

The Broken Promises of Monsters: Haraway, Animals and the Humanist Legacy

Zipporah Weisberg¹

Introduction

Beginning in Fall 2009, Harvard University will offer its first General Education course in Animal Studies. This reflects the academic community's increasing recognition of Animal Studies as a legitimate scholarly discipline. However, the nascent field is as yet not fully formed, and there are different perspectives on what its content and objectives should be. On the one hand are scholars and activists who maintain that Animal Studies should be defined by a radical animal liberationist theory and praxis. Such scholars call for an openly "critical" Animal Studies, by which they mean scholarship which aims to directly intervene on behalf of the billions of nonhuman animals who are tortured and killed systemically around the world each year. On the other hand are scholars who are more reluctant to adopt an abolitionist position—or one of total opposition to all forms of systemic animal exploitation. This paper represents a critique of this latter position and a defense of the former, via a close examination of the recent post- or anti-humanist writings of Donna Haraway.²

Haraway is one of the best known contemporary figures working in feminist theory, Science and Technology Studies, and Animal Studies. She first rose to prominence with

¹ Zipporah Weisberg is a doctoral student in the Humanities program at York University in Toronto and specializes in Critical Animal Studies. Zipporah has been active in the animal liberation movement since 2001 when she joined Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals as an undergraduate student at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. From 2003-2004 she was Campaign and Education Coordinator for the animal liberation organization Global Action Network. She is a contributor to the Cultural Encyclopedia of Vegetarianism (forthcoming), as well as the author of the essay, "On the Totality and Irrationality of Domination: Nature, Animals, and the Frankfurt School," a chapter in a forthcoming volume of essays (On the Animal Question).

² While 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" (*When Species Meet* 19;73). As a result, it is fair to say that although she may not explicitly identify as a posthumanist, her thought is clearly informed by posthumanism.

her early scholarly deconstruction of primatology in *Primate Visions* (1989) where, among other things, she pointed out the relationship between misogyny, anthropocentrism, sadism and modern humanism.³ More recently, in texts such as *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) and *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway has engaged more directly with Animal Studies than in her earlier work. Here, against what she regards as the violent legacy of humanism, she attempts to develop what she terms “nonhumanism” (*When Species Meet* 92). At the center of nonhumanism, and forming the pivot on which her critique of humanism turns, is her theory of “companion species.” In this paper, I argue that companion species not only falls far short of any real challenge to the most problematic aspects of humanism outlined by Haraway, but reveals a disturbing collusion with the very structures of domination she purports to oppose. In particular, I argue that Haraway’s attempt to develop a theory and ethics of companion species within an instrumental framework is itself born out of the humanist project of domination she ostensibly disavows. By, in essence, providing ideological cover for such violent practices as animal experimentation, genetic engineering, dog breeding and training, killing animals for food and hunting, Haraway undermines what might otherwise be construed as an effort to overcome the speciesist ethos which characterizes humanist ideology and the normalization of brutality against animals that it fosters.⁴ I conclude that Haraway’s disturbing writings on the animal question represent a serious threat both to the development of a truly *critical* Animal Studies and, more generally, to the cause of animal liberation. It is therefore important that we gain a better understanding of where her work goes wrong, and why.

³ The term “modern humanism” in Haraway’s writing effectively encompasses the articulations of humanism in the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

⁴ It should be noted that while I agree with Haraway’s critique of the anthropocentric and chauvinist aspects of modern humanism, I do not think that we should throw the humanist baby out with the humanist bathwater, so to speak. While humanism has many problematic elements to it, it can also be reformulated to discourage rather than encourage speciesism and violence against animals. Unfortunately, the scope and focus of this paper preclude a longer discussion of my views on the merits of humanism.

Haraway contra Humanism

As noted, throughout her career, Haraway has aimed to both expose and offer socialist-feminist alternatives to what she considers to be the combined misogynist, racist and anthropocentric tenets of humanism. In “Situated Knowledges” (1991) Haraway outlines one of her principle grievances against humanism: its perpetuation of the illusion that “man,”⁵ like God, is ultimately capable of “seeing everything from nowhere”—what she has famously termed the “god-trick” (189). 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. Man further imitates God, not just by claiming omniscience, but also by claiming ultimate *creative* power. As all-seer and all-knower, man is also all-maker. Like God, man produces the world *in* or *as* his own image. Haraway therefore identifies humanism with productionism. As she explains:

...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. (“Promises of Monsters” 67)

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 narcissistic preoccupation with self-reflection and self-reproduction, Haraway contends, also defines sadism—thus sadism and humanism are of a piece (*Primate Visions* 233). As she writes, “Sadism produces the self as a fetish, an endlessly repetitive project. Sadism is a shadow twin to modern humanism” (ibid.). She develops this comparison in the context of her analysis of American psychologist Harry F. Harlow’s “maternal deprivation” experiments on infant rhesus monkeys at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from the late 1950s through the early 1960s. With his large team of

5 Although I would normally use the gender-neutral term “human” to refer to humanity as a whole, throughout this essay I employ the term “man” instead, in order to highlight and reflect the patriarchal bias underlying the humanist worldview under scrutiny in our discussion.

assistants, Harlow used baby rhesus monkeys as substitutes for human children to examine the psychological impact of the denial of maternal contact and other traumatic experiences among human beings. Harlow separated the young monkeys from their biological mothers, and invented various “surrogate mother” models to replace them. The surrogate mothers were made from wood, sponge and rubber, and covered with terry cloth (ibid., 239). Some had big doll heads with smiling clown-like faces, or heads attached in reverse, while others had no heads at all (ibid., 239f). Some produced milk from a single “breast,” while others emitted extreme heat or extreme cold (ibid., 40). One shot out compressed air, another contained a catapult which would throw the animals into the air and another, which Harlow referred to as “iron maiden,” contained brass spikes which were periodically projected out of its frame to poke the infant monkeys (ibid., 238). Among Harlow’s other inventions was what he called the “well of despair,” a narrow stainless steel isolation chamber with sloping sides and a wire mesh bottom in which he would place the baby monkeys for several days in order to observe the effects of their solitary confinement (ibid., 242). For these experiments, as well as for his invention of the “rape rack” (as again, Harlow himself termed it), a device designed to immobilize female monkeys in order to impregnate them artificially (ibid., 238), Harlow received numerous prestigious awards, some of them the most celebrated in his field (ibid., 242). What these experiments demonstrate, in Haraway’s view, is not that sadism is solely about revelling in the torture of another being. The battered rhesus monkeys in Harlow’s lab were not necessarily the objects of some twisted mode of pleasure-seeking. Rather their bodies functioned as the template upon which Harlow reproduced and imprinted man’s triumphant narrative of scientific ingenuity, prowess and conquest. In Haraway’s words, Harlow’s sadistic experiments are “about the structure of scientific vision, in which the body becomes a rhetoric, a persuasive language linked to social practice. The final cause, or telos, of that practice is the production of the unmarked abstract universal, man” (ibid. 233). Written on the animals’ bodies was the rhetoric of the absolute power of the disembodied omniscient and omnipotent man/god personified by Harlow. Thus, Harlow is the exemplary sado-humanist: by inducing depression and psychosis in the baby monkeys to prove a hypothesis—e.g., that maternal deprivation, abuse and total

isolation will lead to severe trauma in infants—he achieved the productionist god-trick with resounding success.

