nature, the ‘biology’ of the individual.*¹⁵⁴

The biological transformation of the subject primarily involves the replacement of false needs that have been “introjected” into the subject with real needs for sensual, aesthetic, and intellectual fulfillment.¹⁵⁵ It also involves the nonrepressive desublimation of the erotic and aggressive instincts into unbridled creative and aesthetic activity, both of which are antithetical to destruction and violence. Although Marcuse does not suggest that veganism is a necessary outcome of this biological transformation, it is clear that the

non-repressive subject as he has defined it here could not, by its very nature, abide the torture and killing of other animals. Clearly, one of the false needs of which the subject would be purged would be the “need” to consume meat or animal parts and products that has been instilled in the subject by agribusiness corporations and the exterminationist regime more generally. Marcuse’s conception of biological transformation de-naturalizes violence and therefore presents a challenge to those who justify animal slaughter by claiming that it is impossible for humans to overcome our bloodlust for animal flesh. Most importantly, as the passage above indicates, the subject would no longer be *capable* of tolerating the regime of torture and murder. Rather it would be entirely inclined towards gentleness, kindness, compassion, empathy, and care. This is crucial for our purposes because it offers a vision of a new human who is instinctually, inevitably, and ineluctably compelled to protect other animals from harm, and who, by the same token, is instinctually, inevitably, and ineluctably repelled by their violation. Marcuse brings the transformation of the subject full circle. When we remind ourselves that ethical emotions and animality more generally have been actively repressed and suppressed throughout modernity as a means of facilitating the mass exploitation and extermination of human and nonhuman beings, the new subject Marcuse posits is not a “new” subject at all, but a subject already potentially in existence, waiting to burst out of its shell, as it were. The task is to create the material and social conditions for this transformation to take place.

Marcuse’s emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of this biological transformation is especially pertinent to our discussion. By consuming the corpses of tortured creatures, we only perpetuate the aggressiveness, brutality, and ugliness that are constitutive of the

exterminationist system. Torturing and/or killing animals is nothing of not aggressive, cruel, brutal, and ugly. Unless we are appealing to a fascistic aesthetic there is nothing attractive about violence. In chapter three, we caught a glimpse of the horror of a cow abattoir from Timothy Pachirat's candid description. We saw that it is filled with screaming and wailing animals hanging upside down, strung up by one leg, wriggling desperately in futile attempts to escape, their eyes popping out of their heads in sheer terror. The kill floor is covered in blood, guts, and brains, as are the workers themselves. Some animals fall out of their holds into the gory mess, and writhe around in indescribable fear and panic. The grimace on the face of a cow being bled to death obliterates the elegance, grace, and beauty that would otherwise emanate from it when it is properly cared for and allowed to live in peace. Likewise, the sight of the skin or fur being ripped off an animal's body, especially if the animal is still alive, as is often the case in the fur industry, is gruesome and profoundly distressing, the stuff of our worst and most terrifying nightmares. Those who dismember animals with saws and other butcher's tools know nothing other than monstrosity. Whereas the subject conditioned to embrace violence as the status quo may eventually become blind to the moral-aesthetic ugliness of atrocities against animals, the instinctual response to such tortures for a subject in a nonrepressive society would invariably be disgust and horror.

To reiterate what we noted above, the "new men" who emerge out of the biological transformation Marcuse calls for would in fact be physically and psychically *incapable* of such violence for they will "have different gestures, follow different impulses," and they will "have developed an instinctual barrier against cruelty, brutality, and

ugliness.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, Marcuse calls for the creation of an “aesthetic ethos,” which shuns ugliness and instead embraces beauty and freedom, both in art and all activities relating to the senses, and a “new sensibility” which abjures “exploitation in all its forms.¹⁵⁷ The new sensibility is sensuous, playful, calm, and beautiful. And it is characterized by admiration for the beauty of other animals.¹⁵⁸ Beauty is not only the “harmonious union of sensuousness, imagination, and reason,” but it also has an “objective (ontological) character...as the Form in which man and nature come into their own: fulfillment.”¹⁵⁹ Beauty, in other words, is the *reconciliation* of the human and the nonhuman in mutual awe and respect for each other’s true needs. Beauty defined this way has ethical and political potency. “Beauty has the power to check aggression; it forbids and immobilizes the aggressor.”¹⁶⁰ If we regard nonhuman animals through this lens, as beautiful in and of themselves, we are disarmed and lose all impetus to harm or kill them—even the maligned rat, pig, and chicken who are so often ridiculed for their putative ugliness are beautiful when they are allowed to be who and what they are. The new sensibility is a vegan sensibility.

In his pamphlet “On Vegetarianism” (1901), the anarchist geographer and vegetarian Elisée Reclus also points to the ugliness of violence against animals. As Reclus exclaims,

It is on account of the ugliness of it that we also abhor vivisection and all dangerous experiments, except when they are practised by the man of science on his own person. It is the ugliness of the deed which fills us with disgust when we see a naturalist pinning live butterflies into his box, or destroying an ant-hill in order to count the ants. We turn with dislike from the engineer who robs Nature of her beauty by imprisoning a cascade in conduit-pipes, and from the Californian woodsman who cuts down a tree, four thousand years old and three hundred feet high, to show its rings at fairs and exhibitions. Ugliness in persons, in deeds, in life,

in surrounding Nature — this is our worst foe. Let us become beautiful ourselves, and let our life be beautiful!¹⁶¹

And like Marcuse, Reclus calls for the beautification of the world by allowing creatures to live in peace, as they are. Though he does not object to having animals work, he certainly objects to their being killed and eaten. In his words,

We aspire to the time when we shall not have to walk swiftly to shorten that hideous minute of passing the haunts of butchery with their rivulets of blood and rows of sharp hooks, whereon carcasses are hung up by blood-stained men, armed with horrible knives. We want some day to live in a city where we shall no longer see butchers' shops full of dead bodies side by side with drapers' or jewellers', and facing a druggist's, or hard by a window filled with choice fruits, or with beautiful books, engravings or statuettes, and works of art. We want an environment pleasant to the eye and in harmony with beauty.¹⁶²

Marcuse also suggests that the biological transformation of the subject would also foster the “solidarity” between individuals that repressive civilization has destroyed.¹⁶³ If the biological transformation included the shift to veganism, this solidarity would also be cultivated between humans and their fellow animals—a solidarity that I will argue in the next chapter, is integral to the larger liberatory project. Reclus echoes this when he explains that,

The important point is the recognition of the bond of affection and goodwill that links man to the so-called lower animals, and the extension to these our brothers of the sentiment which has already put a stop to cannibalism among men.... The arguments that were opposed to that monstrous habit are precisely those we vegetarians employ now. The horse and the cow, the rabbit and the cat, the deer and the hare, the pheasant and the lark, please us better as friends than as meat. We wish to preserve them either as respected fellow-workers, or simply as companions in the joy of life and friendship.¹⁶⁴

Though, compelling to animals to work is in conflict with the vegan sensibility, Reclus' call to vegetarianism is clearly based on the notion that a natural kinship exists

between humans and other animals, and that it is in everyone's interest—human and more-than-human—to put an end to the violence that severs those bonds.

In sum, a Levinasian, Marcusian, ecofeminist non-repressive society is necessarily a beautiful one, and a beautiful society is necessarily one built on affectionate and respectful engagement with, rather than violent domination of, our fellow creatures.

The Impossibility of Ethical Instrumentality and Killing

Certainly, a Levinas-inspired ethics of empathic being cannot allow for the instrumentalization or killing of animal others. As we saw above, the most fundamental and unwavering ethical requirement in the Levinasian face-to-face relation is the prohibition of harming and killing the other qua face. Of course, Levinas' prohibition against killing refers to the killing of the other, the face. Because it admits of the third party or justice, his ethics cannot necessarily abide an absolute ethics-politics of nonviolence. But certainly nonharm and nonviolence *are* absolute ethical requirements within the context of human-animal relations.

While they may not agree with Singer and Nussbaum's views on killing, some animal advocates argue that some degree of instrumentalization is acceptable and unavoidable. Although Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka are committed ethical vegans, for example, they nonetheless argue that instrumentality is not necessarily harmful and is therefore theoretically permissible under *certain conditions*—namely, wherein animals are regarded as “co-citizens” of the human-animal “polis.”¹⁶⁵ To illustrate this, they suggest that, in a hypothetical town called “Sheepville, in which a flock of sheep are full citizens of the community they share with humans” and in which the sheep “roam freely,” and are

provided with proper shelter, food, medical care, it may not be harmful to the sheep to shear their wool. Given how sheep have been bred to be incapable of shedding their own wool, shearing them may actually provide relief. As Donaldson and Kymlicka point out, at the Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, New York, which abjures any use of animals for human purposes, sheep's wool is shorn and then discarded in the woods for other animals to use. They argue that such an approach makes sense in the current context, but would verge on the "perverse" if applied in a different scenario (i.e. a scenario like the one they imagined above).¹⁶⁶ In their view it is fallacious to assume, as many animal liberationists do, that "any use is necessarily exploitative" and that "use will inevitably lead down a slippery slope to exploitation."¹⁶⁷ However, until the conditions for the imagined scenario are met, the use of other animals is a slippery slope indeed.

The risk of slippage into wholesale domination from the starting point of putatively benign instrumentality is evinced in Donna Haraway's recent writings on companion species, which we discussed in chapter two. Haraway develops her conception of the interrelationality of companion species by borrowing heavily from Continental philosophy in general and ethical phenomenology in particular. For example, Haraway explains that companion species hold "the relation as the smallest unit of being and analysis."¹⁶⁸ Similarly, she suggests that in her theory of companion species, "the partners do not precede the meeting; species of all kinds, living and not, are consequent on a subject- and object-shaping dance of encounters."¹⁶⁹ Gesturing to Merleau-Ponty, Haraway further suggests that companion species consist of "infoldings of the flesh."¹⁷⁰ In a similar vein, she explains that they are figures engaged in "mortal world-making

entanglements” and “constituted in intra- and interaction,” and “te[ll] a story of co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality.”¹⁷¹ In language reminiscent of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s conception of becoming-animal, Haraway also explains that companion species constitute a “tapestry of shared being/becoming among critters (including humans)”¹⁷² and that “animals are everywhere full partners in worlding, in becoming with.”¹⁷³

Although she is critical of what she, like so many others, considers to be an anthropocentric bias in Levinas’ ethics, she follows Jacques Derrida in extending Levinas’ ethical phenomenology to the nonhuman by suggesting that companion species have a *face*, and are in face-to-face relationships with each other.¹⁷⁴ In defiance of the tendency to lump nonhuman animals into one large amorphous category, “Animal,” she also adopts from Derrida the emphasis on the *singularity* of other animals.¹⁷⁵ Haraway adopts key Levinasian concepts to form her ethics. Following Derrida, however, she pushes beyond the speciesist limitations in Levinas’ own thought and ascribes face to nonhumans.¹⁷⁶ For example, she writes: “The animals in the labs...have face; they are somebody as well as something, just as we humans are both subject and object all the time.”¹⁷⁷ Elsewhere she states, “Respect is *respecere*—looking back, holding in regard, understanding that meeting the look of the other is a condition of having face oneself.”¹⁷⁸ In similarly Levinasian terms, she emphasizes the centrality of response and responsibility in companion species relationships. She explains that in interactions between companion species “response...grows with the capacity to respond, this is responsibility.”¹⁷⁹

At first glance, Haraway's use of Levinas is an important contribution to the urgently needed development of a nonanthropocentric ethics. As we have already discussed at length above, if we actually recognized other animals as having face, as being *subjects* of ethical concern rather than *objects* of manipulation, the systemic exploitation of nonhumans could no longer be justified. Moreover in emphasizing, along with Derrida, that animals are capable of *responding*—understood both as communicating and expressing in general, and making ethical demands in particular—Haraway helps to undermine the Cartesian claim that nonhumans are automatons capable only of *reacting*.¹⁸⁰ Haraway's notion of companion species as defined here offers a refreshing challenge to the anthropocentrism and narcissism of sado-humanist thought. Her suggestion that humans and nonhumans are co-constituted and co-evolving would seem to destabilize any claim that humans might make to having absolute superiority and precedence over other beings. Rather than treat nature as raw matter onto which we project our own image, we find ourselves a part of, or a folding into, nature, i.e. as one among many other embodied beings who stands neither above nor outside the nonhuman. By invoking phenomenology, Haraway seeks to dispose of the patriarchal “mythos of enlightenment and transcendence” that conditions our relations with other beings.

However, Haraway distorts Levinasian ethics by suggests that one can recognize the face of the other while still treating the other as an object for one's use. With the laboratory in mind, Haraway writes, for example, “to be in response to [the face] is to recognize copresence in relations of use and therefore to remember that no balance sheet of benefit and cost will suffice.”¹⁸¹ But, as we have seen, genuine response and

responsibility in any Levinasian sense precludes the objectification, instrumentalization and certainly the torture of the other, it does not permit these abusive practices. Whether or not we *feel* or *believe* that we are “in response” to the animals that we are terrorizing in laboratories, or purport to “recognize copresence in relations of use,” does not *do* anything to help dismantle the system that reduces them to calculations on a “balance sheet of benefit and cost.” The positing of face in this framework is therefore self-contradictory.

Haraway further corrupts Levinasian ethics by suggesting that nonhuman animals in exploitative environments are equally responsible to people as people are to them. She states:

Human beings are not uniquely obligated to and gifted with responsibility; animals as workers in labs, animals in all their worlds, are response-able in the same sense as people are; that is, responsibility is a relationship crafted in interaction through which entities, subjects and objects, come into being.¹⁸² It is certainly fair for Haraway to suggest that other animals are equally “*response-able*”—that is, capable of responding. As we have noted, it is crucial to recognize that nonhuman animals do not merely react, but also respond to us. If we actually “listened” to what they were “saying” we might be less inclined to reduce them to automata operating out of blind instinct. However to claim, as Haraway does, that they are equally *responsible*, particularly in a site of brutal domination such as the laboratory, is to once again project onto them an agency they are denied, and to undermine the requirement of non-reciprocity upon which Levinas’ ethics is built. In what way could a burnt, bleeding, wounded, and terrorized laboratory (or factory farm) animal be “responsible” to its abuser? While many animals exhibit the capacity for moral behavior, the mutual reciprocity Haraway sets up here within the framework of a laboratory is not only absurd, but it is also an affront to any meaningful attempt to abolish their oppression.

Haraway delivers her greatest blow to the integrity of Levinasian ethics, however, by suggesting that one can kill animal faces. She goes so far as to make the startling claim that in order to stop mass killing we should not *adopt* but *abandon* the prohibition on killing that is central to Levinasian ethics. As she writes, “I think what my people and I need to

let go of if we are to learn to stop exterminism and genocide, through either direct participation or indirect benefit and acquiescence, is the command “Thou shalt not kill.”¹⁸³ In her view, this absolute command should be qualified to read: “Thou Shalt not make killable.”¹⁸⁴ The latter command is more appropriate, first, because killing, she claims, is unavoidable, and second, because it is not the act of killing other animals per se that holds one ethically accountable, but whether or not one does so “responsibly.” In her words:

The problem is to learn to live responsibly within the multiplicitous necessity of labor and killing... Human beings must learn to kill responsibly. And to be killed responsibly, yearning for the capacity to respond and to recognize response, always with reasons but knowing there will never be sufficient reason.¹⁸⁵

By claiming that one can kill another with whom one is in a face-to-face relationship, and by suggesting that responsibility *facilitates* rather than *prohibits* killing, Haraway distorts the very basis of Levinas’ ethics. If the other is prevented from insisting on the subject’s “obedience” to its command not to kill, the other is reduced to yet another *faceless* victim of brutality.

Haraway further normalizes and justifies killing in non-Levinasian terms. For example, she states that “there is no way to eat and not to kill.”¹⁸⁶ This is only true, however, in a narrow and pedantic sense. If it is not entirely possible to eat without harming other sentient beings (e.g., inadvertently killing field mice while harvesting corn), we can at least do our utmost to avoid killing. Haraway does not provide any concrete alternatives to factory farming, nor does she attribute much potential to vegetarianism or veganism as worthwhile pursuits. Indeed, she suggests condescendingly that to assume

that one cannot eat without killing others is “to pretend innocence and transcendence or final peace.”¹⁸⁷ Haraway does credit vegans with coming the closest to living without causing other animals to “die differentially.”¹⁸⁸ However, she also suggests derisively that veganism “would consign most domestic animals to the status of curated heritage collections or to just plain extermination as kinds and as individuals.”¹⁸⁹ Such a claim represents a blatant distortion of one of the central aims of veganism, which is, of course, to *end* not encourage the extermination of animals as kinds or individuals. After having dismissed vegan abolitionism in this way, Haraway goes on to congratulate organizations like the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) because they “deman[d] effective action for animal well-being in transport, slaughter, and marketing.”¹⁹⁰ She tells us that another of RBST’s achievements is that it “analyzes breeds for their most economical and productive uses.”¹⁹¹ Once again, Haraway validates exterminationist practices—the breeding, selling and killing of other beings for our consumption—rather than offering us concrete strategies out of the bind of domination.

