

The Rise (and Fall) of Critical Animal Studies [1]

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“A revolutionary career does not lead to banquets and honorary titles, interesting research and professorial wages. It leads to misery, disgrace, ingratitude, prison and a voyage into the unknown, illuminated by only an almost superhuman belief.” (Max Horkheimer)

In the last three decades, animal studies has grown exponentially in the global academy. The "animal turn" has moved throughout humanities, the fine arts, and social sciences; it has crossed into psychology, philosophy, anthropology, political science, and sociology; and it has made its mark in literature, history, cultural studies, geography, feminism, and queer theory. Alongside the explosion of articles, books, and conferences, there are hundreds of animal studies courses taught in dozens of universities and colleges worldwide, from the UK and Canada to the Germany and the US to Poland and Israel and New Zealand to Australia. Without question, animal studies will grow in popularity and evolve in dynamic ways. Within a few years, one can expect Animal Studies programs and departments to become as widespread as Women's Studies, African-American Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Disability Studies, and Queer Studies.

The rapid surge in animal studies programs, moving it from the margins to the mainstream, is both laudable and lamentable. For as animal studies is a potential force of enlightenment and progressive change in public attitudes and policies toward nonhuman animals, its academic proponents can only advance it within tight institutional constraints and intensive normalizing regimes that frequently demand conformity, “neutrality,” disengaged detachment, and activism within narrowly accepted limits. The growth, acceptance, and success of animal studies in the sterile corporate environment of academia, in other words, typically demands pacifying the scholar-professor and gutting the subversive implications of anti-speciesism and challenging the human/animal dualism that underpins the violent tyranny of humans over other animals. The academy domesticates the systemic critical power of the “animal standpoint” which provides vital and unique critical insights into the origins of war, slavery, hierarchical domination, and a vast spectrum of psychological, moral, social, and ecological crises (see below); the stultifying structure of “higher education” defuses the potential volatility of critical knowledges in general, including those which might work to expose the true horror of the animal holocaust and international animal slave trade, which exploits, tortures, and murders burgeoning billions of victims, as the academic-industrial complex itself, in its

highly profitable vivisection sectors, claims butchers over one hundred million animals a year for “medical research.”

Homo academicus – that typically competitive, cutthroat, ambitious, vain, arrogant, pompous, one-dimensional, desiccated, apolitical, sycophantic, opportunist, narcissistic career-obsessed primate -- has rushed *en masse* from the staid paradigms, boring traditions, and mummified classics to chase the hot, trendy, fashionable novelty of animal studies in the hopes of jump-starting a new career or revivifying a moribund research life. Because animal studies is so broad, vague, open, and amorphous a field, it offers something for everyone. Yet the similarities of the animal studies paradigm with conventional humanist, positivist, or analytic frameworks are more significant than the differences.

For in animal studies, as well, there are no expectations of coherence between research and ethics or theory and practice, such that personal and academic integrity in animal studies hardly demand normative and political commitments to veganism, animal liberation, and social transformation. Mainstream, animal studies (MAS) has been neutralized, stripped of political relevance, co-opted, and contained by the hegemonic norms of the academic-industrial complex. As a potentially subversive and radical discourse taking shape within the prisonhouse of dead scholars walking, animal studies has unavoidably succumbed to the fate of all other “critical” paradigms and identity politics “studies” programs by introjecting institutionalized discursive rules, bowing to peer-pressure and bureaucratic surveillance, and conforming to the codes of detachment and abstraction; fecund with insight and potential, animal studies has become another specialized, technical, abstruse product and commodity of today’s knowledge factories that specialize in producing data pertinent to profit and social control imperatives but irrelevant to the crises of the day.

Animal studies has been confined within the cage of theory-for-theory’s sake, severed from practical and activist concerns, and sundered from the pressing demands of global social and ecological crisis. The Faustian pact that academics sign with bureaucratic overlords demands fidelity to scholarship as its own end, pseudo-objectivity and drone-like detachment, existential and theoretical abstraction, inscrutable jargon, and the pompous profundity of the illuminati. The scholar-activist and engaged intellectual with “dirty hands,” is viewed with contempt, shunned as threatening, and ridiculed as a dilettante. Hardly showered with awards and accolades, those who violate this tacit terrorism and speak against the tacit codes of complicity incur endless slights, condescension, alienation, and penalties ranging from reduced pay to non-promotion or even termination. “Critical” academics deconstruct every boundary, dualism, and opposition except the bifurcation

between theory and practice and the Ivy Curtain dividing universities from the communities.

The recipe for the "success" of animal studies is also the formula for its failure. For in order to allay fears, disarm skepticism, establish the human-animal studies as a respectable and rigorous research paradigm, institutionalized power systems, and the obliging knowledge-producing work force, process animal studies through the standard filters of positivism, scientism, statistics, quantification, methodologies, theorems, and philosophical obfuscation.