In her later work, Haraway elaborates on these themes. In particular, she argues that narcissistic sado-humanism fosters a sense of “human exceptionalism,” or the view that “humanity alone is not [part of] a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies” (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 11). The god-trick enables man to at once reproduce himself through or project himself onto nature, while at the same time remaining at one remove from it. Borrowing from Bruno Latour, Haraway suggests that humanism operates by placing humans and nonhumans (as well as “nature” and “culture”) on either side of a so-called “Great Divide” (ibid., 9).

From Cyborgs to Companion Species

In opposition to the anthropocentric and dualist sado-humanist worldview which 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” (“A Cyborg Manifesto” 150). In “A Cyborg Manifesto” (1985), Haraway attempted to challenge patriarchal, misogynist and anthropocentric thought by exploring what she saw as the transgressive socialist-feminist potential of cyborgs. In particular, she argued that through an “ironic appropriation” of these “cybernetic organisms,” it was possible to dismantle or at least significantly disrupt the dualist humanist framework (Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto* 4). More recently, Haraway has described cyborgs as “junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species” (“Cyborgs to Companion Species” 300). Cyborgs and companion species, she tells us, “are hardly polar opposites” (Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto* 4). 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” (ibid.). In other words,

cyborgs and companion species both represent areas of ambiguity and contradiction otherwise prohibited in the bifurcated framework of the Great Divide. 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.⁶

Haraway develops her conception of the inter-relationality of companion species by borrowing heavily from Continental philosophy in general and phenomenology in particular. For example, Haraway explains that companion species hold “the relation as the smallest unit of being and analysis” (*When Species Meet* 165). Similarly, she suggests that in 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” (*ibid.*, 4). Gesturing to phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Haraway further suggests that companion species consist of “‘infoldings of the flesh’” (*ibid.*, 249). In a similar vein, she explains that they are figures engaged in “mortal world-making entanglements” (*ibid.*, 4) and “constituted in intra- and interaction” (*ibid.*), and “te[II] a story of co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality” (Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto* 4). In language reminiscent of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s conception of becoming-animal,⁷ Haraway also explains that companion species constitute a “tapestry of shared being/becoming among critters (including humans)” (*When Species Meet* 72), and that “animals are everywhere full partners in worlding, in becoming with” (*ibid.*, 301).⁸ Although she is critical of what she considers to be an anthropocentric bias in Emmanuel Levinas’ ethics, she follows Jacques Derrida in extending Levinas’ ethical phenomenology to the nonhuman by suggesting that

⁶ It should be noted that dogs figured more prominently in Haraway’s earliest discussion of companion species in *The Companion Species Manifesto*. However, in *When Species Meet* Haraway addresses a much broader range of animals.

⁷ See Deleuze and Guattari, 232-310.

⁸ 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’” (*When Species Meet* 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” (*ibid.*, 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” (*ibid.*, 30).

companion species have *face*, and are in “face-to-face” relationships with each other (ibid., 76; 88). 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 (ibid., 19).

On the surface, Haraway’s notion of companion species is 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 ultimately undermines, if not renders null and void, these otherwise crucial challenges to the most problematic aspects of modern humanist thought. She does this by configuring companion species within, and thereby reinforcing, the very framework of instrumentality that has been so central to the sado-humanist legacy of domination.

Instrumental Species

While suggesting that other animals and humans are entangled, co-constituted and so on, Haraway in fact reinforces the anthropocentric logic of mastery over nonhuman human others by naturalizing unequal instrumental relations between species—that is, relations in which humans are the *users* and nonhumans are the *used*.

Haraway attempts to describe a mutually beneficial instrumentality between species which does not necessarily privilege the human. “Instrumental intra-action itself is not the enemy. . . . Work, use, and instrumentality are intrinsic to bodily webbed mortal earthly being and becoming” (ibid., 71). By this account, instrumentality and inter-

relationality need not conflict. Bees and flowers, for example, can be said to be involved in an instrumental relationship with one another in which both gain and neither lose from being used by and using the other for their own respective purposes. Similar symbiotic relationships between and among different species, in which they use each other for their own advantage without harming each other, can be readily observed in any ecosystem. This kind of instrumentality is indeed free, to use Haraway's words, of "unidirectional relations of use, ruled by practices of calculation and self-sure of hierarchy" (ibid.). As a result, Haraway is not wrong to suggest that instrumentality as such is not necessarily equivalent to domination. As she correctly observes, "To be in a relation of use to each other is not the definition of unfreedom and violation" (ibid., 74).

However, Haraway's attempt to distinguish between instrumentality defined by mutuality, and instrumentality defined by unfreedom and violation, becomes increasingly problematic as she develops her argument. She goes on to acknowledge that in modern Western civilization most instrumental relationships between humans and animals are based on a structure of *inequality* in which humans alone have power over and license to use other animals as instruments. As she writes, instrumental relations between humans and animals "are almost never symmetrical ('equal' or calculable)" (ibid.). While this is also true, Haraway does not, as one might expect, go on to suggest that this inequality, asymmetry and calculability are part and parcel of the unfreedom and violation avoided by the mutually beneficial instrumental relationships described above. Instead, she suggests the opposite: that unequal and non-mutual instrumental relations between humans and animals do *not* necessarily translate into animals' unfreedom or violation (ibid.). She writes, "I resist the tendency to condemn all relations of instrumentality between animals and people as necessarily involving the objectifications and oppressions of sexism, colonialism, and racism" (ibid.). While there may be some occasional *exceptions*, Haraway's claim that not all instrumental relations between humans and animals constitute the same fundamentally oppressive nature as those among humans cannot be vouchsafed in the context of human-animal relations in contemporary society. Simply put, as a result of the sado-humanist and techno-capitalist projects, the reduction of other animals to instruments and objects of calculation is *inherently* interchangeable

with their inequality with humans, which is, in turn, *inherently* interchangeable with their total unfreedom and violation at our hands. As critical theorist Herbert Marcuse pointed out in his critique of the joint domination of humans and nature in advanced industrialized nations, instrumental reason operates precisely by reducing human and nonhuman beings to the “mere stuff of control” and to “quantifiable qualities . . . units of abstract labor power, calculable units of time” (156f). Reduced to the stuff of control, nonhuman (and ultimately also human) beings are degraded to “instrumentality which lends itself to all purposes and ends—instrumentality per se, ‘in itself’” (ibid., 156). In other words, as Marcuse sees it, instrumentality *is* hierarchy, *is* calculability, *is* inequality, *is* violation, *is* unfreedom.