Further defending killing, but this time drawing on the Derridian conception of “eating well,”¹⁹² Haraway suggests that we must learn to “kill well.” As she writes, “outside Eden, eating means also killing, directly or indirectly, and killing well is an obligation akin to eating well.”¹⁹³ Haraway explains that among other things, eating well involves having an “excessive” sense of responsibility for the other that one eats.¹⁹⁴ Haraway also describes eating well as avoiding “self-certainty,” not “relegating those who eat differently to a subclass of vermin,” and not “giving up on knowing more, including scientifically, and feeling more, including scientifically, about how to eat well together.”¹⁹⁵

She defines killing well along similar lines. To illustrate her conception of killing well, Haraway points to her friend and colleague Gary Lease who hunts wild pigs on supposedly ecological grounds.¹⁹⁶ He kills well, she argues, because he “knows a great deal about those he kills, how they live and die, and what threatens their kind and their resources.”¹⁹⁷ In other words, Lease kills well in Haraway’s view because he kills with a sense of ecological “responsibility” and because he takes pains to learn about the animals he hunts. While this may be so, one wonders what difference his alleged sense of responsibility makes to those whose lives he is destroying. “Killing well” is still *killing*. Indeed, this conception of killing well, much like that of sharing suffering, appears to be more concerned with assuaging the conscience of killers than protecting their potential victims. Elsewhere, Haraway reiterates that killing and causing pain are not necessarily unacceptable. Rather, what is important is that those doing the harm are not “[left] in moral comfort, sure about their righteousness.”¹⁹⁸ As above, this claim is indicative of the speciesist and anthropocentric prioritization of how humans feel about killing other animals, not about how *animals* might feel as the victims of killing, no matter how “well” it is done.

Haraway also attempts to diminish the brutal reality of killing by suggesting that we “become with” the animals we kill and consume. This is a distortion of our notion of metaphysical empathic relationality, identification with the other’s suffering is an impetus to stop it, not to excuse oneself from responsibility for putting an end to the suffering. Just as there is, in Haraway’s view, no way to eat and not to kill other mortal beings, there is also “no way to eat and not to become with other mortal beings to whom we are

accountable.”¹⁹⁹ In truth, the only way one can “become with” the animals one tortures and kills is by consuming them—hardly a desirable mode of “becoming” for the animals in question. Indeed, as is well known, the supposedly benign consumption of animal corpses is another face of the sado-humanist myth. The animal subject-turned-meat is a product of our project of domination: its carcass tells the story of our ongoing conquest of the nonhuman; in its charred flesh, we see our own self-appointed absolute power over other animals reflected back to us. What Haraway’s “ethical” ruminations signal, therefore, is not the outline of a new relationship to nonhuman others but, on the contrary, a deep commitment to the assumptions and practices of the brutal sado-humanist and exterminationist legacy. At best, Haraway’s ethics amount to no more than what Steiner aptly refers to a “feel-good ethics,” ethical commitments and responsibilities that permit us to express general abhorrence at the treatment of oppressed groups such as animals but do not push us out of our comfort zones by requiring us to take concrete steps to ameliorate the oppression we so abhor.”²⁰⁰ Overall, Haraway’s notion of benign instrumentality and responsible killing pervert the very essence of the Levinasian ethical project, and therefore have no place in our interspecies ethics of empathic being.

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- ¹ Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York; London: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 69.
- ² Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 84; 87.
- ³ Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams, "Introduction," *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5.
- ⁴ Steven M. Wise, *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals* (Cambridge: MA, Perseus Publishing, 2000). 4.
- ⁵ Steven M. Wise, "Animal Rights, One Step at a Time," in *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*, ed. Cass R. Sunstein and Martha C. Nussbaum (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 40.
- ⁶ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, new revised edition (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 4.
- ⁷ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 8.
- ⁸ Immanuel Kant cited in Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995), 96.
- ⁹ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 40.
- ¹⁰ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 11.
- ¹¹ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 17-19.
- ¹² Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 19.
- ¹³ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 19.
- ¹⁴ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 19.
- ¹⁵ See for example, Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 229-233.
- ¹⁶ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 17.
- ¹⁷ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 20.
- ¹⁸ Gary L. Francione, *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 18.
- ¹⁹ Martha Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Nonhuman Animals," in *Animal Rights*, 319.
- ²⁰ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 309.
- ²¹ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 309.
- ²² Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 309.
- ²³ Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, and Species Membership* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2006) 346.
- ²⁴ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 300.
- ²⁵ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 310.
- ²⁶ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 304.
- ²⁷ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 316.
- ²⁸ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 314-317.
- ²⁹ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 317.
- ³⁰ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 302.
- ³¹ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 314f.

³² Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 315.

³³ In what appears to be a later, revised version of the essay in which the above claims regarding harm and killing are made, Nussbaum seems to advocate vegetarianism. She writes, for example, "A human being can be expected to flourish without homicide and, lets us hope, even without most killing of animals" (*Frontiers of Justice*, 370). She also criticizes utilitarians for suggesting that painless killing of animals does not constitute harm because animals are not aware of and have no interest in the future. Instead, she points out that utilitarians "may be wrong about the interests of animals. Some animals probably do have a sense of their life as a narrative extended over time, to at least some degree" (*Frontiers of Justice*, 384) But Nussbaum ultimately defers to the utilitarians to resolve the question of death and harm. As she puts it, "it would appear that the Utilitarian is partly right: the prevention of suffering, both during life and at death, is of crucial importance always," but the prevention of death as such, is apparently not. In the end, then, regardless of the various forms of flourishing to which animals are supposed to be entitled irrespective of species, the species-line does in fact cut right through humans and other animals in her theory of justice, confining the latter to a precarious "justice" at best, and ongoing injustice at worst.

³⁴ Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), xvi-xvii; 243.

³⁵ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, xvi.

³⁶ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 243.

³⁷ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, xviii.

³⁸ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, xvi.

³⁹ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, xvii.

⁴⁰ Ralph Acampora, *Corporal Compassion: Animal Ethics and the Philosophy of Body* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 5.

⁴¹ Christian Diehm, "Facing Nature: Levinas Beyond the Human," *Philosophy Today* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 54.

⁴² Emmanuel Levinas, "The Other, Utopia, and Justice," in *Entre-Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Martha Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 232.

⁴³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard A. Cohen, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 86.

⁴⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 74.

⁴⁵ Alphonso Lingis, "The Sensuality and the Sensitivity," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 229.

⁴⁶ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 97.

⁴⁷ Emmanuel Levinas with Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, and Alison Ainley, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London; New York: Routledge, 1988), 170.

⁴⁸ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 170.

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- ⁴⁹ Richard A. Cohen, "Introduction," in Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), xxxiii.
- ⁵⁰ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 86.
- ⁵¹ Emmanuel Levinas, "Peace and Proximity," in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Writings*, ed. Adriann T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 167.
- ⁵² Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 98.
- ⁵³ Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 99.
- ⁵⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.
- ⁵⁵ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 18.
- ⁵⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," in *The Levinas Reader: Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Sean Hand (Malden; Oxford; Melbourne; Berlin: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 75-87; 80-82.
- ⁵⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 85.
- ⁵⁸ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 51.
- ⁵⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 303.
- ⁶⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 203.
- ⁶¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 203.
- ⁶² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 66.
- ⁶³ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 63.
- ⁶⁴ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 46.
- ⁶⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 204.
- ⁶⁶ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 169.
- ⁶⁷ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 74.
- ⁶⁸ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 172.
- ⁶⁹ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 172.
- ⁷⁰ David L. Clark, Clark, "On Being 'the last Kantian in Nazi Germany': Dwelling with Animals after Levinas," in *Post-Modernism and the Ethical Subject*, ed. Barbara Gabriel and Suzan Ilcan (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 56-7.
- ⁷¹ Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite," in *To the Other*, ed. Adrian Peperzak (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1992), 110.
- ⁷² Matthew Calarco, "Faced by Animals," in *Radicalizing Levinas*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, SUNY series in Radical Social and Political Theory, series ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), 113f.
- ⁷³ Carrie Rohman, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 10.
- ⁷⁴ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 169.
- ⁷⁵ Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 171-72.
- ⁷⁶ Calarco, "Faced by Animals," 113.
- ⁷⁷ Thomas G. Kelch, "The Rational and the Emotive in a Theory of Animal Rights," in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, ed. Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 260.
- ⁷⁸ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, ii.

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- ⁷⁹ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, ii.
- ⁸⁰ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 280.
- ⁸¹ Tom Regan cited in Lori Gruen, "Animals," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Cambridge: MA, Blackwell Publishes, 1995), 29f.
- ⁸² Brian Luke, "Taming Ourselves or Going Feral? Toward a Nonpatriarchal Metaethic of Animal Liberation," in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1995), 293.
- ⁸³ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 301f.
- ⁸⁴ Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion,'" 300.
- ⁸⁵ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 206; 31.
- ⁸⁶ Gruen, "Animals," 351.
- ⁸⁷ Luke, "Taming Ourselves," 312.
- ⁸⁸ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 149.
- ⁸⁹ Luke, "Taming Ourselves," 300-302.
- ⁹⁰ Carol J. Adams, "Caring about Suffering: A Feminist Exploration," in *The Feminist Care Tradition*, 213.
- ⁹¹ Adams, "Caring about Suffering," 215.
- ⁹² Greta Claire Gaard, "Vegetarian Ecofeminism: A Review Essay," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 23, no. 3 (2002): 119, accessed December 12, 2012, doi: 10.1353/fro.2003.0006.
- ⁹³ See for example, Gruen, "Animals," 351.
- ⁹⁴ Greta Claire Gaard, "Vegetarian Ecofeminism," 123.
- ⁹⁵ Luke, "Taming Ourselves," 312.
- ⁹⁶ Josephine Donovan, "Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals," in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, 175; 179f.
- ⁹⁷ Marti Kheel, "The Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair," in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, 49
- ⁹⁸ Gaard, "Vegetarian Ecofeminism," 118.
- ⁹⁹ Linda Vance, "Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality," in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, and Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 136.
- ¹⁰⁰ Donovan, "Attention to Suffering," 180.
- ¹⁰¹ Luke, "Taming Ourselves," 292f.
- ¹⁰² Levinas, "Paradox of Morality," 172.
- ¹⁰³ Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged, 2d ed., s. v. "empathy," "compassion."
- ¹⁰⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995), 144.
- ¹⁰⁵ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 144.
- ¹⁰⁶ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 96
- ¹⁰⁷ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 175.
- ¹⁰⁸ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 175-176; 182. Author's italics.
- ¹⁰⁹ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 96.

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- ¹¹⁰ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 213.
- ¹¹¹ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 143f. Author's italics. In Schopenhauer's formulation it is the other's suffering with which one identifies most immediately, but it is important to remind ourselves that, given the complex nature of most other animals' psychic, emotional, and social lives, suffering is not reducible to pain or fear, but is comprised of a wide variety of emotions, and can be triggered by a wide range of different experiences, from emotional negligence to betrayal to violent abuse to perpetual terror to boredom.
- ¹¹² Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 144. Author's italics.
- ¹¹³ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 175.
- ¹¹⁴ Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, 182.
- ¹¹⁵ Buber, *I and Thou*, 113.
- ¹¹⁶ Buber, *I and Thou*, 80f.
- ¹¹⁷ Buber, *I and Thou*, 59.
- ¹¹⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, 145.
- ¹¹⁹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.
- ¹²⁰ Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 18.
- ¹²¹ See for example, Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 67; 111; 155.
- ¹²² Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 197.
- ¹²³ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 75.
- ¹²⁴ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 41f.
- ¹²⁵ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 251.
- ¹²⁶ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3.
- ¹²⁷ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 4.
- ¹²⁸ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, xiii.
- ¹²⁹ Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 12.
- ¹³⁰ Cited in Donovan, "Attention to Suffering," 190.
- ¹³¹ Donovan, "Attention to Suffering," 190.
- ¹³² Donovan, "Attention to Suffering," 191.
- ¹³³ Donovan, "Attention to Suffering," 190.
- ¹³⁴ Ludwig von Feuerbach, *Principles*, page 53, section 33.
- ¹³⁵ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Manfred Vogel (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), 52.
- ¹³⁶ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 52.
- ¹³⁷ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 53f.
- ¹³⁸ Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, 53f.
- ¹³⁹ Buber, *I and Thou*, 66f.
- ¹⁴⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 256-257.
- ¹⁴¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 266.
- ¹⁴² Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite," 114.

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- ¹⁴³ Sadly, Arthur Schopenhauer undermines the thrust of his own metaphysical ethics and argues against vegetarianism (or veganism), but his appeal to the cultivation of sympathy and compassion is nevertheless an important to the interspecies ethics of empathic being. To justify the ongoing killing of animals, Schopenhauer makes the unfounded claim that “Without animal food the human race could not even exist in the North” (182).
- ¹⁴⁴ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, xviii.
- ¹⁴⁵ Gary L. Francione, *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 25.
- ¹⁴⁶ Francione, *Animals as Persons*, 17.
- ¹⁴⁷ Francione, *Animals as Persons*, 16f.
- ¹⁴⁸ Steiner, *Animals and the Moral Community*, 163.
- ¹⁴⁹ Gary Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism. Critical Perspectives on Animals: Theory, Culture, Science and Law*, ed. Gary L. Francione and Gary Steiner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 201.
- ¹⁵⁰ Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism*, 5.
- ¹⁵¹ Linda Vance, “Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality,” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, and Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 134f.
- ¹⁵² Gruen, “Empathy and Vegetarian Commitments,” in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, 334.
- ¹⁵³ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 10, n.1.
- ¹⁵⁴ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 4f.
- ¹⁵⁵ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 11.
- ¹⁵⁶ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 21.
- ¹⁵⁷ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 24; 88.
- ¹⁵⁸ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 25.
- ¹⁵⁹ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 27.
- ¹⁶⁰ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 26.
- ¹⁶¹ Elisée Reclus, “On Vegetarianism” (1901), Anarchist Library, accessed Jan. 29, 2012, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/elisee-reclus-on-vegetarianism.pdf>.
- ¹⁶² Reclus, “On Vegetarianism,” 7.
- ¹⁶³ Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 10.
- ¹⁶⁴ Reclus, “On Vegetarianism,” 5f.
- ¹⁶⁵ Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135f.
- ¹⁶⁶ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 136.
- ¹⁶⁷ Donaldson and Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, 136.
- ¹⁶⁸ Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet, Posthumanities*, vol. 3, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 165.
- ¹⁶⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 4.
- ¹⁷⁰ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 249.
- ¹⁷¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 249; Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 4.
- ¹⁷² Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 72.

¹⁷³ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 72; 301. While Haraway acknowledges that her language of “becoming” in this context recalls Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of “becoming-animal,” she is quick to assert that she will have “no truck with the fantasy wolf-pack version of ‘becoming-animal’” (26). She even describes herself as “angry” at the fact that Deleuze and Guattari show “disdain for the daily, the ordinary, the affectional rather than the sublime” (29). Haraway also laments the fact that Deleuze and Guattari express condescension towards “domestic” animals such as dogs and cats, and that they write off both companion animals and their human companions as “sentimental,”—“especially” (she adds) “if these people are elderly women” (30). See also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 232-310.

¹⁷⁴ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76; 88.

¹⁷⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 19.

¹⁷⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 22f.

¹⁷⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76.

¹⁷⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 88.

¹⁷⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 71.

¹⁸⁰ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 19. See Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Willis. *Perspectives in Continental Philosophy*, ed. John D. Caputo. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 8-9; 51.

¹⁸¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 76.

¹⁸² Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 71.

¹⁸³ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80.

¹⁸⁴ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80.

¹⁸⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80f.

¹⁸⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁸⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁸⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80.

¹⁸⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 80.

¹⁹⁰ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 273.

¹⁹¹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 273.

¹⁹² See Jacques Derrida, “Eating Well,” or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in *Who Comes after the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 96-119. The scope of this chapter does not permit a more detailed discussion of Derrida’s conception of eating well so I have limited my comments to Haraway’s interpretation of it.

¹⁹³ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 296.

¹⁹⁴ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁹⁵ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁹⁶ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁹⁷ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

¹⁹⁸ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 75.

¹⁹⁹ Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 295.

²⁰⁰ Steiner, *Animals and the Moral Community*, 3.

Chapter Six

Reinventing Left Humanism: Animals as a Class and the New Subjects of History

Today the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the political fight.

Herbert Marcuse¹

Shame [is] where freedom discovers itself murderous in its very exercise.