The potential virtues and contributions of animal studies include challenges to humanist ideologies and speciesist philosophies; illuminating histories of the co-evolution of animals and humans; revelations of the complexity of animal consciousness, social life, behaviour, and agency; and stimulating insights into our own animality, and the genesis of dominator cultures, debilitating mindsets, and an array of dysfunctional relations and institutions generating social pathologies and crises. MAS can help spawn a new ethic of inclusiveness, interconnectedness, and community uniting human and nonhuman animals and the earth as a whole. But too often the critical potential of animal studies is thwarted by the complicity of academics in their own domestication, in the proclivity to posture as "serious" researchers, to cloak mundane observations and banal discoveries in pretentious jargon and execrable abstractions, and to entomb themselves in seminars and assiduously avoid the streets. The production and performance of the "scholarly self" whose professionalism would be tainted through involvement in social movements and struggles conveniently excuses academics from their overriding duties in the political sphere, for they are citizens before scholars, and social beings over private individuals. The professional mask, the insular nature of academia, and the reified language affords the professoriate a numb detachment from a world screaming in pain and dying system by system. The functionary's "disinterested" demeanor pleases academic bureaucrats, as it the feigning of "neutrality" only serves the interests of social elites, corporate exploiters, environmental rapists, and the animal holocaust industry.

Thus, any chance to realize the critical possibilities of "mainstream animal studies" (MAS) demands that it be superseded by a new "*critical animal studies*" (CAS) paradigm, although this proposed radical alternative operates in the same academic prisonhouse and corporate control center and encounters the same risks of co-optation and domestication, such that it too is in danger of degenerating into a pseudo-oppositional discourse, a theoretical tool of pacification, and a commodity for publishing industries to exploit. [2]

Whereas MAS has been defanged, declawed, and neutered by the academic-industrial complex, the goal of CAS, as I envision it here, is to dismantle false oppositions between facts and values, theory and practice, campus and community, and scholarship and

citizenship. Amidst the normalizing and repressive environment of academia CAS confronts the same constraints that debilitate every other discourse or discipline. These include: the formidable co-optive power of capitalism and academia alike; the conformist and opportunist nature of *Homo academicus* as a general type who has to survive in an academic-industrial complex which has merged with corporate capital, the military, Big Pharma, and security institutions, as a massive downsizing and restructuring program has gutted the tenure system and obliterated entire departments. Given the overdetermined context of an institution stripped of nobility and autonomy and the intense competitive and Social Darwinist forces at work, clearly nothing guarantees that CAS is any more immune than MAS from being diluted, corrupted, co-opted, perverted, and eviscerated.

By definition, nature, and goals, CAS can only be developed by radicals, activists, engaged intellectuals, controversial thinkers, defiant teachers, audacious authors, and courageous educators who know their rights and will defend them in mutual solidarity against threats and intimidation. CAS calls on radical writers, academics, teachers, and intellectuals to apply their critical thinking, research, and communicative skills – mining the rich theoretical insights and political potency of the animal standpoint -- to promote systemic social transformation. CAS demands a break from positivism and the bogus “neutrality” that favors the dominator culture in order to openly ally with the oppressed (human and nonhuman animals) and establish themselves as “organic intellectuals” in the tradition of Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire (and thus always operating in the dual role of teacher and student, speaker and listener). CAS thereby repudiates MAS which often advances our understanding of human/nonhuman animal and society realities, but invariably in elitist and inscrutable discourse, and as theories divorced from practice, political struggle, and social transformation.

Against MAS, CAS seeks to illuminate problems and pose practical solutions through vivid, clear, concrete, and engaged *praxis* (the Marxist term for the unity of theory and practice). Following the Frankfurt School rejection of positivism or “traditional theory” for normative “critical theory,” CAS openly avows ethical and practical commitment to end suffering and oppression and to promote human, animal, and earth liberation through psychological, moral, and social revolution. CAS emphasizes the crucial role that speciesism has played throughout history in generating hierarchy, domination, violence, warfare, slavery, patriarchy, racism, colonialism, genocide, and countless catastrophes including ecological collapse. While few academics shun self-interest, transcend narcissism and careerism, resist the social-academic superego, overcome fear of reprisal by employers or police, or dare to support militant direct action, liberation politics, and social revolution, CAS should fight for academic free speech; advocate, champion, and defend a wide range of resistance politics, and support any and all progressive resistance movements and

revolutionary politics, including the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), the global occupation movements, and radical struggle in general.

Contributions of Mainstream Animal Studies

“Education is under assault because it provides access to the historical truths, critical thinking, and alternative perspectives that lay the groundwork for structural change.”
(Uncut Conscience website)

The international, transdisciplinary, and pluralist field of animal studies defies clear categorization and simple generalization. Despite its still young and inchoate nature as a research paradigm, MAS has already congealed into a sterile, abstract, and scholastic paradigm. Given the predilection of academics to exploit new trends for publications, conferences, and career advancement, the Wild West open frontiers of MAS has a seductive allure for careerists seeking academic capital, especially if one is unburdened of any commitment to animal rights and political controversy. An academic grab bag and interdisciplinary playground open to all comers, *MAS is everything to everyone*. Whether the opportunist ingénue is a welfarist, breeder, vivisection supporter, hunter, card-carrying carnivore, or blatant human supremacist, a welcome mat to the community and the profession lies ahead.