Haraway’s own examples of (supposedly benign) instrumentality only bear Marcuse out. For instance, Haraway is an outspoken proponent of dog breeding. Haraway withholds any judgment concerning the mass-breeding of dogs—by “pure bred puppy mill producers” and “backyard breeders”—and instead suggests that she limits her research and analysis to, and personal involvement with, people claiming to do “what they call ethical breeding” (*When Species Meet* 139). She applauds these “‘lay’ people who breed dogs” for the fact that they are “often solidly knowledgeable about science, technology and veterinary medicine, often self-educated, and often effective actors in technoculture for the flourishing of dogs and their humans” (ibid., 140). While such lay breeders may be knowledgeable, and may not operate puppy mills, the practice of breeding as such is nonetheless a direct product of the sado-humanist and techno-capitalist projects which have jointly normalized the exploitative instrumentalization (and commodification) of nonhumans. We manipulate dogs’ (and other animals’) reproductive and social patterns and so on in order to see (the fantasy of) our ingenuity and omnipotence reflected back to us through their “improved” bodies—and also to make a profit. Breeding is a practice built directly out of humans’ entitlement to the bodies and lives of other animals and to the latter’s reduction to the mere stuff of control. Moreover, animals are bred for the most part to serve humans, often as instruments for the enslavement of other animals. As Haraway herself points out, breeders often “place puppies they have bred” into, among other things, “livestock guardian jobs” (ibid.). Finally, while Haraway admits that the

notion of “‘improvement’ is one of the most important modernizing and imperializing discourses” she nevertheless suggests that she “cannot be dismissive of these commitments” towards “improving” certain breeds of dogs (ibid.). Her refusal to abandon the modernizing and imperializing discourse of improvement, is tantamount to her avowal of it.

Haraway is also both a supporter and avid practitioner of so-called “agility” dog training. In a section in *The Companion Species Manifesto* entitled “Positive Bondage,” Haraway lauds Susan Garrett for her “widely acclaimed training pamphlet called *Ruff Love*” (43). She writes, “I have never read a dog-training manual more committed to near *total control* in the interest of fulfilling human intentions, in this case, peak performance in a demanding, dual species, competitive sport” (*my italics*) (ibid., 44). What could exemplify instrumental domination—or instrumentality *as* domination—more than a training manual which is dedicated to gaining “near total control” over other animals to “fulfil[I] human intentions”?

A closer examination of Garrett’s method exposes even further the logic of instrumental domination upon which it is based. It requires that the trainer employ harsh disciplinary tactics to ensure absolute submission from the animals. To this end, the dogs under Garrett’s regime are confined in crates for part of the training period and free play is not permitted (ibid.). As Haraway explains, “forbidden to the pooch are the pleasures of romping at will with other dogs, rushing after a teasing squirrel, or clambering onto the couch—unless and until such pleasures are granted for exhibiting self control and responsiveness to the human’s commands at a near 100% frequency” (ibid.).

Haraway offers no critique of these examples of instrumental domination, and indeed refuses to recognize them as instances of domination at all. While she admits that in her effort to adhere to Garret’s training methods with her own dogs she has “made enough well intentioned training mistakes—some of them painful to my dogs and some of them dangerous to people, not to mention worthless in succeeding in agility” (ibid., 45f), she remains unapologetically committed to the method. Indeed, she proudly proclaims: “I

still lend my well-thumbed copy of *Ruff Love* to friends, and I keep my clicker and liver treats in my pocket” (ibid., 46).

Haraway also undermines any objection to the confinement and coercion of dogs which Garrett’s method requires, and states that “while romantics might quail in the face of requirements to keep one’s dog in a crate. . . . There is no room for romanticism about the wild heart of the natural dog or illusions of social equality across the class Mammalia in Garrett’s practice and pedagogy” (ibid., 44). Such a remark is in marked contrast to what appears in other passages to be her embrace of non-hierarchical cross-species “entanglement” apparently so integral to the notion of companion species. Indeed, by writing off as “romanticism” the goal of equality between species, Haraway unfairly dismisses the struggle for equality, without any substantive examination of the issue. She also reinforces the misogynist and speciesist stereotype that those who are opposed to the unequal treatment of animals are sentimental and irrational.⁹ (Haraway’s comment also appears to fly in the face of her own critique of Deleuze and Guattari for disavowing sentimentality [*When Species Meet* 30; See also note 8]).

Haraway further seeks to disassociate Garrett’s “training” practices from domination by suggesting that dogs who undergo her technique enjoy “legion” compensations, and get “rewarded by the rapid delivery of treats, toys, and liberties” (ibid., 44f). While this may be so, the real motive for “rewarding” the dogs—to create incentive for further obedience—has not changed. In fact, Haraway goes on to explain enthusiastically that the rewards are “all carefully calibrated to evoke and sustain maximum motivation from the particular, individually known pupil” (ibid.). Slaves received occasional “rewards” too, for much the same reason.

In a final attempt to redeem Garrett’s technique, Haraway suggests that the conception of companion species is wholly compatible with this practice. While, as we have seen, it is clear that training other animals through force to submit to one’s commands and to “fulfill human intentions” is, by its very definition, a form of instrumental domination,

⁹ See Donovan and Adams 6.

Haraway frames it as harmonious interspecies relationality. For example, she refers to the trainer and dog under Garrett's method as "a team that is highly motivated, not working under compulsion, but knowing the energy of each other and trusting the honesty and coherence of directional postures and responsive movements" (ibid., 44). This image of "highly motivated" and mutually voluntary teamwork flatly contradicts Haraway's earlier unapologetic characterization of the training method as a system of total control—wherein the dog's every move is orchestrated and compelled by the trainer in order to ensure the former's unequivocal submission. With her support of coercive dog training in general and Garrett's technique in particular, Haraway undermines the supposed challenge to instrumental domination which she claims to offer through the discourse of companion species.

Perhaps nowhere is Haraway's support for the instrumental domination she purports to oppose more evident than in her extensive and disturbing comments on animal experimentation in *When Species Meet*. Although Haraway attempts to disassociate animal experimentation from the Western humanist project of instrumental domination in a number of ways, none of them prove convincing. Haraway begins by arguing that animal experimenters are not, as commonly perceived, necessarily preoccupied with expanding knowledge of the human species (*When Species Meet* 70). The scientist, she writes, is "engaged not in the heroics of self-experimentation (a common trope in tropical medicine histories) but in the practical and moral obligation to mitigate suffering among mortals—and not just human mortals" (ibid.). As Haraway frames it here, the experimenter is not limited to the Baconian conception of experimentation, which is to use nonhumans as *models* by which "we may gain knowledge about what may be wrought upon the body of man" (Bacon, "New Atlantis" 263), but has animals' interest to avoid suffering in mind too. What Haraway does not address is the fact that whether or not animal experimentation may be performed to advance veterinary research, for example, the practice of experimentation itself presumes the prior speciesist reduction of nonhumans into powerless objects and instruments.

Haraway further undermines the weight of her claim that experimentation has other animals' benefit in mind as much as that of humans, when she goes on to suggest that animal experimentation in general and "wicked action" (viz., harming other animals) is also justified on the grounds that it satisfies human "curiosity." As she writes, "Curiosity, not just functional benefit, may warrant the risk of 'wicked action'" (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 70). Can one "satisfy" one's "curiosity" about animals in a laboratory setting without denying their freedom or without incarcerating them and violating their bodies? Whether or not human "curiosity" or even nonhuman interests are fueling experimentation, it is only possible to begin with because of the humanist view of the nonhuman as the mere stuff of control. As a result, Haraway's line of reasoning here does not disprove the view that unfreedom and violation are the basis of the instrumentalization of other animals in laboratories. Rather, it reveals the particularly disturbing truth that we subject billions of other animals to a life of hell in labs, often simply to entertain what amount to *arbitrary* human whims.