Emmanuel Levinas²

This final chapter argues that Left humanism offers a more potent theoretical grounding of resistance than anti-humanism or posthumanism to the progressive dehumanization (and de-animalization) of the subject in late capitalist society.³ Of course, to simply restore the Left humanist project without revising it would be disastrous for other animals. As we have seen in previous chapters, one of the unifying features of the different strands of humanism is the belief in the uniqueness and superiority of human beings over all other animals. Unfortunately, this trend runs through most forms of Left humanism too. Marx's humanism was, after all, a direct product and re-articulation of Enlightenment humanism. Indeed, as we discussed in the general introduction, Marx perpetuated some of Enlightenment humanism's worst fallacies, such as the human supremacist view that human beings are the sole possessors of the supposedly superior qualities of rationality, will, and self-consciousness—the constituents of his “species being.”⁴ Thus, while Marx posited a materialist and historically grounded conception of humanity as fluid and perpetually transforming, he nevertheless reinforced the essentialist

biases of anthropocentrism. Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist humanism hangs suspended in the same troubling contradiction. On the one hand, Sartre replaced a static conception of "human nature" with that of "a human universality of condition." For Sartre it was false to conceive "of man as the end since," he rightly insisted, "man is still to be determined." On the other hand, Sartre's existentialist humanism remained loyal to Cartesian dualism singled humans out as the only self-transcending beings.⁵ Meanwhile, Murray Bookchin's anarcho-humanist social ecology characterizes animal rights as "misanthropic," while Peter Staudenmaier maintains that animal rights is "a specific kind of moral mistake and a symptom of political confusion," that it is "anti-humanist and anti-ecological," and "frequently at odds with the project of creating a free world."⁶ It is very likely statements like this that lead Steve Best to conclude that even Left humanism is unsalvageable from the "pathology" of humanism. "As part of the problem rather than the solution," Best argues, "Leftist humanist theories (including 'eco-humanist' variants) fail to advance a truly revolutionary break with the mindsets and institutions underpinning hierarchy, oppression, violence, species extinction, and the current global crisis."⁷

While Best is right to suggest that all the different forms of Left humanism are guilty of perpetuating human supremacism, he is misguided in dismissing them wholesale and embracing posthumanism in their place. As Gary Steiner rightly cautions, "the goal of contemporary reflections on the problem of oppression should not be to move toward some ill-conceived 'posthumanist' future but instead to revise traditional humanist conceptions so that they better reflect the lives and needs of sentient beings."⁸ This

chapter embarks on this undertaking but focuses especially on the merits of Left iterations of humanism. I proceed on the assumption that Left humanism is not *inherently* anti-animal. In fact, its core principles and aims can be quite easily reformulated to be species-inclusive (as can some of the core principles and aims of other forms of humanism from which it draws). Even so, one might ask, given its sordid past, why would one go to the trouble of resuscitating Left humanism in the first place? The first and most important reason is that Left humanism *recognizes more than any other Left theory the urgency of rescuing the human being from its alienation under late capitalism*. Because the repression of animality is constitutive of human alienation, and helps perpetuate exterminationism, this protest is of paramount importance to the interspecies emancipatory project. Left humanism is also attractive because, like its Renaissance and Enlightenment forbears, it encourages humans to embrace their capacity for self-creation and, departing from its antecedents, attempts to lay the framework for the social and historical transformation of the subject from a repressed to a non-repressed being. Another reason that Left humanism is appealing is because it is committed to the development of universal freedom tempered by responsibility.⁹ Dialectical rationality is a key feature of traditional and Left humanist traditions, and presents an important challenge to the anti-humanist, postmodernist, and poststructuralist disavowal of negative standpoints. Critique plays central role in the development of an interspecies politics because it: 1) insists on the subject's capacity to assert its independence and freedom from the prevailing ideology, 2) seeks to restore substance to major political concepts such as freedom and justice, which have long since been drained of meaning, 3) requires the subject to maintain an ongoing dialogue with

itself, and 4) allows for nontotalizing universal historical truth. Dialectical rationality, especially as conceived by the early Frankfurt School, also facilitates the development of a “metahistorical” critique of the totality of domination of all beings, and conversely, of a unified project of resistance and emancipation, without falling into the trap of totalization. Although they are imperfect and incomplete, there are a number of productive tensions within Marxist humanism-as-naturalism and the recent ecological humanisms it has inspired that point the way towards expanding humanism beyond the human, and towards a politics of reconciliation without any residual power imbalances. With this new historical trajectory laid out, I suggest that animals are the historical class par excellence. As we have seen, other animals are arguably the most objectified beings on earth. As a result, in Hegelian-Marxist terms, they are at the centre of the revolutionary struggle, which, I close by arguing, must be pursued through nonviolent means.

In Defence of the Subject

The defence of the coherent subject against its reification under capitalism is the primary goal of Marxist, socialist, and existentialist humanisms. As we saw in chapter two, anti-humanists have long argued that the subject is long dead, and that this is a good thing. According to Michel Foucault, for example,

One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.¹⁰

While Foucault is right to challenge the one-dimensional accounts of subjectivity represented by both of these extremes—i.e. either a transcendental or an immanent subject—he goes too far in seeking to “get rid of the subject itself.” In so doing he reinforces the logic of late capitalism, which as we have established, depends on and perpetuates the destruction of the subject. This same problematic tendency contaminates the work of other poststructuralist thinkers such as Félix Deleuze and Gilles Guattari. In their view, “subjects” are not whole, united or autonomous but rather are better characterized as schizoid “assemblages,” “desiring-machines,” and “bodies without organs.”¹¹ They also suggest that, in contrast to the supposed humanist myth of the unified subject, “each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities.”¹² Their conception of the (non-)subject is particularly disturbing because of its mechanistic overtones. Postmodern theorists Jean-François Lyotard makes a similar mistake in uncritically accepting that, in the technological age, “a *self* does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at ‘nodal points’ of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be.”¹³ This is indeed the case—the human subject has been reduced to nodal points in specific communication circuits, especially now that the “digital age” has taken off. But this should be cause for concern and resistance, not acquiescence or jubilation.

In addition to reinforcing the logic of late capitalism, these theories of the non-subject, Terry Eagleton laments, are politically impotent and nihilistic.¹⁴ How can the

fragmented, schizoid subject, with no sense of ontological groundedness, orient itself politically or ethically? To paraphrase Eagleton, if the subject is too schizoid to tie its own shoelaces, how can it possibly topple the state?¹⁵ Frederic Jameson similarly argues that it is increasingly difficult for the already fragmented and disoriented subject “cognitively map” itself in a time-space compressed postmodern “hyperspace.”¹⁶ To engage in political and social transformation, the subject must first be capable of cognitive mapping which aims to “endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system.”¹⁷ The fragmented, disoriented, discombobulated, ontologically ambiguous hybrid subject is especially ill-equipped for such a task. With concerns like these in mind, Elizabeth Butterfield beseeches us to re-examine the existing and potential state of the subject from within the framework of socialist and existential humanisms. She observes that, “While no one suggests a return to the problematic essentialism of Enlightenment humanism, the alternative of postmodern anti-humanism turns out to be lacking as well.” In short, neither essentialism nor anti-essentialism will do. Therefore, she aptly points out, “there is a sense that the postmodern deconstruction of the ‘human’ now requires a *reconstructive* moment.”¹⁸ And, she rightly observes, Left humanism is an excellent starting point for this reconstruction.

As we have noted already, unlike anti-humanism and posthumanism, Left humanism adamantly insists on the importance of restoring the subject to coherence, unity, and wholeness against its usurpation by technique. As Erich Fromm explains,

Marx’s philosophy, like much of existentialist thinking, represents a protest against man’s alienation, his loss of himself and his transformation into a thing; it is a movement against the dehumanization and automatization of man inherent in the development of Western industrialism.¹⁹

Humanism has always been devoted to protecting the human being from threatening forces, from “religious fanaticism” in the Renaissance, to slavery and “nationalism” in the Enlightenment, and radical alienation resulting from rationalization, industrialization, mechanization in late modernity.²⁰ By 1965, when Fromm joined other socialist humanists such as Raya Dunayevskaya and Ernst Bloch in calling for a revitalization of the socialist humanist project, the primary fear was that human beings would also “become the slave of things.”²¹ In short, the greatest menace in late modernity was the world capitalist system and the possibility of total, irreversible reification and alienation it introduced, and this remains its greatest threat today (alongside a global ecological catastrophe and nuclear and chemical warfare, of course).

They posited that one way the subject can defend itself against its potential annihilation is through recourse to its capacity for self-creation, self-transformation, and self-development. This notion is central to all forms of humanism. As we have seen, Italian Renaissance humanist Pico della Mirandola, insisted that, in contrast to both nonhuman animals and “higher spirits” (angels) who were pre-programmed, the human being was as an “indeterminate form” who could fashion itself in whichever way it chose.²² While Pico’s conception of the human is clearly exceptionalist and supremacist, one can extract the notion of self-creation from it and leave the rest behind. Enlightenment humanists reinforce this notion of self-overcoming, but purge it of its religious or theological content, and instead located humans’ supposedly distinct capacity for self-transcendence in the powers of reason. Rousseau stood out among Enlightenment philosophers for his emphasis on the historical nature of self-transformation. According to

Asher Horowitz, one of Rousseau's principle objections to natural law theorists was their static ahistorical conception of human nature. In Rousseau's analysis, Horowitz observes, "man in his inception and his essence is conceived to be a self-transforming creature." But, he goes on to explain, "Human nature for Rousseau *is* history, is itself created within the historical process."²³

Marxist, socialist, and existentialist humanists build on this traditional humanist belief in self-transcendence but frame it even more overtly within the context of the larger political, social, and historical struggle. According to Sartre, "man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself... Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower," or, we might add as series of nodal points in a network of circuits.²⁴ For Paolo Freire, socialist humanism is also about the "completion" of the as yet "incomplete" human being.²⁵ Frantz Fanon contends that decolonization in particular would usher in a "new humanity."²⁶ More recently, Eagleton observed that "Humans are determined precisely in a way which allows them a degree of self-determination (just to survive, the human animal cannot rely on instinct but must bring reflective resources into play)."²⁷ However it is framed, the socialist and existentialist humanist call for the self-creation/transcendence of the subject is important for any emancipatory project because it reinforces the subject's autonomy over and against the technical and productive apparatus. The principle of self-creation depends upon a unified, coherent and autonomous subject who objectifies its own life as a project. Without a coherent subject such self-transcendence is impossible, and without self-transcendence, historical transformation is impossible. Unfortunately, Left humanists typically reinforce

the anthropocentric dimension of the humanist concept of self-creation. As John Sanbonmatsu has noted, from Plato to Pico to Kant to the socialist humanists in Fromm's volume, humans' self-transformation has been presented as depending in large part upon their triumph over their animality and other animals, while self-creation is presented as a distinctly human capacity.²⁸

However, while traditional humanists assumed self-creation was specific to humans, and therefore implicitly set human beings over and above other animals, the principle of self-creation can and, indeed, in light of our preceding analysis, must be reinterpreted in a nonspeciesist framework. The humanist principle of self-creation by its very nature paradoxically opens up the possibility of human beings finally shedding their age-old humanist claim to superiority. Self-creation need not be about human beings rising above their animality, but rather, re-entering it, as it were, and re-entering the world of other embodied beings. In a revised humanism, the human would become conscious of its incompleteness as an animal, and the choice available to the human would be whether to continue to deny its animality and its kinship with other animals and maintain the status quo, or to embrace both and thereby bring humanity and animality into a new, and more ethically and politically advanced stage of civilization. More specifically, the new humanism would require the self-creation of the human not as an animal that transcends itself and its immanence (and therefore its animality and other animals) through reason, free will, and universality, but rather as an embodied being that *develops* itself in its immanence, that is, in its erotic and sensuous engagement with other beings-in-the-world, the process we attempted to outline in chapter four. As Sanbonmatsu

put it, if we follow Marcuse's lead, "True overcoming of nihilism would entail not the negation or denial of the animal, but the reverse: a reconceptualization of ourselves as subject for whom subjectivity is always-already *intersubjectivity*, *mitsein*, being-with other beings-in-the-world."²⁹ Seen this way, the self-creation of the human is newly associated with the self-realization and self-discovery of the human as an animal among other animals. The fulfilment of "species being," as a rational, free-willing, self-conscious, and self-objectifying being, becomes fulfilment of *interspecies* being, as a thinking, feeling, free-willing, self-conscious, self-objectifying being-in-the-world-among-other-thinking-feeling-self-conscious-self-objectifying-beings-in-the-world.

An argument can also be made for animals' capacity to self-create. We have seen that other animals are not confined to a fixed and predetermined monodimensional existence. They too self-develop and self-transcend inasmuch as they strive daily and throughout their lives to fulfil their entelechy, to live in the fullness of their being. Stasis is anathema to such self-fulfillment. Although other animals may not be self-conscious or self-objectifying in the same way that humans are, they are self-conscious and self-objectifying inasmuch as their lives are meaningful to them. They may not see themselves as part of a species, and therefore may not universalize their own experience, but this is immaterial here. The historical task, the revised task of self-creation, is for the human subject to recognize that its special capacity to universalize should be the very thing that enables it to identify with, rather than detach itself from, its sense of community and kinship with, and responsibility for other animals.

A specifically Left humanist conception of self-creation is acutely aware of the unified subject's vulnerability to and embeddedness in historical and socio-economic realities, and thereby undermines the anti-humanist dualism between the transcendent subject, which is wholly immune from historical contingencies, and the immanent subject, which is drowning in them. According to Fromm, whereas Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism assumed that education would help the human achieve its goal of self-perfectibility, "the socialist Humanism of Karl Marx was the first to declare that theory cannot be separated from practice, knowledge from action, spiritual aims from the social system," and that, in other words, the "self-perfectibility" of the human being depended on the transformation of social and economic conditions.³⁰ This subtle distinction allows for a small proverbial window of opportunity for self-overcoming not permitted by a theory that denies the possibility of refusal. For Marcuse, the transformation of the subject and the transformation of society are part and parcel of the same process.³¹ The qualitative change in needs and the infrastructure of the subject involve the distancing of the human from the technical apparatus in which it is currently entangled.

At the same time, while the notion self-transcendence of the subject does not occur somehow outside of the existing social and economic conditions, it does allow for and even demands a refusal and rupture of existing conditions. That is, it calls for what Marcuse refers to in Nietzschean terms as "a political practice of methodical disengagement from . . . the Establishment, aiming at a radical transvaluation of values."³² The practice of refusal, Marcuse explains further, "involves a break with the

familiar, routine ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding things so that the organism may become receptive to the potential forms of a nonaggressive, nonexploitative world.”³³ Refusal, in other words, constitutes a deliberate break with the dominant ideology, and a deliberate and necessary reconstitution of the subject in opposition to it, at the instinctual or biological level, to recall Marcuse’s terminology.

According to Fanon, disalienation involves a break not only with the past but also with the present.³⁴ “The body of history,” he insists, “does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation.”³⁵ For example, while the “Negro” is a product of history, it also blasts out of this mold, and rejects its creation by others as an object of oppression, by (re)creating itself now, at the present historical juncture, as a human being. This tension between recognizing the existing conditions and also seeking to rise above them is encapsulated in Sartre’s existentialist motto “existence precedes essence.”³⁶ On one hand, while the human is bound to the contingencies of its factual existence in the world—including a given social, cultural, ethical, political, and economic order—those conditions themselves can change in part as a result of the subject’s deliberate refusal of its own degradation under those conditions. Although existentialism is charged with being “an invitation to people to dwell in quietism of despair” and of “pessimism,”³⁷ it is eminently hopeful because it “confronts man with a possibility of choice,” as Sartre points out, and therefore the possibility of determining its own trajectory to some extent.³⁸ This means that the subject which has internalized the animal exterminationist worldview is capable of rejecting that worldview, and reshaping itself according to a different set of values.

Self-Transformation and Responsible Universal Freedom

The specifically *political* dimension of the defence of the subject lies in the struggle for *universal* freedom. As Marcuse explains, the human subject's recognition of itself as an animal is integral to its individual and historical freedom. In his words, "The human being is and remains an animal, but an animal which fulfills and preserves his or her animal-being by making it part of himself or her-self, his or her freedom as a Subject."³⁹ Human freedom is inextricably bound up with the freedom of the senses from their co-optation and depletion by technique. As he puts it, "Human freedom is . . . rooted in the human sensibility. . . . The emancipation of the senses would make freedom what it is not yet: a sensuous need, and objective of the Life instincts (*Eros*)."⁴⁰ The re-eroticization and re-animalization of the subject, then, is not only an ethical move, but a fundamentally political one. The freedom of the human being also involves the transformation of itself from another objectifying subject, to a subject that develops dynamically by stepping back, so to speak, and letting other subjects be. "The faculty of being 'receptive,' 'passive,' is a precondition of freedom: it is the ability to see things in their own right, to experience the joy enclosed in them, the erotic energy of nature—an energy which is there to be liberated; nature, too, awaits the revolution!"⁴¹

Sanbonmatsu's metahumanism is also, at its core, a "*defense of the freedom of the subject,*" both human and nonhuman.⁴² Freedom is only truly universal, Sanbonmatsu rightly insists, if it involves the freedom of other animals—freedom *from* violence, and freedom *to* fulfill their entelechy.⁴³ Thus, the self-transcendence of the human being depends upon allowing other animals to be involved in *their* own projects of self-

transformation, whatever they might be, and however different they might be from our own. In short, the self-creation and freedom of the individual subject is never at the expense of the fulfillment and freedom of the animal *other*, but rather always depends on supporting the other's self-development and self-fulfillment.

The mutually reinforcing freedom of the human and animal subject can also be understood in terms of Sartre's conception of the particular and universal subject. For Sartre, existentialism is a humanism precisely because it insists that "in choosing for himself [man] chooses for all men," that the responsibility of the individual "concerns mankind as a whole," and that the subject is in an intersubjective world in which "the intimate discovery of myself is at the same time the revelation of the other as a freedom which confronts mine."⁴⁴ As Butterfield notes, the reconciliation of the universal and the particular is among Sartre's most important contributions. As she puts it, for Sartre who replaces the term "individual" with "singular universal," "the person is universal as an incarnation of a greater social context, but the person is also singular in his or her own particularity and 'differential.'"⁴⁵ Existential freedom is truly universal because, paradoxically, it requires the subject to balance its own claim to freedom with the same claim of every other particular subject. Sartre's characterization of freedom echoes Levinas' conception of freedom discussed in chapter five. As we noted, for Levinas, good freedom is always already responsible freedom, a freedom tempered by shame. Freedom is, in fact, not the beginning but the "end of powers."⁴⁶ Fanon makes a similar point. "It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence

for a human world.” For Fanon the particular subject’s freedom translates into universal “love” or the ability to “love man, wherever he may be.”⁴⁷ Of course, for Sartre, Levinas, and Fanon, the human species is the limit of this universal freedom and love. But, as we have been arguing, to limit universal responsibility and love to the human species alone is no longer tenable, for it would undermine the very project of freedom itself. Rather universal freedom recognizes that other animals are at once particular and universal: they are particular in their uniqueness one from the other, but they are always already universal, not only in their ethical, but also in their political and historical co-relationality with each other and with human beings. Although animals are not responsible for humans, one central component of humans’ universality, is their responsibility for them—there is not only “a human universality of condition,” as Sartre suggest, but an *animal* universality of condition—defined by suffering, vulnerability, fragility, and mortality. Because the human subject is uniquely capable of preventing the same suffering it inflicts, it is uniquely compelled to act on behalf of another’s well-being.

With this re-evaluation of alienation and the new conception of animal-human co-subjectivities and historical transformation in place, humanism sheds its speciesist skin. We begin to see the transformation from human supremacist humanism to a new species-inclusive humanism, or what I am increasingly inclined to call “animalism.” Animalism may be preferable because by replacing the term “human” with “animal,” it explicitly dispenses with any last remnants of anthropocentrism and instead repositions the liberatory struggle as one in defence of all animals *qua* animals. In short, the term animalism represents most unambiguously the call to restore humans’ status as one

among many animal species. Whatever the case, and whatever we call it, far from reinstating the human as master subject then, a radically revised Left humanism potentially provides us with the last vestiges of hope we may have in rescuing the human and animal subject from the exterminationist juggernaut of twenty-first century technocapitalism.

Dialectics and the Conquest of Nihilism

Left humanism may also save us from the despair and self-deprecation of the anti-humanist position which refuses to refuse. The humanist emphasis on dialectics in general and dialectical rationality in particular is also integral to the instinctual transformation of the human subject and the pursuit of freedom, and further restores hope in a subject anti-humanism would condemn to hopelessness. Dialectical rationality enables the subject to position itself at a critical distance from the prevailing order, to identify its betrayal of the concepts and principles it touts (e.g. in the tensions between the freedom it promises, and the unfreedom disguised as freedom it delivers), and to imagine alternative approaches to social, political, ethical, and aesthetic organization. Anti-humanists and poststructuralists who, largely as a result of Foucault's analysis of power as a complex web of relations from which no one could escape or rise above, effectively reject the possibility of a negative standpoint.⁴⁸ One of the mantras of anti-humanists such as Lyotard and Foucault, and, more recently Judith Butler, is that it is impossible to adopt a negative position vis-à-vis the prevailing ideology. Referring specifically to the way in which sexual identities are intimately interwoven and ultimately inseparable from the web of power relations, Butler insists, for example, that "the postulation of a normative sexuality that is 'before,'

'outside,' or 'beyond' power is a cultural impossibility and a politically impracticable dream, one that postpones the concrete and contemporary task of rethinking subversive possibilities for sexuality and identity within the terms of power itself."⁴⁹ In short, for Butler to imagine transcending power is inimical to the emancipatory struggle, for it ignores the reality of how power operates in and through subjects.

Butler is not wrong to suggest that a *total and final* break with power is impossible. But she is too quick to dismiss the possibility of *striving* to detach oneself from it, even if only momentarily in order to gain a critical distance by which to overcome it. For Butler critique is possible only within the existing structure of power. She explains, that her "critical task presumes . . . that to operate within the matrix of power is not the same as to replicate uncritically relations of domination. It offers the possibility of a repetition of the law which is not its consolidation, but its displacement."⁵⁰ Acts of "subversion," such as cross-dressing, can effect this displacement by repetition. What Butler does not acknowledge is that efforts to reclaim power by reproducing and exaggerating stereotypes to the point of destroying them, such as "the replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames," for instance, are not necessarily mutually exclusive with efforts to step outside that power structure altogether, to refuse to abide by its logic.⁵¹ In suggesting that there is but one option for critically engaging with and against power, Butler inadvertently sets up a new dualism—between critique within power and critique outside power. The view that isolated acts of subversion to overcoming centuries of patriarchal, heterosexist, speciesist, colonialist, and racist ideology and praxis is also, frankly, rather dubious and naïve.

For Lyotard the disappearance of class antagonism killed the critical model. Dialectics was reduced to the regurgitation of empty concepts such as Ernst Bloch's notion of "hope." According to Lyotard Bloch's concept of hope was merely "a token protest raised in the name of man or reason or creativity..."⁵² Although, to be sure, the leveling out of class distinction in the twentieth century dramatically *changed* the nature of political theory and praxis, and diminished critical tension to some extent—a point Marcuse has also made—it did not *eliminate* it entirely. Lyotard's analysis is particularly troubling because he dismisses the struggle for dialectical reason and dialectical society on the basis that technological development and changes in socio-economic conditions have rendered dialectical tensions in thought and reality obsolete—that, in short, history is over and we might as well accept it. In his view "oppositional thinking is out of step with the most vital modes of postmodern knowledge," or informatics.⁵³ This is a nihilistic view, and has very dangerous repercussions for humans and nonhumans because it effectively concedes defeat to the technical apparatus. Although the apparatus appears to be winning, that is all the more reason to struggle to overcome it.

Unlike poststructuralists and anti-humanists, proponents of dialectical rationality assume that a critical standpoint "outside" is possible, and that an alternative social, political, and ethical order is within reach. As we have seen, critical theorists and Left humanists admit of the subject's inevitable participation in and influence by the existing order. Echoing Marcuse, Horowitz reminds us that among technological rationality's greatest triumphs is its colonization of the subject's subjective life. As Horowitz put it, "the uniform constant motion of the machine has expanded to fill ever more the space of

interiority.”⁵⁴ This could not be more true today, with the digitalization of nearly every facet of human subjective experience.

Although they are well aware of technique’s usurpation of the subject’s consciousness, however, Left humanists have always insisted on the possibility of reclaiming, not only an ontological distance from the prevailing order, but also an epistemological one, a view they also inherited from their Enlightenment humanist predecessors. One of the central goals of Enlightenment humanism was to restore to reason the classical (i.e. Greek) emphasis on critique. John Luik explains that “reason, for the Enlightenment humanist, is driven by criticism and scepticism, and if we are to find the most consistent feature of Enlightenment reason it would be its insistence that all claims are falsifiable, and that no one has a privileged position in determining truth by virtue of their authority.”⁵⁵ In his 1784 essay, “What is Enlightenment?” (*Was ist Aufklärung?*), Immanuel Kant captures the spirit of Enlightenment humanism by stating that “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.”⁵⁶ By “immaturity” (which is elsewhere translated into “tutelage”), Kant means “the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another,” a kind of intellectual dependency resembling the dependency of a child on its parents.⁵⁷ With this in mind, Kant proclaims that “the motto of enlightenment is . . . *Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your own understanding!”⁵⁸ Disappointingly, only “men of learning” (viz. scholars and clergymen-as-scholars) are entitled to such intellectual independence, and “the use of public reason” or freedom of expression to the “entire reading public,” and then, only outside the domain of their office of employment—wherein they must reproduce doctrine

unquestioningly. Meanwhile, others such as civil servants must use reason “privately” as a means for best fulfilling their office and obeying commands, for any questioning of authority would jeopardize the stability of “civil order.”⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Kant insisted that intellectual freedom did not translate into civil freedom. In fact, Kant argued that the more restrictions on civil freedom, the more advantageous for the development of intellectual freedom.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he maintained that scholars could and should guide all individuals towards freedom by providing role models.⁶¹ “Once the germ on which nature has lavished most care—man’s inclination and vocation to think freely—has developed within its hard shell,” Kant asserted, “it gradually reacts upon the mentality of the people, who thus gradually become increasingly able to *act freely*.”⁶² Kant also crucially insisted that reason cannot reach its fullest potential in one person, but must be realized historically in the species as a whole, which is, in turn, the telos of history.⁶³ Although, Kant’s conception of critique is flawed in part because it treats it as a privilege afforded only by the few (scholars and priests), it is still an important assertion of the unified subject’s entitlement to relative autonomy from the prevailing ideology.

Left humanists inherit the (Kantian) Enlightenment emphasis on critique and suggest that reason is nothing if it is not negative. For Marcuse,

...the instinctual rebellion will have become a political force only when it is accompanied and guided by the rebellion of reason: the absolute refusal of the intellect (and the intelligentsia) to lend their support to the Establishment, and the mobilization of the power of theoretical and practical reason for the work of change.⁶⁴

Without the rebellion of reason, and the concomitant assertion of an “outside,” the subject would be powerless to resist its colonization by the prevailing, and highly

irrational, ideology. It would not recognize irrationality for what it was, but would rather confuse irrationality with rationality and support the very system which depends on its voluntary acquiescence. A negative standpoint, on the other hand, cultivates the spirit of resistance and, crucially, enables the subject to think in universal and world-historical terms. Without the rebellion of reason, the subject would be ill equipped to commit to historical transformation, but would remain atomized and self-absorbed, and, as a result, continue to serve the system which depends on its estrangement from and indifference to fellow subjects, both human and nonhuman.

According to Bertell Ollman, dialectics are absolutely crucial at this historical juncture, which, as we have been arguing, is defined by a more concerted effort than ever before to confuse, diffuse, and defuse the subject. As he explains,

The current stage of capitalism is characterized by far greater complexity and much faster change and interaction than existed earlier. But if society has never been so imbued with dialectics, the efforts to keep us from grasping what is taking place have never been so systematic or so effective – all of which makes a dialectical understanding more indispensable now than ever before.⁶⁵

In short, dialectics provide the only hope of gaining the clarity necessary to finally overthrow capitalism and all the evils associated with it. In a similar vein, Georg Lukács noted that, from a Hegelian-Marxian perspective, dialectics is central to the self-transcendence of the subject—both as an individual and as a historical force. As he put it, beginning with Hegel, “The genesis, the creation of the creator of knowledge, the dissolution of the irrationality of the thing-in-itself, the resurrection of man from his grave, all these issues become concentrated henceforth on the question of *dialectical method*.”⁶⁶ In other words, for both Hegel and Marx, the self-creation of the subject depend on the

dialectical method, which is the only method that casts the subject's self-alienation and objectification into relief. The method is not only epistemological, but also defines the movement of history itself.

Bookchin and Marcuse suggest that Platonic dialectics provides an especially powerful antidote to technological rationality in as much as it refuses to take "appearances" for granted, but is instead always restless and agitated, always striving to explore the tension between the way a thing or an idea is in the world, and the way it could or ought to be (i.e. its Form/Idea). Instrumental rationality, positivism, and technological rationality have all appropriated the syllogistic method of formal logic. Formal logic renders "expendable if not meaningless" the "notion of conflict between essence and appearance," or the Platonic conception of the Idea (Form) of something and its Appearance in reality.⁶⁷ For example, in Aristotelian syllogistic logic "(S) is (S)," there is no tension between them. Under formal logic, "man had to create theoretical harmony out of actual discord, to purge thought from contradictions."⁶⁸ In formal logic contradiction is written off as being wrong or "the fault of incorrect thinking."⁶⁹ As a result, concepts no longer serve as vehicles for the scrutiny of prevailing norms. Rather, with their negative quality eliminated, concepts become instruments of prediction and control."⁷⁰ In Platonic dialectics, on the other hand, "(S) is *not* (S)." Instead, "(S) is defined as other-than-itself," and so "must *become* that which it is."⁷¹ In Platonic dialectics true thought is that which "contradicts that which is given" and "opposes its truth to that of the given reality."⁷²

Platonic dialectics therefore provides the framework for examining the tension between the existing political and social reality, and the potential one, between the concept or idea of freedom, for example, and its current manifestation (as unfreedom). A dialectical analysis would not remain satisfied with simply identifying the conflict, but would insist on bringing it to resolution by bridging the gap between what freedom ought to be and what it is. Thus, while dialectical rationality emphasizes the importance of recognizing contradictions between concepts and objects, between subject and object, between the subject and other subjects, and so on, it does not forgo identity. In fact, as the above example evinces, the ultimate aspiration of dialectical thought and praxis is to forge identity between the is and the ought, albeit without falling into the trap of totalization, a subtle but crucial distinction. As Adorno explains, “the ideal of identity must not simply be discarded. Living in the rebuke that the thing is not identical with the concept is the concept’s longing to become identical with the thing.”⁷³ It is precisely in the concept’s “longing” to become identical with that from which it has been estranged in which lies the “utopian element” of the historical struggle. “A’ is to be what it is not yet,” or A is to identify or be reconciled with itself.⁷⁴

The recognition of the difference between the way things are and the way they could and ought to be is an important inspiration for any radical political project, especially one which seeks to overcome the systemic extermination of animals. While subversion may be helpful in certain specifically human political struggles—such as the struggle against heterosexism and homophobia—it is hard to imagine it having much efficacy in the animal industrial complex, or to even imagine what subversion of

exterminationism would entail. A much more potent theory and practice of resistance would involve a refusal of the existing order altogether—a refusal which is shaped by the recognition that the way things are not the way they should be, that the torture and murder of tens of billions of nonhuman animals for profit and superficial gratification is an abomination, and the opposite of what a healthy society would consist of.

With this opposition laid out, the task ahead becomes clear: to create the conditions for the mutual freedom of human and nonhuman animals to fully realize itself. As we have already noted, the resolution of this epistemological tension corresponds to the resolution of ontological tension between a being's actuality and its potentiality. According to Marcuse, "The philosophic quest proceeds from the finite world to the construction of a reality which is not subject to the painful difference between potentiality and actuality, which has mastered its negativity and is complete and independent of itself—*free*."⁷⁵ This reconciliation between a being's potentiality and actuality is "the work of Logos and Eros."⁷⁶ It reconciles in peaceful harmony not only the object and its concept, but the being and what it is in *essence*, which is to say, what it ought to be. In seeking to create the conditions for epistemological reconciliation, in other words, critique helps pave the way for the subject's ontological reconciliation, which, in Marcuse's view, is constituted by "the *joy* of being."⁷⁷ As we have seen, the joy of human being is intimately tied up with the joy of animal being, and the joy of beholding other animals experience the joy of their being.

But, of course, this yearning for identity is always mitigated by the intractable reality of non-identity—no object can or should ever be truly contained within its concept

for this would spell the end of critique and open the door to totalization and intellectual and political paralysis. Contrary to what Butler, Lyotard, and other poststructuralist thinkers assume, even as it aspires towards reconciliation of the is and the ought, dialectical rationality never settles comfortably with any existing concept or manifestation of it, for dialectical rationality is inherently dynamic. By its very nature it demands a continual questioning of established truths and realities, even critical ones. For example, dialectical rationality reminds us that we cannot rest satisfied with any definition of freedom, nor with claims that every person is already free. As Adorno explains, “Emphatically conceived, the judgment that a man is free refers to the concept of freedom; but this concept in turn is more than is predicated of the man, and by other definitions the man is more than the concept of his freedom.”⁷⁸ In other words, the concept of freedom itself, as well as the concept “man,” must undergo *continual* reassessment as historical and social conditions change, and also as time passes. The dynamism inherent to dialectical rationality means that once the potentiality and essence of freedom are realized, the need and the conditions for negative or critical thought do not disappear, but are continually reintroduced. Freedom is not a fixed state of being but rather, like reason itself, is a fluid one which must be continually rebuilt, reformulated, and reconceived.