In a particularly disturbing move, Haraway attempts to redefine as progressive, rather than to challenge outright, the inequality between humans and other animals in the laboratory. She writes, "Inequality in the lab is, in short, not of a humanist kind, whether religious or secular, but of a relentlessly historical and contingent kind that never stills the murmur of nonteleological and nonhierarchical multiplicity that the world is" (ibid., 77). In other words, so long as the inequalities of the laboratory environment are neither construed as the product of a secular humanist outlook ("The Human" over and above "The Animal"), nor cast in quasi-religious terms (e.g., as "sacrifice")—so long as, instead, we view such inequalities as being "of a relentlessly historical and contingent kind," then they are justified and even contain subversive potential. What Haraway posits here is at best a futile theoretical exercise, and at worst a discursive adventure with potentially catastrophic ethico-political consequences. We cannot simply *theorize* the laboratory into being a haven of the putative "nonteleological and nonhierarchical multiplicity" of the world. By attempting to do so, we mask and thereby perpetuate the actual inequality produced by the sado-humanist project of domination which puts animals in labs in the first place.

In an equally bewildering move, Haraway attempts to distance experimentation from the humanist project of instrumental domination she decries by suggesting that it is in the unequal and instrumental framework of the laboratory that animals actually *transcend* calculability. In her words, laboratory animals can occupy “unfilled spaces” where “something outside calculation can still happen” (ibid., 73). To demonstrate this, she claims that lab animals “have many degrees of freedom.” An example of this “freedom,” she writes, is “*the inability of experiments to work if animals and other organisms do not cooperate*” (my italics) (ibid.). If there is a more perverse conception of freedom than this, however, it is hard to imagine. To have any ethico-political import should freedom not mean freedom *from* exploitation and violence and freedom *to* fulfill one’s potentialities?¹⁰ The reader is left to wonder how rabbits or dogs whose heads are locked into holds, or monkeys exposed to nerve gas and given electroshocks, can *not* cooperate in the experiments. Even if such victims do manage to squirm and wriggle out of their hold, or to bite their tormenter, it is absurd to equate their acts of desperation and anguish with the exercise of freedom. Haraway’s claim that animals experience degrees of freedom in the modern laboratory is not only unsupported by evidence (as well as by common sense), it serves to occlude the actual state of unfreedom to which they are subjected. It thereby manages to legitimate, in the realm of high theory, their oppression.

Haraway makes a similarly untenable claim about the “refusal” of intensively farmed animals to cooperate with the forces of their oppression. She writes, “Even factory meat industries have to face the disaster of chickens’ or pigs’ refusal to live when their cooperation is utterly disregarded in an excess of human engineering arrogance” (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 73). Although she correctly highlights that it is an “excess of human engineering arrogance” upon which the factory farming industry is built, by suggesting that the death of these creatures is a “refusal to live,” Haraway attributes to them an agency which they are denied in reality. In the same discussion, she admits that

¹⁰ This definition of freedom is borrowed from John Sanbonmatsu’s conception of freedom as “freedom from oppression” and “freedom to the creative fulfillment of our natural capacities” (Sanbonmatsu 248). It is also based on Marcuse’s suggestion that freedom is at least partly defined by the capacity for beings to be themselves, “‘by themselves’ and ‘as themselves’” (Marcuse 125).

factory farming “is a very low standard for thinking about animal freedom in instrumental relations” (ibid.). Yet this admission does not hold her back from suggesting that “freedom” is still possible in this context. Such a claim, presented without evidence or logical argument, ultimately dissolves into little more than discursive posturing.

Other critics have similarly pointed out that Haraway’s endorsement of animal experimentation seems to identify her position with the very sado-humanist outlook she purports to reject. For example, in *When Species Meet* Haraway reprints her own correspondence with Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi in which the latter emphasizes that the imbalance of power between humans and nonhumans in the laboratory derives from and is excused by a specifically early modern humanist worldview. In Ghamari-Tabrizi’s words, “In the lab, not only is the relationship [between humans and animals] unequal and asymmetrical; it is wholly framed and justified, legitimated, and meaningful within the rationalist materials of early modern humanism” (cited in Haraway, *When Species Meet* 86). By way of response, Haraway effectively admits to, but also rationalizes, what we can only call the hypocrisy of her position. In her reply to Ghamari-Tabrizi, she writes,

Yes, all the calculations still apply; yes, I will defend animal killing for reasons and in detailed material-semiotic conditions that I judge tolerable because of a greater good calculation. And no, that is never enough. I refuse the “choice” of “inviolable animal rights” versus “human good is more important.” Both of these proceed as if calculation solved the dilemma, and all I or we have to do is choose. (ibid., 87)

This response is problematic for a number of reasons. To begin, while, as we saw above, Haraway stated that she opposes the instrumentalization of animals when linked to “calculability,” here she affirms a crude utilitarian calculus of her own (“the greater good”). Though she admits that this calculus is “never enough,” she still allows herself to rely on it in part and thereby legitimizes it. Relatedly, Haraway falsely represents the critique of animal experimentation as an either/or choice between inviolable animal rights or human good. Opposition to animal experimentation does not pit human and animal rights against each other. Nor does it necessarily require a belief in animal *rights* at all. Many animal studies scholars such as Peter Singer suggest that the language of rights,

though appropriate in an earlier iteration of the struggle against animal exploitation, is “in no way necessary” to the cause of animal liberation today (8). Furthermore, opposition to animal experimentation does *not*, as Haraway claims, “proceed as if calculation solved the dilemma.” Indeed, feminist care ethicists Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, among others, oppose both rights-based and utilitarian ethics because they “ten[d] to be abstract and formalistic, favoring rules that are universalizable or judgments that are quantifiable” (6). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Haraway simply avoids responding to Ghamari-Tabrizi’s main point: that laboratory experimentation is part and parcel of the modern humanist legacy of the domination of nature. Haraway appears to have no answer.

Discursive Deceptions

Haraway’s tendency to revert to discursive wizardry to conceal rather than reveal the structure of domination fostered by the sado-humanist tradition, is also evident in her use of euphemisms to characterize animal victims and their torturers. In particular, 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.¹¹ Haraway suggests that we ought to view lab animals not as victims, but as “lab actors,” “significantly unfree partners” (*When Species Meet* 72) and “workers” (ibid., 62; 71). She does concede that animals do not work in labs by choice (ibid., 62) or “under the conditions of their own design” (ibid., 73). However, Haraway’s recognition of animals’ lack of choice in these matters does not prevent her from ascribing agency—i.e., “actorship”—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 brutal reality of the total denial of their ability to act in any meaningful way—namely, as self-determining *subjects*. Yet, Haraway insists that while animals in labs can be workers on one hand, they cannot be slaves on the other, simply because

11 See Latour 10; 23. For Haraway’s detailed discussion of her interpretation of Latour’s conception of actors and actants, see also “Promises of Monsters” 89..

“they have paws, not hands”—that is, because they are not human (ibid., 56). A glaring double-standard appears to be at play here.

Finally, Haraway attempts to redeem animal exploiters themselves by euphemistically labeling them animal “caretakers” or “caregivers” rather than experimenters (ibid., 59). 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. (ibid.)

This passage could not be more revealing of the irrational logic of instrumental domination that 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 latter was at best secondary to maintaining them as instruments. Thus, the lab staff are not caregivers in any true sense of the word, but thorough 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.

Ethics or Excuses?

Haraway makes a number of theoretical gestures in the direction of an ethics that might inform our relations with other animals. However, upon closer examination, Haraway's "ethics" prove to further reinforce rather than challenge instrumental domination and the institutionalized torture of animals.

Central to Haraway's ethics is what she terms the "sharing" of suffering (*ibid.*, 75). 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 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.

As with her views on instrumentality, 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" (*ibid.*, 70). 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 (*ibid.*, 75). However, Baba Joseph's gesture of sharing—or what Haraway also refers to as his show of "solidarity" with the guinea pigs—was not, as one might expect, also one of protest against their instrumentalization and torture. Rather, his gesture served as an avowal of the very ethos of instrumental domination which produced the conditions for the guinea pigs' suffering 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” (ibid.). If sharing suffering is not meant to *stop* suffering, what can its purpose really be? 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 unfairly dismissive and weakens her credibility.

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 100 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 such as Haraway describes, therefore, 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, 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” (ibid.). 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” (ibid.). However, if he really wanted “to do what he could about it,” all he needed to do was to set the guinea pigs free.

Outside the notion of sharing suffering, to the extent that Haraway offers any ethics for our encounters with other animals, she tends to rely, as noted, on the ethical phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas. In particular, Haraway repeatedly invokes the Levinasian language of the “face.” In simple terms, the face for Levinas is the abject

Other—such as “the stranger, the widow, the orphan”—whose corporeal vulnerability is always already greater than one’s own (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* 215). The very fragility of the Other is what paradoxically lends it the authority to insist on one’s compliance to the primordial ethical command “Thou shalt not kill” (Levinas, “Ethics as First Philosophy” 83). One’s “response” to this command is its fulfillment. This obedience in turn constitutes one’s ethical “responsibility” (Levinas, “Paradox of Morality” 169). While one is obliged to protect the Other from harm, the Other has no comparable responsibility to oneself (Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity* 98). Thus, the face-to-face relationship is deemed “asymmetrical.”¹²

Haraway directly adopts these 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 (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 22f). 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” (ibid., 76). 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” (ibid., 88). In similarly Levinasian terms, she emphasizes the centrality of response and responsibility in companion species relationships. For example, she explains that in interactions between companion species “response . . . grows with the capacity to respond, this is responsibility” (ibid. 71).

At first glance, Haraway’s use of Levinas is an important contribution to the urgently needed development of a non-anthropocentric ethics. 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

¹² It should be pointed out that Levinasian asymmetry is not the same as that associated with the inequality inherent to instrumental domination, discussed above, but rather has the opposite meaning. For Levinas, the notion of asymmetry encapsulates the dynamic between oneself and the Other in which the Other is both more vulnerable than oneself and commands an (ethical) authority over oneself which one does not command over it.

demands in particular—Haraway helps to undermine the Cartesian claim that nonhumans are automatons capable only of *reacting* (ibid., 19).¹³

The problem is that Haraway misappropriates these important Levinasian concepts by suggesting that they are consistent with instrumental relationships. For example, Haraway suggests that one can recognize the face of the Other while still treating the Other as an object for one's use. Once again with the laboratory in mind, Haraway writes, "to be in response to [the face] is to recognize copresence¹⁴ in relations of use and therefore to remember that no balance sheet of benefit and cost will suffice" (ibid., 76). 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 which 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 intra-action through which entities, subjects and objects, come into being. (ibid., 71)

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

13 See Derrida, "The Animal that Therefore I Am" 8-9; 51. See also Descartes, 74f.

14 Haraway attributes the term "copresence" to biologist Barbara Smuts (*When Species Meet* 76).

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 those with face. She goes so far as to make the startling claim that in order to stop mass killing we should not *adopt* but *abandon* the absolute prohibition on killing which 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" (*ibid.*, 80). Instead, she suggests, this absolute command should be qualified to read: "Thou Shalt not make killable" (*ibid.*). 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 live to learn responsibility 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. (*ibid.*, 80f)

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 refused the authority to assert "Thou shalt not kill," and to insist on one's obedience to this command, the Other is reduced to yet another *faceless* victim of brutality. There can be no ethics of face as Levinas intended it without a total ban on killing.

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” (ibid., 295). 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 veganism¹⁵ 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” (ibid.). Haraway does credit vegans with coming the closest to living without causing other animals to “die differentially” (ibid., 80). 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” (ibid.). 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” (ibid. 273). She tells us that another of RBST’s achievements is that it “analyzes breeds for their most economical and productive uses” (ibid.). Once again, Haraway validates sado-humanist productionist 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,”¹⁶ 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

¹⁵ The lifestyle choice in which one strives to avoid the consumption of any food, clothing, or other products which contain animal products, were tested on animals, or otherwise involve confining, harming, or killing other animals.

¹⁶ See Derrida “Eating Well” 96-119. The scope of this article 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.

eating well” (ibid. 296). Haraway explains that among other things, eating well involves having an “excessive” sense of responsibility for the other that one eats (ibid., 295). 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” (ibid.). 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 (ibid.). 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” (ibid.). 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” (ibid., 75). 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. Just as there is, in her 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” (ibid., 295). 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, 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 legacy.

Haraway Meets Bacon

Haraway's unacknowledged debt to sado-humanism is cast into yet greater relief in her enthusiasm for genetic engineering and the development of transgenic animals, such as OncoMouse™. 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 (Haraway, "Race" 273).

Haraway is not wholly uncritical or unreflective about the problematic ethico-political implications of the development of OncoMouse™. For example, she acknowledges 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 (Haraway, *Modest_Witness* 47). In particular, Haraway contends that in this religio-secular framework which, 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" (ibid.). 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" (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 76). 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 of OncoMouse™ by highlighting that it is “an ordinary commodity in the exchange circuits of transnational capital” (*Modest_Witness* 79).

Haraway’s characterization of the rationalizations which fuel the development of transgenic animals is accurate. It goes without saying that the animals that are genetically manipulated (and experimented on in general) in laboratories are often characterized as necessary sacrifices for the greater (human) good, while their genetic alteration or manipulation is hailed as a laudable advance in scientific knowledge.¹⁷ Moreover, as is well known, these creatures are often developed by private profit-seeking mega-corporations such as DuPont which developed and patented OncoMouse™ (*ibid.*, 9). However, Haraway ultimately short-circuits the power of her own critique by merely *replacing* the Solace of Sacrifice and the majesty of Reason with what amounts to the consolation of “mundane reasons” (*When Species Meet* 76). 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*” (*ibid.*).