Dialectical rationality is also important for any political project inasmuch as it emphasizes the dynamic nature of reality, and the possibility of transforming it by way of organized, strategic action with a unified purpose. As Bookchin points out, “From Heraclitus onwards” dialectical rationality insists on “a view of reality as developmental—

of Being as an ever-unfolding *Becoming*.”⁷⁹ This perspective of reality as dynamic, fluid and ever-changing is a crucial ingredient to any political program. Without it there would be no prospect of self-transformation and of social and political transformation. Moreover, what in the syllogistic model of logic is merely a “categorical statement,” in propositional logic “becomes a categorical *imperative*, the necessity to *bring about* a fact.”⁸⁰ Dialectical rationality not only encourages one to think dialectically but also to act dialectically based on what one has discovered by way of dialectical thinking. As Marcuse explains, “Thinking in accordance with truth is the commitment to exist in accordance with truth.”⁸¹ Part of dialectical philosophy’s “task,” Marcuse argued is to “to free “thought from its enslavement by the established universe of discourse and behavior,” “to elucidate[s] the negativity of the Establishment” and to “project[s] its alternatives.”⁸²

Unfortunately, although he establishes the inextricable link between ontology and epistemology, knowing and being, thinking and living truth, and therefore between theory and praxis, Plato proved unwilling or unable to honour this connection in his political theory. Marcuse lamented that Plato remained stuck in a kind of “serf” mentality by denying slaves access to the realm of truth and by condemning them both to eternal ignorance and servitude.⁸³ In protecting his socio-political reality from the sting of critique, Plato betrays the central tenets of his own philosophy, and the “transformative nature of philosophy [was] lost on him.”⁸⁴ However, the transformative nature of philosophy was not and need not be lost on all. The renewal of dialectical rationality can inspire radical praxis which, contra the anti-humanists, recognizes that power is not only diffused within and among subjects, but is also top down, that its source can be located,

and that a coherent strategy for its overcoming can be developed and carried out. With regard to animal exterminationism, the sources are clear: human supremacist ideology and global capitalism. Dialectical rationality would expose the belief that human beings can be free while they continue to condemn nonhumans to unfreedom for the lie that it is, and consequently inspire human beings to redefine human freedom as co-constitutive with animal freedom. This realization would, in turn, inspire people to take action to bring this reconciliation of human and animal freedom to fruition.

Dialectical thought not only insists on preserving or restoring negativity between the subject and the external world, but between the subject and itself. Hannah Arendt suggests that Socrates provided the model for this kind of internal negativity. In light of Socrates' statement that "it is better to be in harmony with oneself and at odds with others" than vice-versa, Arendt suggests that through thinking, "A difference is inserted into my Oneness."⁸⁵ We are all, therefore, in the Socratic model, a "two-in-one."

Elaborating on this point Arendt writes,

This curious thing that I am needs no plurality in order to establish difference; it carries the difference within itself when it says: "I am I." So long as I am conscious, that is, conscious of myself, I am identical with myself only for others to whom I appear as one and the same...I am inevitably *two-in-one*.⁸⁶

As two-in-one the subject is always in dynamic conversation with itself, always scrutinizing and challenging itself, it is never settled or complacent. The external and internal critical distance it maintains paradoxically preserves its identity with other subjects, inasmuch as it is the necessary precondition for making moral and political judgments—judgments surrounding the impact of ones actions on others, for example.

She points out that the inner dialogue is never ethically or politically neutral, but is inextricably linked with *conscience*. When broken down etymologically, Arendt points out that the word “con-science” translates into inner-dialogue. In her words, “The very word *con-science*...means “to know with and by myself,” [and suggests] a kind of knowledge that is actualized in every thinking process.”⁸⁷ In other words, to think with oneself, means to create the space to make moral judgments.

Arendt’s characterization of the subject as two-in-one does not translate into the fragmented subject celebrated by anti-humanists, poststructuralists, and posthumanists. To the contrary, the internal dialogue requires a coherent subject within which the dialogue may take place. In the age when digital technologies and devices are consuming public and private space, collapsing them beyond recognition, providing endless distractions that serve to prevent the subject from taking time to think by and for itself, a bold reclamation of a coherent subject and the time and space to think with oneself is that much more important. A refusal of this co-optation of inner space, would involve, for example, getting rid of one’s “Smart” phone, spending less time on the computer, or fiddling with gadgets, and more time walking, thinking, and being with other sensuous beings in the world in an engaged and attuned *presence*. In dispensing with the multiple inane distractions of late capitalist society, one might be able to momentarily escape the vacuous and death-fetishizing culture which, by preventing self-reflexivity, fosters indifference to the terrible suffering of billions upon billions of our fellow creatures.

While critique encourages people to adopt particular viewpoints, it allows for and indeed requires the affirmation of objective truth. As noted in chapter four, Gary Steiner

observes that postmodern theorists fail to offer a substantive critique of and alternative to animal exploitation because of their adamant “endeavor to challenge the pretensions of traditional philosophy to objective truth and determinate principles.”⁸⁸ Because of their repudiation of objective truth, and their concomitant embrace of epistemological, ontological, ethical, and political indeterminacy, postmodern theorists cannot fulfil their own mandate of justice.⁸⁹

Objective truth is not necessarily symptomatic of totalizing metanarratives. One of the primary aims of adopting a critical and dialectical standpoint is to disentangle totalizing objective truth—such as reductive claims about the ethical worth of a given species or group—from nontotalizing objective truth—such as the fundamental repudiation of such claims as prejudicial and inextricably bound up with ideologies of domination. Objective truth can also simply refer to the assertion that certain things, such as cruelty and torture, are *inherently* unjust and incompatible with a nonrepressive society. In order for any political project to advance, it must establish and uphold certain objective truths and principles—otherwise it will implode into the chaos and reckless permissiveness of relativism. Without objective truth in sight, and the determinacy upon which it depends, anything is possible, any manner of violence against other animals is still theoretically permissible. Moreover, without objective truth to guide it, an emancipatory project is likely to suffer from lack of vision, structure, and coherence. As Steiner notes, even Foucault was aware of this danger.⁹⁰

Perhaps foreseeing the crippling of Left theory and praxis with the cynicism and nihilism that ultimately poisons Foucault’s thought, Horkheimer argued that the rejection

of objective truth is the basis of what he calls the “crisis of reason,” and by extension the crisis of ethics and politics, that characterizes modern society. As Horkheimer explains,

The present crisis of reason consists fundamentally in the fact that at a certain point thinking either became incapable of conceiving such objectivity at all or began to negate it as an illusion. This process was gradually extended to include the objective content of every rational concept. In the end, no particular reality can seem reasonable *per se*. All the basic concepts, emptied of their content, have come to be only formal shells.⁹¹

When the possibility of arriving at objective truth is rejected, reason is stripped of its most important capacity, which is to enable the realization of a harmonious society. As such, reason is degraded to the role of servant to the apparatus. When objective truth is liquidated, the forces of social, political, and ethical irrationality are unleashed, albeit under the guise of a supreme rationality. As Horkheimer continues,

The formalization of reason has far-reaching theoretical and practical implications. If the subjectivist view holds true, thinking cannot be of any help in determining the desirability of any goal in itself. The acceptability of ideals, the criteria for our actions and beliefs, the leading principles of ethics and politics, all our ultimate decisions are made to depend on factors other than reason.⁹²

This is exactly what poststructuralist thought has done: it has redirected responsibility for making decisions to “factors other than reason,” such as infinite and unintelligible webs of power from which no one can feasibly disentangle herself, let alone overcome. Socratic/Platonic reason, by contrast, was “objective” inasmuch as it aspired towards the dialectical (but not totalizing) unification of a concept and its object, which is to say it sought to realize the Greatest Good, Justice, Freedom, and so on without *collapsing*, as Hegel eventually did, the is with the ought (or the real with the rational) in a static, identitarian, and therefore false unity. Objective reason requires ethical and

political responsibility in all who employ it; when approached dialectically it is eminently ethically and politically empowering; it incites critically thinking subjects to action. As Horkheimer explains, “The term objective reason . . . on the one hand denotes as its essence a structure inherent in reality that by itself calls for a specific mode of behavior in each specific case, be it a practical or a theoretical attitude. The structure is accessible to him who takes upon himself the effort of dialectical thinking, or, identically, who is capable of *eros*.” But objective reason also reflects the just order itself:

On the other hand, the term objective reason may also designate this very effort and ability to reflect such an order. Everybody is familiar with situations that by their very nature and quite apart from the interests of the subject, call for a definite line of action—for example, a child or an animal on the verge of drowning, a starving population or an individual illness. Each of these situations speaks, as it were, a language of itself.⁹³

Horkheimer admits, with reference to the scenarios described above, that, “since they are only segments of reality, each of them may have to be neglected because there are more comprehensive structures demanding other lines of action equally independent of personal wishes and interests.”⁹⁴ But, in a new form of objective reason grounded in a Levinasian ethics, none of those situations could be justifiably neglected. Rather, all lines of action would be pursued simultaneously, to the best of one’s ability, with ethical attentiveness offered to both the particular other such as the drowning child or dog, and the general other, such as the starving population, at the expense of no one.

The resuscitation of objective and dialectical reason depends upon the recognition that to be ethically, politically, and socially meaningful, concepts can never be fixed or reified, but must always be regarded as fluid, albeit not without grounding.⁹⁵ The

objective truth behind a concept such as Goodness, for example, is that it is incompatible with the violation and torture of any living being, human or nonhuman. Of course, Goodness may take on additional or slightly different valences depending on the particular historical conditions in which it is being contemplated and actualized, and this flexibility is crucial to its survival as a meaningful concept at all. But there are limits to this malleability. Certain elements of objective truth remain objectively true regardless of changing circumstances. But the objective truth that violation and torture are incompatible with Goodness would survive any historical, geographical, social, and political changes, otherwise Goodness would be liquidated of meaning altogether.

Overall, objective truth, objective reason, and dialectical thought more generally can provide desperately needed ethical and political orientation to a society which has lost sight of the True and the Good and the Just and is stumbling blindly into an increasingly bleak future, clinging desperately to the dictates of Function, Operation, Production, and Extermination, heartless untruths which are rapidly leading it to its demise.

'The Unfolding of a Single Existential Judgment,' and a Species-inclusive 'Historical Consciousness'

Critique also enables what Horkheimer describes as the "*unfolding of a single existential judgment*" with a "historical dimension."⁹⁶ Although Horkheimer posits a single, and in one sense, therefore, "universal," judgment of history, the judgment is not totalizing; it is not a "metanarrative" to use Lyotard's term, a sweeping and homogenizing, but at the same time, narrow and one-sided, view of history that subordinates the subject to a "metaprinciple" such as Hegel's "dialectics of spirit."⁹⁷ Like

postmodernism on Lyotard's definition, critical theory and Left humanism also express "incredulity towards metanarratives," especially Hegel's metanarrative of history's resolution in Absolute Spirit. But, unlike postmodernism, the dialectical reason that undergirds the critical evaluation of history does not do away with metahistorical analyses, nor does it lapse into relativism.⁹⁸ Adorno's negative dialectics, for example, upon which he bases his analysis of enlightenment's barbarism, avoids both absolutism and relativism. It resolves the dilemma, not by "seek[ing] a middle ground between the two," but by "oppos[ing] them through the extremes themselves, convicts them of the untruth by their own ideas."⁹⁹ In short, it exposes the pitfalls of both absolutist *and* relativist accounts of history, just like Socrates exposed the pitfalls of his interlocutors' arguments by encouraging them to pursue their arguments to their logical (or illogical) end.

While it always recognizes the particulars, dialectical metahistory never loses sight of the driving force of a history that is drenched in the blood of its human and nonhuman victims. The "single existential judgment" is a judgment of the barbarism of history that has taken so many as its victims, but the "historical dimension" ensures that the judgment involves the recognition of how the barbarism has manifested itself differently depending on the particular historical moment and the particular being or group in question, and also ensures that historical overcoming of barbarism is always recognized as a possibility. Crucially, because there is but *one* judgment, *all* forms of barbarism are regarded as part and parcel of the same overarching historical trend. This means that the critique of human alienation and oppression cannot be conducted in isolation from a critique of animal extermination, but only in tandem and with a view to how they interlink and

overlap. Because the single judgment is not only moral or political but *existential*, it concerns the impact of violence on (human and nonhuman) beings at the level of being. The judgment is of how different ideological forces have distorted the being of beings, and forced them to be what they are not.

The single existential judgment lays the framework for weaving a scathing critique of atrocities against animals into dialectical accounts of history, and abandoning (falsely) “universal” and totalizing accounts of history that justify animal oppression as a necessary means for humans’ scientific, technological, and economic progress. Hegel’s philosophy of history is a prime example of the totalizing perspective which defines conventional anthropocentric conceptions of human history.¹⁰⁰ Hegel’s reading of history cancels out the crucial negativity between the is and the ought, by suggesting that the real world is just as it should be. He writes, “The insight into which philosophy ought to lead...is that the real world is as it ought to be, that the truly good, the universal divine Reason is also the power capable of actualizing itself.”¹⁰¹ This is a nihilistic, fatalistic, and decidedly anti-dialectical view, because it rationalizes the bloodshed on the “slaughter-bench of history” as an unfortunate but necessary evil in the progress towards (supposedly) absolute freedom.¹⁰² This is the same attitude perpetuated by most conventional, human supremacist readings of history wherein the brutal subjugation of animals is regarded as a necessary evil.

While rationalizing universal history is dangerous, however, acknowledging that universal history is part and parcel of domination is necessary. Against Hegel, Adorno recognizes that there *is* a single, universal, and total truth to history, but it is not, as

Adorno tells us, the progress from unreason to reason, and barbarism to civilization as Hegel surmised. Rather, it is the truth of radical violence, of the erasure of particulars, of the death-drive, of total destruction, of life's absolute *negation*, a negation that cannot be negated. In Adorno's words,

no universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb. It ends in the total menace which organized mankind poses to organized men, in the epitome of discontinuity. It is the horror that verifies Hegel and stands him on his head."¹⁰³

For Hegel, the grand resolution of the historical dialectic is supposed to culminate in absolution, in all senses of the word, in redemption, and permanent peace. However, if the pursuit of this goal has proceeded by way of violence and exploitation, it is destined to end in permanent and unrelenting violence and exploitation, or what Adorno aptly calls, "permanent catastrophe."¹⁰⁴ The systemic brutality against animals which is catapulting us to the most gruesome end of history imaginable—a history that would end in the triumph of the technical apparatus, and its achievement of total, irreversible control over human and nonhuman life (and death)—is a major part of this horror and permanent catastrophe. This same history that has led from the spear to the megaton bomb, has led from the spear to the "high-speed macerator" that grinds alive newly hatched chicks who have no economic value, to the machinery of assembly-line slaughter, and to the genetic manipulation of other animals into crippled monstrosities. Certainly, Adorno and Benjamin (who also condemned the domination of nature for its irrationality and cruelty) would be hard pressed to deny that the so-called "dead piles," or the heaps of injured, dying, and dead animals found outside slaughterhouses—literally discarded for their lack

of economic worth as a result of injury or disease—are among the greatest indictments against the barbarism of universal history and the myth of progress it veils itself with.

For Adorno and Benjamin, the suffering of one never trumps that of another—rather, all are regarded as part of a *constellation*, a partial truth that helps illuminate the whole. Constellations, Adorno explains “represent from without what the concept has cut away within: the ‘more’ which the concept is equally desirous and incapable of being.”¹⁰⁵ The whole that bears illuminating is the single catastrophe of history. In the framework of a constellation, the homogenization of animals into a faceless mass is no longer acceptable. Instead, each and every animal is illuminated as an individual. This recognition and remembrance of each particular animal, further illuminates the magnitude of the suffering itself, for it is not the suffering of one amorphous entity (the Animal), but of each and every one of the billions of billions of animal subjects that have suffered.

Adorno and Benjamin call for replacing the *memory* of lives lost—the fleeting and embarrassed glance backwards in time—with the *remembrance* of the particular, of each and every victim of violence now and forever. For Benjamin, remembrance is revolutionary time and is the antidote to homogenizing universality. In Benjamin’s view, the Jewish religious calendar encourages remembrance and nontotalizing “historical consciousness.” “The initial day of a calendar serves as a historical time-lapse camera,” Benjamin explains, and “is the same day that keeps recurring in the guise of holidays, which are days of remembrance. Thus the calendars do not measure time as clocks do; they are monuments of historical consciousness of which not the slightest trace has been

apparent in Europe on the past hundred years.”¹⁰⁶ This new (or rather, ancient) “historical consciousness” rejects a triumphalist conception of progress through “empty, homogenous” time, because it refuses to regard the past as over, and its victims as gone. Instead, it brings them back to life to stand in existential judgment of the past and the repetition of its crimes in the present. In short, revolutionary time is perpetual past made present. For Jews, it is “the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter” at any moment to redeem every *one* of history’s victims.¹⁰⁷ Remembrance brings each animal back to life and thereby redirects the historical struggle to their emancipation. In exploding universal history as they do, and revealing the horrors it is responsible for, Adorno and Benjamin help us to envision a path to a more peaceable future in which no one, no being, human or otherwise, is left behind.¹⁰⁸

Animal advocate and graphic artist Sue Cue has captured the spirit of remembrance in her famous print, “Modern Man Followed by the Ghosts of his Meat” (1990).¹⁰⁹ In the image, a man carrying a McDonald’s take-away bag looks over his shoulder at a crowd of pig, cow, chicken, and goat phantoms following closely behind. He is menaced by their everlasting presence and the guilt it inspires in him. To his left, the carcasses of other maimed animals hang in the window of a butcher shop as a further indictment of his bloodlust and greed, which, in turn, are represented by the bag of fast food made up of the flesh of the spirits who now surround him. The streetlamp above burns bright illuminating the grimacing face of the man, along with each and every one of the dead animals, underscoring their tragic interconnectedness in the drama of the nightmare of universal history unfolding. The man is captured in suspended animation, in

a moment of decision. He has a choice—an existential choice: he can keep turn his head forward and rush headlong into the future characterized by the pursuit of empty gratification, or he can turn around and allow himself to be confronted by the ghosts of the past upon whom his empty gratification depended. In looking forward, he moves “backward” because he walks the path of universal unfreedom, but in looking backward he moves “forward,” for he takes the first step on the journey towards universal freedom and reconciliation.

Redemptive Teleology and Interspecies Peace

Although universal history must be rejected for having laid waste to countless of human and nonhuman innocents in its pursuit of history’s (falsely) glorious resolution in some unifying principle—whether Hegel’s Spirit, or enlightenment’s Progress—it should not be conflated with teleological accounts of history, and the unified visions of emancipation they foster. Lyotard is certainly justified in condemning the totalizing tendencies of Hegel’s philosophy of history, and of *some interpretations* of Marx’s teleology. But his implicit dismissal of *all* emancipatory projects as totalizing metanarratives is deeply troubling, for two reasons: First because it suggests that a global project of emancipation is impossible, and second because it is itself totalizing, for it fails to differentiate between different emancipatory visions.¹¹⁰ As Eagleton points out, not all Marxist teleologies are Hegelian. In fact, “Marx had nothing but scorn for idea that there was something called History which had purposes and laws of motion independent of human beings.”¹¹¹ At the same time, as Fromm notes, “Marxist and other forms of socialism are the heirs of prophetic Messianism,” which is to say that Marxist and socialist humanism believe that a

reclaimed history has a single purpose. This purpose was reconciliation, or the “abolition of human self-alienation, the return of man as a real human being.”¹¹² In a similar vein, Eagleton notes that, “socialism does indeed posit a *telos* of a kind: the possibility of a more just, free, rational, and compassionate social order.”¹¹³ A teleological or “Messianic” account of the movement of history, which balances universal judgment with a recognition of geographical, social, and individual nuances, fluidity, and contingencies, is integral to any liberatory vision because it provides direction and hope—not hope as a vague, floating concept, but as a motivating factor for praxis, as an antidote to complacency, as a source of purpose and of clarity about the task ahead. In short, a teleological reading of history unifies the various liberatory struggles, including animal liberation. A reinvented socialist humanism would modify the *telos* of socialism into a more just, free, rational, and compassionate social order for humans *and* nonhumans. As Marcuse pointed out, The attribution of teleology to nature, or rather nature’s inclusion within a teleological reading of history is crucial to any intervention into nature’s objectification and commodification. If nature is regarded as “a *subject* in its own right—a subject with which to live in a common human universe,” it can no longer be denied a teleology.¹¹⁴ Nature’s subjectivity “seems inseparable from teleology,” Marcuse writes, “long since taboo in Western science.”¹¹⁵ If nature continues to be regarded as outside of history, in other words, historical transformation is jeopardized, for, as we have demonstrated, the liberation of the human subject is inextricably bound up with the liberation of the nonhuman subject.

Following from this, true emancipatory moral progress is without question incompatible with ongoing subordination of other animals. Given the inextricable link between the alienation of humans and nonhuman animals in late capitalist modernity, it is clear that if the Left wishes to achieve social and environmental justice it can no longer afford to marginalize other animals or to ignore, support, or remain complicit in their exploitation. Movements claiming to represent the oppressed cannot be true to the spirit of universal social justice so long as their members remain wilfully blind to the plight of billions of sentient creatures under capitalism. Because animal exploitation, human exploitation and alienation, and ecological destruction are inextricably linked, human domination over other species cannot be ignored, disparaged, or pushed to the margins of critical analysis, except by doing profound damage to the ethical and analytical integrity of socialist praxis. Putting it another way, if violence against animals—from animals' domestication thousands of years ago to their genetic manipulation today—has helped shape human history, historical transformation depends in a large part on animal's liberation from violence. If we continue to enslave other animals as we have over the millennia—but in especially brutal form over the past five hundred years—we cannot properly reorient history towards emancipatory ends. To fight for indigenous rights, for ecological protection, for women's liberation, or for the elimination of racism while dispensing with animal liberation as an obstacle to human liberation, is to remain captive to the narcissistic delusion and self-hatred upon which the survival of all ideologies of domination depend.

The first chief Rabbi of Israel Avraham Yizhak Kook shows us how vegetarianism (and by extension nonviolence towards nonhuman animals) is part and parcel of a unified prophetic or messianic teleology. In his treatise *A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace* Rav Kook explains that,

There is a fundamental part of a lofty, humane, and progressive sensibility that, according to the present state of the prevailing culture, exists today only in the pleasant dream of a few extremely idealistic souls: an innate ethical striving, a feeling for what is humane and just, to consider the rights of animals, with all that this entails.¹¹⁶

This passage is striking because of its naturalization of vegetarianism. On one hand, Kook recognizes that at the moment universal vegetarianism is unlikely, but on the other hand, he integrates the Enlightenment concept of moral progress with Messianic teleology to insist that vegetarianism is an *inevitable* aspiration of anyone with a “lofty, human, and progressive sensibility.” For Kook, the consumption of animal flesh is the result of postlapsarian human strife and struggle. No animals were killed or consumed in Eden. But after the Flood, humans began tearing each other apart in conflict and, in order to mitigate the violence, God interposed animals between human and human to serve as objects onto which they could vent their uncontrollable rage. But, Kook argues, this was only a temporary “concession.”¹¹⁷ The divine plan was always to restore humans to a state of interspecies peace, one feature of which would be vegetarianism and animal “rights.” According to Kook, the laws of Kashrut are testaments to the guilt and shame associated with the killing and eating of animals.¹¹⁸ In Kook’s view, “The obligation [in Leviticus 17:13] to cover the blood [of an animal killed for consumption] teaches us to see the shedding of a [non-domestic] animal’s blood as an act akin to murder; thus we should

be ashamed to shed the blood of a [domestic] animal, as well.”¹¹⁹ Kook explains further that the arrival of Messianic age, and the age of “motivation by virtue of enlightenment,” will be marked by humans’ recognition of their kinship with other animals and forgo the (false) pleasures afforded them by God’s original and reluctant concession. They will be so enlightened that they will no longer require any concessions to quell unruly behaviour. Rather, they will, as in Marcuse’s theory, no longer be *capable* of cruelty or violence. In Kook’s words,

Then human beings will recognize their companions in Creation: all the animals. And they will understand how it is fitting from the standpoint of the purest ethical standard not to resort to moral concessions, to compromise the Divine attribute of justice with that of mercy . . . for they will no longer need extenuating concessions, as in those matters of which the Talmud states: ‘The Torah speaks only of the evil inclination’ (Kiddushin 31b). . . Rather they will walk the path of absolute good. As the prophet declares: ‘I will make a covenant for them with the animals of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; I also will banish the bow and sword, and war from the land [and I will cause them to rest in safety. I will betroth you to Me forever; and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with kindness, and with compassion; and I will betroth you to Me with faith, and you will know God]’ (Hosea 2:20).¹²⁰

The completion of history for Kook then, involves the radical transformation of the human being into a different kind of subject—a subject who is humbled and pacified in its reverence for life. Kook goes so far as to suggest, against the grain of traditional Jewish doctrine, that upon the rebuilding of the Temple animal sacrifice should not be reinstated.¹²¹

In an even more radical move, Kook also suggests that in the Messianic age other animals will be pacified and morally heightened. On one hand, Kook has a dualistic view of animals: they are driven by raw instinct. But this dualism is unstable. Ultimately, like

Marcuse, Kook reiterates Isaiah's prophetic statement that the lion will lay down with the lamb and all beings will living in moral righteousness and harmony. What this indicates is that, for Kook, peace among animals is as important a part of reconciliation as peace between human beings and animals.

If we recall, Marcuse illustrates his vision of reconciliation by way of the myth of Orpheus.¹²² As the Robert Graves edition of the myth recounts, Orpheus “not only enchanted wild beasts, but made the trees and rocks move from their places to follow the sound of his music. At Zone in Thrace a number of ancient mountain oaks are still standing in the pattern of one of his dances, just as he left them.”¹²³ Marcuse's evocation of this image is meant in part to point to the entrance of animals onto the world-historical stage. Through the image of Orpheus we see that nature “becomes part of the human world, and to this extent, the qualities of Nature are historical qualities.”¹²⁴ In other words, the myth of Orpheus demonstrates the importance of negating the negation of animals and nature upon which our civilization is founded, and re-introducing them into history by way of the historical struggle for liberation. Indeed, without the inclusion of nature in history it seems it would not be possible, in Marcuse's view, to create the conditions for a universe devoid of bloodshed or suffering. One of the consequences of casting nature outside of history was to suggest that it was bound to an eternal chaotic cycle of cruelty. But this view is dangerous inasmuch as it naturalizes violence. As Marcuse writes, “suffering, violence, and destruction are categories of the natural as well as human reality, of a helpless and heartless universe.”¹²⁵ However, as rationality is redefined to liberatory ends, this notion of the *inevitability* of suffering is cancelled. The

renunciation of humans' violent domination of animals would, as Kook and Marcuse's analyses suggest, simultaneously open up the possibility of freedom for both. Once the dynamic is overcome, history is finally broken through and both human and nonhuman animals can reclaim, or perhaps start to explore what it means to be, on their own terms. Perhaps Marcuse points to the passage from Isaiah specifically because in its audacity, in the ostensibly impossible image it presents of predator and prey joining together in peace, it reminds us that the Messianic moment is about creating something that has never existed before. To arrive at that moment, which seems so remote, requires a radical rupture with the existing order, a break in the horror. Although Marcuse does not promote vegetarianism or veganism, as we have seen, the boycott of products derived from animals' is, or at least precipitates, one of those fissures.

Kook and Marcuse's views on human-animal reconciliation and nature's pacification are in no way primitivist. While Kook refers to the time "before" the flood, he is not suggesting a regression to that time. Rather the Messianic age brings historical time full circle. It is the end of history inasmuch as it is the past, the present, and the future in one. Thus, the pacification of humans and nonhumans would mean that history does not "end" in the Hegelian sense, but is, in a sense, surpassed. Fanon proclaims, "I am not a prisoner of history.... I am a part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it," by which he means that history is not going to repeat itself on his back.¹²⁶ The revolutionary struggle he takes up will enable him to escape the confines of a history that denies his existence as a human being. Levinas, too, insists on history surpassing itself. He characterizes nontotalizing history beyond history as "eschatology." In his words, "eschatology

institutes a relation with *being beyond the totality* or beyond history.”¹²⁷ In our new humanist messianic teleology, nonhuman animals also partake of this relation with being beyond the totality of being.

Rethinking Naturalism and Humanism

Marxist and ecosocialist humanisms, though flawed and imperfect, offer further insight into the reconceptualization of the emancipatory political project beyond the human in general, and the historical reconciliation of humans and animals in particular. As we have seen, reinforced the human exceptionalism so central to traditional humanisms. However, his naturalism nevertheless helps lay the framework for a species-inclusive humanism. On one hand, Marx challenged traditional humanist metaphysics by suggesting that communism was a humanism and humanism was a naturalism. As Marx explained,

This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully-developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species.¹²⁸

This is an important statement for it indicates that the resolution of the historical dialectic—and all the tensions constitutive of it, between existence and essence, subject and object, and so on—depends upon, or is at least inextricably bound up with, the erasure of the schism between the human and the nonhuman or nature. On the other hand, as we have also seen, the reconciliation of the human and nature was not mutually exclusive with latter’s ongoing objectification. Of course, some degree of use of nature will

be always necessary for human beings to survive. The problem is that, in Marx's view, nature was destined to remain an object, and would not, like its human counterparts, be restored to objectifying subjectivity.

As we know, nature and the nonhuman were integral to human history in Marx's account, but only inasmuch as they provided substance through which the human subject as individual and species could realize itself. If we recall, Marx declares that history is the coming-to-be-of-nature-for-the-human, the "humanization of nature." The nonhuman, as pure materiality, had no history of its own. According to Ted Benton, in Marx's analysis, "The 'conflict' between humans and nature is overcome in favour of an incorporation of the natural into the domain of the human without residue. Only when the *whole* world is appropriated cognitively, aesthetically and practically can humanity itself be fully realized."¹²⁹ In other words, the development of the human being was inextricably linked with the subordination of the nonhuman to its will. As Benton explains, Marx

was wrong in ways which undermine his own view of the desirability of a changed relationship between humanity and nature in the future communist society. Connectedly, he is also wrong about animals in ways which cut him off from a powerful extension and deepening of his own ethical critique of prevailing (capitalist) modes of appropriation of nature.¹³⁰

In other words, Marx failed to see that in perpetuating the human supremacist thread of humanism in his naturalist humanism, he undermined the possibility for the genuine historical transformation of the human species upon which communism would be founded. And, by leaving the exploitation of animals under capitalism unexamined and unchallenged, Marx impaired the very possibility of bringing communism to fruition. A true communism, and a true humanism and naturalism, Benton correctly insists, could

not abide animals' extermination, because in leaving such a dynamic of exploitation in place, a part of the human subject would always remain as estranged as it had always been under capitalism. By and large, Marx did not differentiate between animals and the rest of nature. When Marx does mention nonhuman animals, they typically serve as metaphors for humans' degradation and abjection. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx implicitly dismissed concern for animal well-being in so many words as a proverbial bleeding-heart "liberal" tendency, as another of the self-deceptions of the capitalist class who claims to be full of goodwill towards humans and other creatures, but in fact "has no heart in its breast."¹³¹ While Marx posited a materialist and historically grounded conception of humanity as fluid and perpetually transforming, then, he nevertheless reinforced the essentialist biases of anthropocentrism.

Nevertheless, Marx left the door open for others to reconceptualise naturalism and the reconciliation it aspires towards in nonanthropocentric terms. As Benton has shown, Marx's naturalism potentially militates against the anthropocentric presuppositions which inform his humanist project. It is possible to overcome Marx's myopia by reinterpreting Marx's call for the "humanization of nature" not as "literal 'humanization' of animals, but, rather, an alteration of our relationship to animals—perhaps a rendering of that relationship more consistent with our 'humanity,' a more humane relationship."¹³² The struggle against dehumanization would be reconfigured, therefore, as we reconfigured it above: as the struggle against the *inhumanization* of the human being, and also against the *deanimalization* of both humans and nonhuman animals. To humanize human beings in our relations with other animals, which is to say to eliminate the violence and cruelty

we inflict on them, “is the very least that would be required to make Marx’s notion consistent with his own professed naturalism.”¹³³ As we have seen, capital turns humans *and* animals into “animals” in the derogatory sense, by reducing both, not only humans as Marx claimed, to their basic functions. With this in mind, Benton also properly insists that “the ethical critique of [violent] practices [against animals] should not be seen as an alternative to a Marxian critique of modern forms of labour discipline, but, rather, an extension and a deepening of it.”¹³⁴ In short, it is not necessary to abandon Marxist humanism for its anthropocentrism, but rather to revise it so that it fulfills its own promise of reconciliation.