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 their exploitation? Indeed, beyond exciting our curiosity or fulfilling a (twisted) desire to toy with other animals’ lives by seeing what bizarre 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 besides the point: from the standpoint of ethics,

¹⁷ While, to be sure, there is controversy surrounding genetic engineering and transgenics, the debate tends to revolve around the ethics of genetically manipulating humans, not animals. The discussion following the announcement in 1997 of British scientist, Ian Wilmut’s, “creation” of the cloned sheep, “Dolly,” is a case in point. See, for example, Gina Kolata’s article (23 February 1997) in the *New York Times* describing Wilmut’s “feat.”

mundane reasons, whatever their content, are as problematic as “majestic” Reason if they ultimately serve to legitimize violence.¹⁸

Haraway further attempts to distinguish mundane reasoning from majestic Reason by suggesting that unlike the latter, the former does not exclude affect. In her words, “Those mundane reasons are inextricably affective and cognitive if they are worth their salt” (ibid.). It is undoubtedly important that we reconfigure our conception of reason against its typical sado-humanist characterization as disembodied, transcendent and unemotional if we hope to overcome the prejudicial thought and practices against other creatures that such a conception of reason promotes. However, Haraway’s reformulation of rationality as including affect ultimately only helps to perpetuate the violent domination of other animals, precisely because she uses it to *justify* not to *protest* their exploitation. Indeed, Haraway goes on to explain that redefining rationality so that it is not mutually exclusive with feeling and, she now adds, care, is important because it highlights the importance of never feeling fully (self-)satisfied with our ethical reasoning. As she reiterates, “Felt reason is not sufficient reason, but it is what we mortals have. The grace of felt reason is that it is always open to reconsideration with care” (ibid.). Of course it is always important to reconsider our ethical choices, particularly with a view to prioritizing care, so that we can be sure, for example, that we have done our utmost to avoid causing others harm. However, we have already seen the true face of Haraway’s conception of “care”—viz., that it facilitates further abuse. As a result, once again, her conception of reason informed by feeling and care falls flat. And, contrary to what Haraway claims here, we *do* have more than “felt reason” which permits systemic torture. We can take “felt action”—or action inspired by empathy—to eliminate it. From a liberationist perspective, Haraway’s “felt reason” and “mundane reasons” are thinly veiled rationalizations, in all senses of the word, of violence.

¹⁸ 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. See Arendt.

Haraway further vindicates the genetic engineering of other animals by claiming that hybrid animals such as oncomice embody transgressive, boundary-blurring and anti-humanist politics. OncoMouse™, she tells us, need not be viewed as a product of, but can be seen as a challenge to, the anthropocentric dualism of the modern sado-humanist tradition. No longer must nature and society be artificially divided, or treated as ontologically distinct as befits the Great Divide. Rather, once again following Latour, Haraway suggests that our world is made up of “naturecultures” and hybrids—of which we could say OncoMouse™ is the apotheosis (*When Species Meet* 16; 32). She writes, “symbolically and materially, OncoMouse™ is where the categories of nature and culture implode for members of technoscientific cultures” (Haraway, “Race” 273). 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” (Haraway, *Modest_Witness* 79). 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” (ibid.). By suggesting that OncoMouse™ is her “sister” Haraway in fact papers over and minimizes the actual gap between herself and this transgenic creature and the techno-capitalist apparatus which allowed OncoMouse™ to be created in the first place. By calling OncoMouse™ her sister without wholly opposing its development to begin with, Haraway does not actually shrink the Great Divide which 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 consolation for supporting violence that is committed against animals in the name of techno-science.¹⁹

Indeed, we must seriously question Haraway’s very assumption that dissolving boundaries as such inherently contains radical political possibilities. The supposed collapse of the humanist binary between nature and culture turns out not to be really a collapse at all, but a one-sided imposition of culture (man) onto nature (mouse). The

19 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.

ontological distortion of the genetically engineered creature is nothing more than the productionist god trick—man making himself by remaking nature—in a new guise. In fact, it is the culmination of Francis Bacon’s early modern humanist vision of Nature made wholly available to the claims and desires of instrumental reason in general, and the fulfillment of his call to the mastery of nature through its ontological transformation in particular. As Bacon wrote, “On a given body to generate and superinduce a new nature or new natures, is the work and aim of human power” (“New Organon” 148). The genetic engineers at Charles River Labs who, with DuPont’s support, produced OncoMouse™, are today’s “Fathers of Solomon’s House” or “Fathers of the College of the Six Days Works,” the scientist-priests featured in Bacon’s utopian “New Atlantis.” For Bacon, not only does man treat nature as a model for himself, but he can alter nature in defiance of natural laws, further imprinting himself on it. In the words of the Father of Solomon’s House:

By art likewise we make [nonhuman beings] 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. (ibid. 263f)

As we can see, for Bacon, nature is not tied to any rigid ontological rules but is infinitely alterable by man. In splicing beings at the genetic level, the makers of OncoMouse™ take this Baconian fancy to the next level. By casting other creatures into the mold he has designed for them, the Father of Solomon’s House indirectly reproduces his own image as the all-powerful man of reason and science. It is no wonder that Bacon’s fictional character is *both* priest and scientist—he is the god/man of reason par excellence. While this excerpt from “New Atlantis,” therefore, attests to the validity of Haraway’s earlier critique of the productionist aspect of sado-humanism, her subsequent celebration of OncoMouse™ as a challenge to sado-humanism, signals a regrettable inversion of her original analysis.

In the end, Haraway's glorification of the dissolution of boundaries supposedly represented by OncoMouse™ amounts to what Eileen Crist describes in her excellent critique of postmodern constructivist views of nature, as the 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 (8).²⁰ The postmodern renaming of nature—or, in our case, nonhuman animals—which occurs through this designation of meaning, is indistinguishable from the Judeo-Christian heritage of human supremacism and exceptionalism which it aims to undermine: the "naming-and-working" of humans onto nature or the nonhuman, confers a special status on human beings (*ibid.*, 11). Comparing the otherwise antagonistic schools of positivism and postmodern constructivism, in particular, Crist explains that "for both the primary locus of meaning is human categories *cum* techniques—in Biblical terms, naming-and-working" (*ibid.*). While Haraway is not 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 towards 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 have always involved "the violation of rightful boundaries—first annihilating and then assimilating the other, whether nonhuman or human" (*ibid.*, 22). The discourse of boundary blurring so lauded by Haraway is representative of what, as Crist explains, Vandana Shiva calls the "politics of disappearance" and which Crist argues is endemic to postmodern constructivism (*ibid.*, 21). For the postmodern constructivists the nonhuman *referents* themselves—such as "self-determining nonhuman habitats" (*ibid.*, 21), or in our case, self-determining nonhuman animals—are "denied existential/ontological standing" and are thus made to "disappear" (*ibid.*, 21f). Indeed, as Crist and other outspoken critics of postmodernism have highlighted, there is a direct correlation between the *theoretical* and *actual*

²⁰ For Haraway's use of the term "trickster" in this way see, for example, *Modest_Witness* 127.

destruction of “nature” or the nonhuman. In Crist’s words, “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” (ibid., 19). Or as John Sanbonmatsu puts it, referring specifically to the postmodern annihilation of the subject as such, “the main trouble with the postmodern rejection of the subject in theory . . . is that it has fatefully coincided with the obliteration of the individual human or nonhuman subject in social or historical fact” (239). Although Haraway does not necessarily advocate the total annihilation of the subject per se, and indeed suggests that we recognize other animals as subjects (*When Species Meet* 67), her conception of subjectivity is dubious if it permits the reduction of other animals to ontologically indeterminate, infinitely transformable and boundary-less objects.