Although they do not examine the animal question specifically, ecosocialists break out of and disrupt Marx’s human isolationism and develop the naturalist bent in Marx’s thought into a full-fledged ecological socialist politics of human-nonhuman reconciliation. They argue convincingly that in the twenty-first century when alienated labour, poverty, and human misery in general are magnified by climate change-related crises, which are, in turn, exacerbated by unapologetically exploitative neoliberal global economic policies, socialism is moot unless it adopts an ecological perspective. The 2011 Ecosocialist Manifesto, for example, states that “the crises of ecology and those of societal breakdown are profoundly interrelated and should be seen as different manifestations of the same structural forces.”¹³⁵ While the ecological crisis is largely due to ever-increasing industrialization, and the current manifestation of the social crisis is linked to globalization, both crises are the result of “the central dynamic that moves the whole: the expansion of the world capitalist system.”¹³⁶ The authors of the Manifesto suggest that,

like the industrial approach to production it favours, capitalism as a system is “profoundly unsustainable.” It cannot solve the crises it has created. In its attempt to preserve the status quo, it has resorted to “a new and malignant variation of fascism” which, in addition to more subtle manipulations of consciousness, uses violent force to compel individuals, communities, and nations into involuntary compliance.¹³⁷ A new system based on socialist humanist and ecological values must take its place if we want to prevent a total, irreversible ecological and social catastrophe. The options are therefore still the same as those originally presented by Rosa Luxemburg over one-hundred years ago: “Socialism or Barbarism!”¹³⁸

Ecosocialists do not necessarily describe their project as *ecohumanist*, but it bears the hallmarks of Marxist humanism inasmuch it holds as its principal objective “the transformation of needs, and a profound shift toward the qualitative dimension and away from the quantitative.”¹³⁹ Because ecosocialism rejects not only the totalitarian but also the industrial and productivist socialisms of the past, this transformation of needs from the quantitative to the qualitative would presumably involve a curtailment of the rapaciousness of humans in industrial societies towards the nonhuman, and a slowing down and a dismantling of the industrial machinery of production/destruction to better protect the needs not only of the human but also the nonhuman subject. In fact, the authors of the Manifesto explicitly state that ecosocialism is not concerned merely with effecting a qualitative shift in *human* life, but holds “the freeing of *all beings* as its ground and goal.”¹⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the authors of the Manifesto do not mention the freeing of *animals* specifically. Indeed, animals' conspicuous absence from the document indicates that the authors did not necessarily consider animal liberation to be a necessary or even desirable feature of ecosocialism. They posit a "world society...in a degree of ecological harmony unthinkable under present conditions," but it is unclear whether nonhuman animals are members of either the world society or of the nature they envision.¹⁴¹ While, of course, many animal species would be protected under an ecosocialist mandate, one wonders whether animal production would continue unimpeded, if not in the current intensive industrialized form, perhaps, then in a smaller-scale "local" form. Despite their frustrating and unjustifiable silence on the plight and future of animal subjects, however, their call to expand the parameters of the socialist project so that it takes heed of environmental degradation, and their stated objective to free all beings from the ravages of capitalism, ecosocialists take Marxist humanism one step closer to making good on its promise to reconcile humans and nature, without perpetuating the instrumentalist and repressive logic implicit in Marx's concept of reconciliation. By stating that ecosocialism advances the freedom of all beings, ecosocialists imply that freedom is not a specifically human entitlement, as Marx assumed. Moreover, ecosocialists openly admit that nonhuman existence is tied up with human existence more than simply as a resource, and that the flourishing of the human depends less on its mastery of nature, than on its preservation of the nonhuman in its optimal state.

Bookchins's hostility towards animal rights notwithstanding, his humanism adds another important dimension to this refreshingly nonanthropocentric political vision of

reconciliation: the explicit refutation of hierarchical ontologies of nature and the nonhuman. Bookchin distances himself from Marxism and identifies as an anarchist, but his theories of “dialectical naturalism,” and “social ecology” are nevertheless grounded in the Left Hegelian dialectical tradition, and therefore have some clear affinities with Marx’s humanism. Bookchin’s social ecology is based on the conviction that ecological devastation is a social issue—that is, that “ecological problems originate in a hierarchical, class, and today, competitive system, that reduces the world to an agglomeration of resources for human production and consumption.”¹⁴² With the social roots of ecological destruction in mind, social ecology calls for the “reconciliation of nature and human society in a new ecological sensibility and a new ecological society.” Specifically, it seeks, “a reharmonization of nature and humanity through a reharmonization of human with human.”¹⁴³ Crucially, Bookchin emphasizes the fact that human-human harmony is inextricably linked with and depends on nature-human harmony. Only in eliminating human supremacism, will human beings find social harmony amongst themselves. One way of restoring ecological and social integrity to the earth and its inhabitants would be by promoting unity in diversity, spontaneity, and complementarity.¹⁴⁴ As these passages indicated, whereas Marx’s vision of reconciliation allowed for ongoing productive control over the natural world, Bookchin’s “radical utopian alternative” or “ecotopia” would have no room for hierarchy of any kind. Not only hierarchical policies, but the whole hierarchical “state of mind” on which they are based would be abolished, inciting a powerful transformation in the human subject.¹⁴⁵ The nonhuman would no longer be confined to a particular position on an oppressive “chain of being.” As we saw above,

“ecology recognizes no hierarchy on the level of the ecosystem,” so “there are no ‘kings of the beasts’ and no ‘lowly ants.’”¹⁴⁶ This statement suggests that, unlike ecosocialists, Bookchin’s humanism is not only eco-friendly, as it were, but animal-friendly too. Certainly, based on Bookchin’s repudiation of hierarchy, one would assume that the exploitation of other animals for whatever purpose would have no place in an ecotopia. If all animals are equal, and no longer defined according to the dictates of human supremacist metaphysics which assumes that there are lesser and greater beings, we can learn to respect them on their own terms.

Unfortunately, as we know, Bookchin disappoints on this front. He ultimately betrays his own stated commitment to reconciliation without domination, and flatly contradicts the tenets of his own anti-hierarchical social ecology. Despite his sweeping condemnation of hierarchical consciousness, Bookchin sees fit to condemn the pursuit of equality between humans and animals as “misanthropic.”¹⁴⁷ Bookchin egregiously misrepresents the historical development leading up to modern capitalism’s institutionalization of barbarism against humans and nonhumans by attributing it to humans’ lingering animality.¹⁴⁸ Worse, Bookchin reduces animals to resources, and glosses over or even denies their subjectivity. As Peter Marshall points out, in Bookchin’s philosophy, “Animals with distinct and complex patterns of behavior are neutralized into livestock. [Bookchin’s] eco-farms are synthetic environments; he waxes lyrically about the ‘augermatic feeding of livestock . . . in feed pens,’ without recognizing that such pens are very similar to prisons and deny the claim of every being to free movement.”¹⁴⁹ Although Bookchin’s social ecology is purportedly an extension of Peter Kropotkin’s theory of

“mutual aid,” it flouts some of the very basic assumptions underlying Kropotkin’s analysis. For example, Bookchin refuses to accept that animals are social beings. They live in communities, he argues, but not societies. “Society is the exclusive province of humans, for what distinguishes a human society from an animal community is the existence of social institutions.”¹⁵⁰ This is an inconsistent claim coming from an anarchist who ostensibly wishes to free the social realm of institutions. Any apparent social behaviour exhibited by other animals such as bees is really just “programmed,” instinctual and therefore not truly social.¹⁵¹ So even though he claims that the social and ecological are inherently linked, he denies what he calls “first nature,” or nonhuman nature, admission into the social sphere. Bookchin also ultimately reproduces the human exceptionalist biases of traditional and Marxist humanisms. For example, he claims that “no life-forms seem to be capable of sharing our empathic sentiments, except where parental care is involved, and possibility for members of the pack, her or band to which they belong.”¹⁵² Only humans, he further insists, have a sense of self, self-consciousness which, he claims, developed only by virtue of a sharp “break with pure animalistic sensibility.”¹⁵³ As we saw in chapter four, ethology has long since disproved and delegitimized such traditional humanist assumptions. Perhaps aware of the weakness of these claims, Bookchin attempts to absolve himself of the accusation that these views reinforce rather than challenge hierarchical thinking by arguing that he does not claim that humans are *superior* to other animals per se, just more *advanced*—that is, that humans are “more complex, more differentiated, or more fully endowed with certain valuable attributes than [other animals].”¹⁵⁴ But his myriad reductive claims about other animals undercut his attempt to

escape the accusation of hierarchical thinking. By suggesting humans are more advanced, and by sanctioning the use of animals for human ends, Bookchin reproduces the ideology and system of control and domination he claims to abhor.

Despite these shortcomings, by rejecting hierarchy Bookchin's ecological humanism at least potentially destabilizes human supremacism and provides another entryway into reimagining Left humanism beyond the human. As Andrew Light has shown, like Marcuse, Bookchin offers a hopeful vision of the future. In his words, "both find it crucial to express hopes for the creation of new states of material organization in their analysis of the proper political response to human exploitation and environmental problems."¹⁵⁵ As with other humanisms, we can build on some of the tenets of Bookchin's social ecology, without resorting to his anthropocentrism.

Animals as a Class and the New Subjects of History

With historical transformation thus rethought, animals emerge as a class and as the new subjects of history. In the Hegelian master/slave binary, later reframed by Marx and Lukács in the bourgeoisie/working class opposition, the slave or working class come into consciousness by passing through, as it were, the objectification of their own objectification by the capitalist class—in short by way of a dialectical method.¹⁵⁶ As Lukács explained, "the dialectical method as the true historical method was reserved for the class which was able to discover within itself on the basis of its life-experience the identical subject-object, the subject of action; the 'we' of genesis: namely, the proletariat."¹⁵⁷ The first moment of this dialectic involves the objectification of the working class as alienated labour. In this moment, the working class is objectified in the

sense that its members are reduced to labour power, and are fragmented bodily, socially, psychically to generate surplus value for the capitalists. But, as in the case of Hegel's slave, the objectification of the workers becomes so extreme that they eventually begin to objectify themselves in a different way, *qua* self-consciousness, and class-consciousness. Their self-estrangement is so radical that they are, in this moment in the dialectic, able to see themselves in their mutilation and abjection from a critical distance. This clarity, in turn, enables them to begin to organize to overcome their objectification—that is, to see their emancipation, and their development as individual and historical subjects, as the their objective.

With the rise of the standard of living, and a gradual deindustrialization of labour, and the weakening of unions under neoliberalism, among other things, the working class has long since become obsolete and is no longer considered the revolutionary or historical subject. With globalization, the outsourcing of labour, mass migration, and so on, no particular group has taken their place. As many thinkers, including Marcuse, have pointed out, as result of these massive historical socio-economic shifts, the whole notion of a revolutionary class and historical subject or agent is no longer relevant.¹⁵⁸ The fragmentation of the Left, the depoliticization and gutting of the labour movement, and the nature of social organization in the twenty-first century, not to mention the apparent capacity of global capital to rehabilitate itself after every massive financial crisis, suggests that a great cataclysmic moment in which the two opposing forces of history clash in the final battle of “class war” imagined by Marx is also an anachronism and no longer feasible or desirable. Certainly, as I will argue below, a violent clash of forces is precisely what

anyone seeking to build a nonrepressive civilization wishes to *avoid* and *prevent*. However, the notion of class is still important to the interspecies Left humanist emancipatory struggle—and, animals, I contend, claim this role at this historical juncture.

It is important to conceive of historical transformation in terms of the master/slave and subject/object dialectic because it sheds light on the interconnectedness of human alienation and animal extermination, that is, on the way in which animals' objectification is bound up with humans' self-objectification, and conversely, on the way in which humans' development as subjects of freedom depends on their recognition of the self-mutilation involved in casting themselves as the master species. Given the increasingly global character of the animal industrial complex today, and given the extreme brutality to which nonhuman animals are subjected around the world, they arguably now hold the position the working class once did in traditional Marxist analyses. It would not be inaccurate to suggest that, in terms of the nature of the violence committed against them, and the sheer number of that are tortured and killed, they are *the most objectified creatures on earth*. As such, they are the representatives of the slave class par excellence.

It goes without saying that unlike the working class or any other human group, other animals cannot come to consciousness through their total objectification. They cannot become aware *as a class* of their degradation. Nor can they emerge out of the master-human/animal-slave dialectic as self-conscious *essential* subjects, as in the case of colonized peoples rising up against the colonizers, or women against men, to defend themselves and overcome their objectification. While cattle and other farm animals—who are doubly exploited for their dead bodies and for their labour power—may be the new

proletariat, according to Bob Torres, they cannot start a revolution to overcome speciesist domination.¹⁵⁹ Animals' lack of potential for political consciousness, solidarity, and mobilization would therefore preclude them from being recognized as a class, in most understandings of the term. But it is still useful to think of animals as a class for this reason: in an inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, it would require *human beings, who have finally come to recognize our fundamental identity with and as animals, to recognize that we, the masters, must come into consciousness simultaneously on animals' and on our own behalf*. Whereas in the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, the master remains relatively immune to and even impotent in the face of the self-transcendence of the slave from object to subject, in our inverted dialectic, the master (human) and the slave (animal) transform together, in tandem, not through the latter's claim to political power, but through the former's renunciation of its coercive, destructive, and violent onto-epistemological power over the latter.

Marcuse's analysis of the way the educated middle-class was taking on the role of catalyst for the mobilization of the increasingly disaggregated working class may help shed light on this process. In what is perhaps an inversion of Antonio Gramsci's theory of the "organic intellectual," who rises up from among the ranks of each class and can therefore speak to the particular struggles of that class with clarity and erudition, Marcuse remarked that in the 1960s the middle-class intelligentsia, though ostensibly removed from the toil and exploitation of the labourers, were and would continue to be instrumental in bringing the latter into consciousness. The working classes, or what remained of them, were, along with everybody else in advanced industrial society, becoming increasingly placated, stupefied, and politically incapacitated by the increasing comforts and pleasures offered by

late capital. But, because of their privileged position, the middle-class intelligentsia had preserved some degree of negative consciousness and therefore, at least in the 60s, claimed the burden of the historic role to precipitate social and political transformation.¹⁶⁰ A similar dynamic may be at play between human and nonhuman animals, albeit for very different reasons. Whereas the dissolution of working class consciousness is a historically determined phenomenon, organization as a group always has and always will be impossible for nonhuman animals. But, this does not mean that human beings cannot make use of their relative “privilege” in this regard to mobilize on animals’ behalf. Still, the feasibility of conceptualizing animals as a revolutionary class is admittedly questionable. Given the obsolescence of the concept of historical class, subject, or agent of revolutionary transformation, not to mention the fact that animals cannot develop class-consciousness, why would one even bother to conceptualize them in this way? I would answer this challenge by suggesting that the notion of class is important because it confirms animals’ membership in the political community and their central position in the historical struggle for freedom more generally.

Revolutionary Nonviolence and the Pacifist Imperative

Universal freedom and historical reconciliation are inherently incompatible with violence. The biological transformation of the subject into a truly free being is not only curtailed by the commission of violence against animals, but also by violence against humans in the name of those animals (or any other cause). Universal freedom is automatically undermined if one group takes it upon themselves to harm another group for any purpose. For violence not only harms the other victim, but, as we saw in chapter

three, it also harms the perpetrator and destroys the delicately reconstituted psychosensual “infrastructure” of the new nonrepressive ethico-political subject. Thus, the refusal to engage in violence is not only an ethical issue, as discussed in chapter five, but also a political one because it involves action with potentially world-historical implications.

Fanon and Sartre contradict their exhortation to responsible freedom by calling for the violent overthrow of the colonial oppressor. In fact, for Fanon and Sartre, violence is a *necessary* means for the oppressed subject to recreate itself in its own image, to break out of the bonds the oppressor has placed upon it. As Fanon plainly states, “The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence.”¹⁶¹ On this view, the violent revolt of the colonized is redemptive; it resolves the dialectic of violence begun by the colonizer: the colonizer commits violence against the colonized; the colonized responds with a proportionate degree of violence, and by so doing proves that she is no longer a passive victim. Through her act of violence she is no longer a slave, but a self-determining subject, a political agent who determines both the end and means of her struggle. Only thus may she wrench herself out of “crushing objecthood” into full-fledged subjecthood. In short, for Fanon, violence purges the colonized of the despair stemming from inaction.¹⁶² As Fanon argues further, in order for the new humanism to take hold the task of the colonized is to eliminate the colonizer, in all senses of the word. By doing away with the colonizer one does away with the colonizer/colonized binary all together, and thereby creates the conditions for a new subject to emerge.¹⁶³ Violence, then, is the entryway for the colonized into history. Prior to a full-scale violent revolution people of colour are merely silent victims in the relentless onslaught *against* humanity that characterizes much

of European history. To make history means, for Fanon, to take an active role in shaping the present and future:

Illuminated by violence, the consciousness of the people rebels against any pacification. From now on the demagogues, the opportunists, and the magicians have a difficult task. The action which has thrown them into a hand-to-hand struggle confers upon the masses a voracious taste for the concrete. The attempt at mystification becomes, in the long run, practically impossible.¹⁶⁴

In other words, it is no longer possible to mystify people into believing that slaughtering, enslaving, persecuting, and exploiting others is commensurable with liberal humanism.

Sartre shares Fanon's position. Revolutionary violence is the only response to the hypocrisy of humanism. In this case, with particular reference to the French colonization of Algeria, Sartre points out that "When we were victorious we practiced [violence] without it seeming to alter us; it broke down the others, but for us men our humanism remained intact. Untied by their profits, the peoples of the mother countries baptized their commonwealth of crimes, calling them fraternity and love."¹⁶⁵ The only way to overcome and move past this hypocrisy is to submit to the sword of our former victims. In his words, "Can we recover? Yes. For violence, like Achilles' lance, can heal the wounds it has inflicted."¹⁶⁶ In short, for Sartre, violence is not only redemptive for the decolonized other, but for the former oppressor who dies at the hand of its former victim.