Technoscience as Technological Rationality

Haraway’s celebration of the dissolution of boundaries between beings in particular, and between science fiction and reality in general,²¹ is also symptomatic of the irrationality of what Marcuse calls “technological rationality.” Loosely defined, technological rationality is the subordination of language and thought, sexuality, art and labor to the forces of capitalist production and the technological apparatus which supports them. This process relies on the collapse of former areas of contradiction such as those among humans, things and animals. For example, Marcuse explains that in the universe of technological rationality, people “recognize themselves in their commodities,” while the natural world itself is viewed as an “extension of man’s mind and body” (9). The conflation of formerly contradictory beings and ontological categories also inhibits or eliminates the capacity for “negative” or critical thinking, thus preventing political and social resistance and the realization of freedom—understood, to reiterate, as freedom from exploitation and violence and freedom to fulfill one’s potentialities (ibid., 125). Nature or the nonhuman is one of these areas of contradiction. As Marcuse writes, “When cities and highways and

²¹ See Haraway, “Promises of Monsters” 70.

National Parks replace the villages, valleys, and forests, when motorboats race over the lakes and planes cut through the skies—then these areas lose their character as a qualitatively different reality, as areas of contradiction” (ibid., 66). When we splice one animal with a gene from another, we cut through another qualitatively different reality and therefore lose yet another area of contradiction by which to cultivate critical thought.

Marcuse goes on to suggest that in a world governed by technological rationality, illusion and reality, science and magic, and imagination and progress merge together and are jointly subsumed into the project of domination. He continues:

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. (ibid., 247f)

Transgenic animals are, once again, the perfect examples of these dangerous confluences 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” (“Race” 275), strikes a decidedly sinister note in light of Marcuse’s critique. Indeed, the outcome of the self-perpetuating logic of irrational technological rationality in which former areas of contradiction 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” (79). Haraway’s enthusiasm for biotechnology, genetic engineering, transgenics and technoscience reflect the ethico-political myopia and impotency which Marcuse so poignantly suggests are inherent to technological rationality.

Haraway further glaringly exemplifies the “false consciousness” endemic 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. She asks rhetorically, “How could feminists and antiracists in this culture do without the power of the laboratory to make the normal dubious?” (Haraway, “Race” 275). 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 major corporate sponsorship from the biotech, agribusiness and pharmaceutical industries. If feminists and antiracists find a home in the laboratory in which animals are experimented upon, 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.” With reference again to oncomice she writes, “Inhabiting the nature of no nature, OncoMouse™’s natural habitat is the fully artifactual space of technoscience” (ibid.). 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” (Haraway, “Promises of Monsters” 72). Haraway’s avowal of the laboratory as a site of evolution of rabbits, flies, transgenic mice and worms, eerily recalls the Father of Solomon’s House in Bacon’s utopia who eagerly proclaims that “we have also places for breeding and generation of those kinds of worms and flies which are of special use” (Bacon, “New Atlantis” 264). 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.

Since technological rationality operates by dissolving areas of contradiction, it is the restoration of *essence*—or the capacity for a being to *be* itself, *by* itself, *as* itself—which constitutes political resistance, not the erasure of ontological distinctions. 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)” (125). If transgenic animals have any essence at all it is to be dominated. As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argue, “In their transformation the essence of things is revealed as always the same, a substrate of domination” (6). Beyond manifesting the “essence” of the dominated, transgenic creatures assume the form of the de-essentialized and therefore unfree beings described by Marcuse. They indeed exist in total distortion, limitation and denial of their nature. The genetic engineer may think that the essence of the mouse he is genetically manipulating is to-be-genetically-manipulated, but in truth, its essence is *to-be-mouse*—to fulfill its natural behaviors and to live amongst its own kind in its natural environment. If we allowed mice and all other animals to be themselves, by themselves, and stopped transforming them into the monsters that populate science fiction novels and films, we would revive one of the areas of contradiction which technological rationality has fatefully eliminated. Perhaps then we would be a step closer to, rather than further from, the realization of freedom for both nonhumans and humans.

Ironically, though, as Crist aptly points out, for those adopting or working from postmodern discourse, such as Haraway, “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” (22). As Marcuse similarly pointed out, because the techno-capitalist apparatus is identified with rationality itself, critique is considered a kind of madness—“the intellectual and emotional refusal ‘to go along’ appears neurotic and impotent” (9). Hence Haraway’s telling condescension toward animal rights activists—her dismissal of those who would object to hybridization as “pure of heart,”²² or to other brutal practices as “romantic”—as if to rebuke them for indulging in “anachronistic” sentiments like compassion, or a commitment to justice, and substantive ethico-political critique.

22 See Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto* 4.

Haraway's enthusiasm for transgenics and technoscience ultimately leaves the framework of techno-capitalist domination unscathed. As such, she can be said to participate in what Crist contends is the "redemption" of the destruction of nature or the nonhuman, "through icons of . . . a technologically remade world" (19), thus joining the ranks of those whom Carol Gigliotti calls "apologists for an inevitably biotechnological future" in advanced capitalist society (1).

"Wrong Laughter"

Haraway further aligns herself with the forces of domination by participating in the sadistic tendency to laugh at the victims of oppression. This is both ironic and unfortunate, since in her earlier work Haraway illuminated for us how Harlow's sado-humanist commitments came through in the jocular misogynistic asides which run through his reports. For example, Haraway cites the following quip in which Harlow compares the "surrogate mothers," described above, to frigid women: "There is only one social affliction worse than an ice-cold wife, and that is an ice-cold mother" (cited in Haraway, *Primate Visions* 240). Harlow's plays-on-words reflected his plays-on-reality. Indeed, Haraway describes Harlow's experiments themselves as "functional artifactual jokes" and concludes, "No wonder the style of the Harlow labs reads as burlesque parody. The simultaneously literal and jocular quality of Harlow prose is part of its fascination, as the scientist translates metaphor into hardware" (ibid., 233).