These are ethically and politically repugnant views, for they encourage and create the conditions for an *endless* cycle of violence. In its potential perpetuity, violence is the *opposite* of redemptive. It does not break through history, it does not topple to the Tower of the Past, to use Fanon's expression, but confines both oppressor and oppressed to a

projection of the bloody past into an equally bloody future.¹⁶⁷ As numerous pacifist anarchists have pointed out, violent revolution has not only been proven ineffectual but counterproductive inasmuch as it inevitably normalizes brutality in the consciousness of communities and individuals who may have originally set out with the most peaceful of intentions. Critics of pacifism, such as Steve Best, reduce this view to a cliché.¹⁶⁸ But such a claim is clearly meant to delegitimize pacifism without properly examining the nuances of the pacifist position. History itself validates the pacifist denunciation of violence. As pacifist anarchists such as George Woodcock remind us, revolutionary violence poisons the perpetrators, and therefore destroys the possibility of freedom in whose name it is committed:

The actual use of violence arouses a brutality which infects large masses of people. The terrible cruelties practiced by revolutionary idealists, the executions of the French Terror the mass shootings of Soviet Russia, the almost indiscriminate slaughters during the Spanish Civil War, show that even the best-intentioned people are capable of the worst deeds when they begin to use violence to achieve their ideals. We need hardly ask, are these men in a fit mental state to become the founders of a golden age of freedom?¹⁶⁹

Leo Tolstoy echoed this sentiment almost a century before Woodcock: “All revolutionary attempts [by which he means violent acts such as assassinations] only furnish new justification for the violence of Governments, and increase their power.”¹⁷⁰ For Tolstoy the Christian doctrine of universal “law of love” necessarily required “the renunciation of all opposition by force.”¹⁷¹

Crucially, in addition to potentially terrorizing and ruining the lives of countless innocents, violent revolt is always based on the reification of the oppressor as fixed and predetermined in its identity as oppressor, and thus contradicts the value of self-creation,

which, as we saw above, is otherwise central to socialist and existentialist humanism. To peg a perpetrator as pure and irredeemable evil, as unworthy of compassion, or even life, is to pay homage to the exterminationist mandate on one hand, and to destroy the principle of self-transformation which lies at the heart of the emancipatory struggle, on the other. Violence cancels the capacity for both the victim and the perpetrator's self-overcoming and so cancels any hope we might have of transcending the current world order, which is expressly built on violence. As we have seen, the new humanism understands political freedom as always already ethical—a freedom tempered by the responsibility to promote the flourishing of the other, even if the other offends. In the exterminationist regime, the perpetrator of violence against animals is itself the victim of a system built on multiple layers of estrangement, psychic and social mutilation, and collective existential despair. Therefore, ethical and political redemption rests on reconciliation with and compassion for all suffering beings, including those who commit acts of violence against animals.

With the total senselessness of political violence in mind, an interspecies humanism insists that violence against humans in the name of animal liberation is anathema and inimical to the emancipatory struggle. At the start of this dissertation I argued that we are embroiled in a “war” of extermination against other animals. This is indeed the case. But the resolution to this war is not to take up arms against the oppressors, for then we become oppressors ourselves. The only way to confront the war is by way of peace. In a belligerent diatribe against pacifism, Steve Best claims that pacifism is a form of paralysis, and “is a big part of the reason why we are losing” our struggle against the corporate

monolith in defense of animals and the earth.¹⁷² He argues that, while Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King were active pacifists and engaged in meaningful acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, contemporary “vegan abolitionists” who disavow violence are *passive* pacifists.¹⁷³ The only way to overcome this paralyzing passivity, in his view, is to engage in “militant direct action” on behalf of animals, which is based on Malcolm X’s principle of “by any means possible.”¹⁷⁴ Anything else is too “polite.” He claims that his view is “pluralistic,” which is to say, that it is not based on empty moral principles which have no bearing on the reality, but rather is based on each situation as it presents itself. So, he maintains, if someone is breeding puppies, for example, the best way to stop them from doing so might be to call them up and threaten to “kick [their] ass.”¹⁷⁵ If someone is torturing cats, a reasonable response, he claims, might be to wield a baseball bat against them.¹⁷⁶ It strikes me as terribly ironic that Best would dismiss pacifism for its alleged emptiness, and posit alternatives like this, which involve nothing more than macho posturing and misdirected rage. In promoting physical violence against animal abusers, Best tramples on the very foundation of interspecies politics (and ethics), and destroys the possibility of ever achieving interspecies peace, to say nothing of destroying others’ faith in animal liberation altogether. To stand up for animals without threatening and beating up human beings is only weak from a fascistic or a patriarchal perspective. As ecofeminists and pacifists have shown, there is enormous strength in resisting force without force.

To be sure, both covert and open rescues that liberate animals from laboratories and other sites of exploitation, do not, as Best and others such as Anthony Nocella argue, necessarily constitute violence, depending on how they are carried out.¹⁷⁷ Rescuing

animals from harm, and harming human beings who harm animals, are two very different things. While the former propels us forward into a new stage of civilization in which violence is no longer tenable, the latter restores the logic of barbarism upon which animal extermination itself is founded. If no human being is threatened, intimidated, or harmed in any way before, during, or after a rescue, and the *sole* objective of the operation is to free animals from confinement, torture, and abuse, and rehouse them in sanctuaries for rehabilitation and care, the rescue does not violate the principle of pacifism.

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Conclusion

The first three chapters of this dissertation were diagnostic and devoted to outlining and critically analyzing the relationship between animal extermination and human alienation using the conceptual framework of the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School and psychoanalytic theory. In chapter one I argued that biotechnology heralds the triumph of technological rationality over the life-world in general and animal subjects in particular. Because animals are naturally ill-suited to the artificial, crowded, and highly stressful conditions of the factory farm, biotechnological solutions are required to ensure that the global trafficking of animal flesh and parts can continue unimpeded, while enormous profits are promised for the production and distribution of genetically engineered lab animals and, increasingly, cloned pets. I suggested that biotechnology is the most devastating moment in the history of human-animal relations thus far. The genetic modification, invention, and patenting of nonhuman animals hammers the last nail in the coffin of animals as subjects-of-a-meaningful-life and seals their fate as commodities with no claim to existence outside the limits of production. As such it closes the circle between sciences, technology, and capital, and eliminates any last vestiges of ontological tension between animals and technics, a tension which is integral to preserving animals' integrity as subjects. This total integration of animals with the technical apparatus is supported by a total dearth of ethical scrutiny of biotechnological practices. Animal biotechnologists are bound by almost no regulatory constraints. Concern about genetic engineering centres around the impact on human health and the environment,

while the unfathomable suffering it causes to tens of thousands of creatures goes largely unnoticed and unremarked upon, which only confirms technique's success in neutralizing ethics to serve its ends. Worst of all, in their repudiation of species-integrity, and their conflation of essence with essentialism, bioethicists posthumanist theorists indirectly (and sometimes directly) lend their support to biotechnology, which is nothing if not committed to violating animals' species-integrity.

With the nightmarish realities of boundary dissolution between humans, animals, and technics in mind, I critically evaluated the posthumanist discourse of hybridity in chapter two. I argued that while posthumanist theory has made helpful contributions to the critique of human supremacism/exceptionalism and dualist metaphysics endemic to humanist thought, it has gone too far in positing hybridity as an alternative. Hybridity theory does not undo dualism. It merely reverses it. Like the rejection of species-integrity, hybridity reinforces the logic of technological rationality by celebrating the very thing the latter seeks to achieve: the elimination of distinctions between animals and technical artifice. In their failure to properly account for the social, economic, and material realities constitutive of biotechnology, in their mystification of the hybrid, posthumanist hybridity theorists perpetuate a new form of commodity fetishism. Posthumanists also recall transhumanists, who put their faith in technology to enable humans to self-transcend their own species-specific and creaturely limitations. Posthumanists fail to recognize that science and technology are human, all-too-human, phenomena and therefore that subjecting animals to their dictates only reaffirms rather than undermines the humanist belief in the superiority of the human. I argued that posthumanists are too hasty in their

total dismissal of humanism; while humanism is certainly problematic it is much more complex and multifaceted than posthumanists give it credit for. I also contended that posthumanist theory threatens to depoliticize critical animals studies. Without wishing to homogenize or dismiss these traditions, I argued that these pitfalls of posthumanism are largely due to its indebtedness to poststructuralism, postmodernism, and anti-humanism. I closed the chapter by arguing that critical animal studies should not be conflated with posthumanism, as is increasingly the case, and should instead reposition itself within the discourse of critical theory from which it originally emerged.

Chapter three focused on the impact of exterminationism on the psychosocial health of human beings. I drew on the early Frankfurt School's reworking of Freud's theory of repression to argue that the ideology of extermination both results from and perpetuates the repression of human animality, the de-animalization of the human body, and humans' estrangement from other animals. While, as Herbert Marcuse pointed out, some forms of repression are relatively benign and "necessary" to promote human and nonhuman well-being, animal repression is inherently malevolent and gratuitous, a manifestation of the performance principle, and exists primarily to reinforce exterminationist ideology and practice. I demonstrated that this repression-extermination dyad is the source of a host of neurotic symptoms such as misplaced aggression, abusive jocularity and ridicule of objectified animals, compensatory gestures intended to restore to life and wholeness to tortured and dead animals, and in the case of those involved directly in violence against animals, psychological disorders such as Perpetration-induced Traumatic Stress (PITS). I contend that a society that actively exterminates billions of

gentle sentient creatures each year, and at the same time expresses wonder, awe, adoration, and affection for its victims in storybooks, films, and the cultural imaginary, is suffering from a toxic and self-destructive psychological disaggregation. Bleak as the situation may be, however, I argue, following Marcuse and Erich Fromm, that whereas in Freud's analysis repression is an inevitable feature of civilization, animal repression is historically contingent and can therefore potentially be overcome.

With these critiques in place I proceeded to develop a nonrepressive theory of the subject, accompanied by an interspecies ethics and politics, on the assumption that the same civilization that has unleashed a zoocidal campaign against nonhuman animals also creates the conditions for overcoming this campaign and the repressive mechanisms that support it.

Chapter four was devoted to constructing a new theory of the human and nonhuman animal subject based on the insights and discoveries of phenomenologists and cognitive ethologists into consciousness, sociality, emotionality, and relationality amongst and across species. We saw how Jacob von Uexküll, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and David Abram's phenomenological forays into embodiment, perception, and intentionality not only release animals from their unjust imprisonment in the metaphysical realm of inert objects and machines, but also frees the human subject from its self-imposed isolation from animals. Phenomenologists' relocation of the subject in the perceptual body and the world is a profoundly radical move that levels the proverbial playing field between humans and animals and thereby threatens to destabilize the foundations of human supremacism and animal exterminationism. The relocation of the subject in the body is

important for the simple reason that it automatically reintroduces animals into the community of subjects on one hand, and reunites human beings with their own sensuous entanglement with other beings in the world on the other. The body subject is neither strictly “human” nor “strictly” animal in the “traditional” (i.e. dualist) sense of these words, but nor is it a “hybrid” in the posthumanist sense. Rather, it is a subject that partakes of the world and other subjects, orients itself in the world, and comes into its own ontologically and existentially by way of a shared and mutual corporeality (interanimality) on one hand, and an impenetrable singularity on the other. Each species has its own perceptual journey to embark upon, which is defined by its highly specific “perception marks,” “carriers of meaning,” and so on, but so does each individual. At the same time, what is common among human beings and the many other animals who roam the earth, fly the skies, and swim the seas, lakes, and streams is that they all access the world, each other, and themselves by way of perception. I turned to findings of cognitive ethologists Donald Griffin, Marc Bekoff, and Jonathan Balcombe to explore the richness of animals’ social and emotional lives. While we now have reams of evidence pointing to the complexity of animal consciousness at our disposal, however, both phenomenology and cognitive ethology are properly tempered by a fundamental sense of humility and a recognition that much if not most of what other animal subjects experience is beyond the grasp of the philosopher and the scientist. This unknowability is not cause for concern, however, but rather for celebration, for it is the key to the re-enchantment of the world, to the reclamation of the “magic” of being, which Baconian science and enlightenment civilization more generally have been hell-bent on denying and eradicating.

Chapter five explored the possibility of developing an interspecies ethics outside the framework of deontology and consequentialism and other traditional approaches to animal ethics. This new species-inclusive ethics, or what I call the interspecies ethics of empathic being, rejects the need for certain criteria to be met for an embodied being to count as an ethical subject. It also replaces detached rationality and externally imposed principles and rules of patriarchal models of ethics, with a more “organically” derived emotional rationality as the basis for ethics. I argued that the interspecies ethics of empathic being is “metaphysical” inasmuch as it assumes that ethical relationality in general and compassion and empathy in particular are innate and prior, not secondary, to the formation of principles. It is also metaphysical because it calls for a radically new way of conceptualizing relations between the one and the other as simultaneously being-oneself and being-with-and-for-the-other, and because it rests on the continual destabilization of the subject in its self-enclosed ipseity by the other’s restless questioning of the subject. From Arthur Schopenhauer, to Emmanuel Levinas, to Carol Adams and other ecofeminists, the message is resoundingly clear: ethics is less a matter of moral duties, regulations, or maxims to be followed, and more a matter of the psychological, physical, and metaphysical transformation of the subject from a being-for-itself to a being-for-others. While the interspecies ethics of empathic being is not prescriptive as such, it cannot abide violence against animals of any kind and holds as its fundamental objective truth that using, harming, and killing animals is anathema to ethics. As such, I insisted that veganism is an essential component of the interspecies ethics of empathic being—not as a lifestyle choice, but rather as a commitment to metaphysical and instinctual

transformation. As their name suggests, vegetarian ecofeminists unequivocally insist that flesh-consumption and any other form of instrumental domination, harm, or killing of nonhuman animals contradicts the feminist ethics-of-care at its foundation and must therefore be rejected. Likewise, his resistance to positing a positive ethical program notwithstanding, not to mention his ambivalence towards the ethical status of nonhuman animals, Levinas' invocation of the sixth commandment not to kill, and his conception of a freedom tempered by ethical responsibility jointly militate against injuring or killing other animals. Finally, Marcuse's neo-Marxian utopianism allows for the gradual "biological" transformation of the repressive subject who reproduces the violence of the dominant order, into the nonrepressive subject who eschews such violence. The nonrepressive subject is shaped by a new vegan sensibility and repudiates violence for its moral and aesthetic hideousness. The careful cultivation of a cavalier attitude towards animal suffering and death and the ravenous consumption of tortured animal bodies jointly constitute the apogee of human's estrangement from the more-than-human world.

Finally, in chapter six we argued that while they are imperfect, and certainly beholden to anthropocentric assumptions, Left humanisms, especially of the Marxist, socialist, ecological and existential persuasions, and the "traditional" philosophical and political humanisms from which they were born, are not only salvageable but once adapted and purged of their human supremacist content offer a much stronger platform for an interspecies political project and emancipatory struggle than anti-humanism or posthumanism. Whereas anti-humanist, poststructuralist, and posthumanist discourse jeopardize their critical potency and slip into affirmative rationality by attempting to appropriate the (anti-)metaphysics of hybridity,

undifferentiated identity, fragmentation, and subject dissolution upon which the exterminationist regime thrives, Left humanisms properly seek to defend the subject against its alienation and degradation. Although Left humanists are typically concerned with defending the human subject against its alienation, our analysis demonstrates that human disalienation depends upon the human subject's reconciliation with itself as an animal and with other animals. Left humanism is appealing because it emphasizes the capacity of the subject to self-transform, albeit never failing to lose sight of the historically contingent nature of subjectivity. As John Sanbonmatsu has shown, unlike anti-humanism and poststructuralism, which refuse to recognize an "outside," Left humanism insists that the intellectual, social, and political freedom of the subject is attainable. Among the means for achieving this freedom is the reintroduction of dialectics and dialectical rationality, which asserts: 1) that an autonomous, intelligible, self-adhering (but not self-identical), and historically embedded subject can achieve a critical distance from the prevailing order, and 2) by insisting that it is possible and indeed necessary to challenge that order without resorting to its own categories, metaphysics, and terms. Unlike postmodernists and poststructuralists who dismiss emancipatory teleologies as "grand narratives," Left humanism is committed to social, political, and moral progress outside totalizing narratives of history. Finally, in its struggle to defend both the human and nonhuman subject against reification, the new humanism is unwaveringly pacifist, which means it is opposed not only to violence against animals but also to violence against human beings.

Overall, I have sought to illuminate how our relations with nonhuman animals have plummeted to an all-time ethical low. Violence against animals has reached unprecedented dimensions in both nature and scope. To ignore such violence, or to

pretend that it has no impact on human consciousness and psychosocial well-being, to struggle against capitalism, and to fight for social justice without fighting for animals' liberation, is to serve the apparatus of domination. Historical, ethical, political, and social transformation is doomed to failure unless human beings join in solidarity with our fellow animal kin whose unspeakable suffering indicts us all.

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