Haraway's critique of Harlow is, once again, in many respects highly insightful. The use of humor to reinforce and legitimate the exploitation of the powerless is in fact one of the most disturbing weapons in the arsenal of the powerful. As Adorno and Horkheimer observed, "Ringing laughter has always denounced civilization" (88). In their discussion of de Sade's *Juliette*, they describe Juliette—who sets out to torture and murder as many people as possible, ostensibly to rebel against rigid Christian mores—as the emotionless, calculating, rationalist bourgeois figure par excellence. Juliette who "loves systems and logic," plans and inflicts tortures on her victims with great efficiency (ibid., 74). Totally

devoid of pity or compassion for her victims, Juliette is a perfect Nietzschean (ibid. 76). Laughter explodes out of efficient torturers like her who have long since purged pity. Moreover, as Adorno and Horkheimer further explain, laughter always has an object. In their words, “Laughter about something is always laughter at it, and the vital force which . . . bursts through rigidity in laughter is, in truth, the irruption of barbarity, the self-assertion which, in convivial settings, dares to celebrate its liberation from scruple” (ibid., 112). Weakness especially attracts laughter. Adorno and Horkheimer continue: “A creature which has already fallen attracts predators: humiliation of those already visited by misfortune visits the keenest pleasure” (ibid. 88). In the fascist state, in the death camp, in the torture chamber and in the laboratory, factory farm, breeding facility and so on, “there is laughter because there is nothing to laugh about” (ibid., 112). Having drained himself of pity or compassion, particularly for the nonhumans who would serve as his experimental subjects, in order to fulfill his role as impartial objective observer/creator, Harlow laughed his way through his career of torturing. Or perhaps Harlow’s laughter represents a flight from the residue of that feeling that he sought so virulently to expunge from himself; or perhaps a flight from the fear of the accusation of guilt he read on the baby monkeys’ anguished faces and battered bodies. Whatever the case, like the sadists, the fascists and the bourgeois rationalists that Adorno and Horkheimer decry, Harlow cheated the monkeys he tortured over the course of a decade, and possibly also cheated himself, of any semblance of happiness.²³

In light of Adorno and Horkheimer’s critique, Haraway is right to underscore the troubling role of humour in Harlow’s lab. However, she once again diminishes the strength of her own critique by engaging, herself, in the very sadistic laughter she attributes to Harlow and the “wrong laughter” described by Adorno and Horkheimer. Whether in her cavalier discussion of animal rights, or in her display and celebration of cartoons which trivialize the suffering of animal victims, Haraway’s tone is irrepressibly mocking. In one cartoon which she discusses, a wolf with an “electronic communications pack” attached to her body enters a forest and approaches a pack of other wolves. The

²³ For Adorno and Horkheimer’s discussion of the way in which wrong laughter “cheat[s] happiness,” see Horkheimer and Adorno 112.

caption reads, “We found her wondering at the edge of the forest. She was raised by scientists” (cited in Haraway, *When Species Meet* 13). For any one attuned to the heinous cruelty necessarily involved in the use of animals for experimental purposes, this cartoon should register as deeply disturbing and upsetting. Instead, Haraway glosses over the wolf’s humiliation and pain and, reducing the wolf to a symbol, makes herself the focus of analysis:

I find myself also in that female telecommunications-packing wolf. This figure collects its people through friendship networks, animal-human histories, science and technology studies, politics, anthropology and animal behaviour studies, and the *New Yorker’s* sense of humor. (ibid.)

Just like Harlow, Haraway is imprinting herself onto this wolf and making light of its actual suffering.

In another cartoon included in *When Species Meet*, caged laboratory mice have set up a giant mouse trap with a McDonald’s take-away bag strategically placed to lure in the unsuspecting experimenter. One mouse cries out, “Quiet, Everyone! The test subject is coming!” (ibid. 68). The cartoon is obviously poking fun at the expense of the all-knowing scientist, who gets his comeuppance. At the same time, however, the humor depoliticizes that power relation: we can poke fun at our hubris, without however threatening our right to power. In fact, the false empowerment ascribed to these fictional laboratory animals is reminiscent of the false empowerment Haraway ascribes to the real laboratory animals discussed earlier. The cartoon also recalls Haraway’s claim that humans too, can share in the suffering of laboratory animals. Such an act of rebellion would never take place. And that is the humour of the cartoon. As their oppressors we can laugh heartily at this fictional ruse, knowing it could never occur in reality. Our position of domination is still perfectly intact. Indeed, as noted in the discussion of Harlow above, after a raucous laugh any trace of guilt or responsibility at the misery we might have caused other creatures is effectively obliterated.

As we have already witnessed, Haraway belittles animal rights much as she belittles the animals themselves. Just as Haraway came close to valorizing veganism only to ultimately undermine it, she also appears to at least gesture towards a validation of the animal rights movement as a whole, only to eventually invalidate it as well. For example, she acknowledges that animal rights activists are “committed” to their cause (ibid., 295), and at one point even admits that her sleep is “haunted by the[ir] murmurings” (ibid., 297). However, such comments are overshadowed by what can only be described as her otherwise sardonic attitude towards animal rights. Haraway suggests, for example, that the “demands individual animals might make” are “ventriloquized in animal rights idiom” (ibid., 296), implying that animal rights activists and scholars unconsciously treat other animals as puppets, projecting their own voices of outrage and indignation onto the animals themselves. Finally, in addition to condemning animal rights to the ranks of the “romantic” and “pure of heart,” as noted above, she also disparages the movement by condescendingly describing animal rights discourse as “rights besotted” (Haraway, *Companion Species Manifesto* 48). While a serious critique of animal rights would be an important contribution to Animal Studies, Haraway does not offer this. Instead, she shrugs the entire movement off with a jeer at its expense and, therefore, also at the expense of the animals it seeks to defend.

Conclusion

As I outlined at the outset, Donna Haraway’s work has become paradigmatic of a largely depoliticized approach within Animal Studies. Rather than discuss the co-constitutive, entangled, responsible, and responsive relationships that we might form outside of and against the structure of domination (e.g. as in fact occurs today in places such as farm sanctuaries which are dedicated to rescuing and protecting animals from institutionalized violence), or legitimize the dedicated work of animal liberators and rescuers, Haraway instead chooses as her heroes animal dominators such as animal “trainers,” experimenters and hunters, and as her sites of interspecies inter-relationality, sites of total domination and violence such as laboratories. Indeed, for all her discussion of companion species and

progressive politics, Haraway seems strikingly often to be on the side of the victors in the sado-humanist project of domination.

In the end, then, while we can still learn from Haraway's analysis of sado-humanism in *Primate Visions*, her recent conception of companion species falls dramatically short of any substantive, transgressive and progressive ethico-political critique which strikes at the roots of domination. To be sure, Animal Studies can and should draw inspiration from the same thinkers on which Haraway claims to build her conception of companion species such as Levinas, Derrida and Merleau-Ponty. Phenomenology, as many other Animal Studies scholars have shown, is particularly conducive to rethinking human-animal relations along non-speciesist lines. However, it is a fatal ethical and political mistake to combine phenomenological conceptions of intersubjectivity, co-constitution, and so on with an affirmation of institutionalized violence against animals, as Haraway does. If we are to truly end the brutality and domination brought about by the sado-humanist tradition, we will need to develop an ethical phenomenology that is coupled with a radical political critique to yield a wholesale rejection—a total *refusal*—of domination. Unless Animal Studies takes as its premise that instrumental domination of nonhuman animals is politically and ethically unacceptable—full stop—then it has little to offer beyond frivolous excursions into the limits of discourse.

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