The term "animal studies," in fact, is a misnomer that impedes understanding from the start, for the field is not about nonhuman and human animals in isolation but rather in close relation (hence often is called “human-animal studies”). Animal studies examines how our lives, identities, and histories are inseparably tied to other sentient, intelligent, communicative, and cultured animals in ways that historians and thinkers (in Western cultures above all) have systematically denied. Typically, writers have erased the fundamental, constitutive role nonhuman animals have played in both the shaping of the natural and social worlds. Most reify human actors as agents *sui generis*, ignoring the co-evolutionary role other animals played in the biological and social development of *Homo sapiens*, especially over the last ten millennia of agricultural societies that emerged when humans abandoned hunting and gathering lifeways for settled agricultural societies rooted in the domestication of wild plants and animals.

Following the lead of historicists, poststructuralists, postmodernists, feminists, and others who "deconstructed" binary oppositions pivotal to Western ideology and hierarchical domination (e.g.: mind vs. body, reason vs. emotion, and men (the masculine) and women (the feminine), animal studies theorists rearranged the conceptual furniture in the house of humanism. Whereas postmodernists deconstructed the numerous binary oppositions

humans created throughout Western history, most levelled everything but the Berlin Wall dividing human and nonhuman animals. Some MAS theorists took it to the next level to take apart the bifurcation between the "human" and "animal." Consequently, it became clear that humans constructed their own "natures" and those of other animals as well, through essentialist constructs, fallacious dualisms, and the distorting lens of speciesism.

Human supremacism prevented philosophers and scientists from grasping the continuum of biological and social evolution as a unity in difference and a difference in unity. Speciesism and Dark Age "science" led countless legions of thinkers to the same error, whereby they overestimate human "rationality" and underestimated animal thinking and the complexity of their psychological, emotional, and social lives generally. [3] "The question of the animal," writes philosopher Matt Calarco, is now being used by many scholars to highlight "the notion that humanist and anthropocentric conceptions of subjectivity must be called into question." [4] Such a discursive approach would analyze, for instance, how the dominant Western traditions fractured the evolutionary continuity of human/nonhuman existence by reducing animals to (irrational, unthinking) "Others" who stand apart from (rational, thinking) human subjects.

The Animal Standpoint

"The political function of progressive intellectuals is not to wage a solitary duel with the ruling power but to help enlighten, arouse, instruct the ... people who have the power, by virtue of their numbers, organization and strategic social position, to change the course of history." (George Novack)

Postmodern critiques have been hugely influential in many theoretical strains of animal studies, but theorists could not employ the insights of postmodernism without overcoming their limitations. This is crucial for two reasons. First, postmodernists (like Marxists, socialists, anarchists, and "social progressives") are in all but rare instances speciesists and dogmatic humanists (including the "posthumanists" who deconstruct "humanism"!). They rarely challenge the human/animal dichotomy and thus perpetuated the prescientific errors that falsify human and nonhuman animal natures alike. Thus, second, they cannot possibly grasp how the human/animal dichotomy binary opposition underpins repressive and motivated oppositions between reason/emotions, thought/body, men/women, white/black, and Western/non-Western, which provide the conceptual underpinnings of hierarchical systems of domination that order people into "superior" and "inferior" types.

Yet, as noted by various theorists (e.g., Keith Thomas, Jim Mason, and Charles Patterson), hierarchical ideologies that justify the domination of human over human

stemmed from the chasm separating "human rationality" and "animal irrationality." [5] The tendentious reduction of other animals to mindless creatures and "brute beasts" allowed the equally false inflation of humans as demi-gods whose alleged rational essence and superior intelligence elevated them to incontestable positions of power and privilege, giving them full licence to exploit other animals for any purpose, utility, and convenience. The appalling hubris and ignorance of human supremacism raised rationality to the highest virtue, the touchstone of human identity and "radical uniqueness," and the Divine privilege – indeed, in Christian theology, the mandate -- to "dominate" nature and subdue the animal kingdom. Speciesism strips animals of all intrinsic value to reduce them to instrumental value, to mere tools and objects whose cosmic purpose is to satisfy human purposes. Once humans defined animals as creatures devoid of reason, autonomy, and inherent value, they could use and abuse them without mercy or compassion. Various social elites then applied *the same speciesist discrimination model* to oppress other human beings. For once "rational" white, male, wealthy, privileged, propertied elites designated women, people of color, and other groups to be deficient in rationality, and thus in humanity, they declared them to be subhuman, "mere animals," closer to nature and animality than to culture and humanity, and thus could be thrown to the dungeons of damnation were they could be exploited, enslaved, and slaughtered like animals.

Whereas nearly all histories, whether conservative or "radical," or narrated from the standpoint of rulers and kings or slaves and workers, have been written from the human standpoint, a growing number of theorists have broken free of the speciesist straightjacket to examine history and social dynamics from the standpoint of (nonhuman) animals. This approach, as I define it, considers the interaction between human and nonhuman animals - past, present, and future - and the need for profound changes in the way humans define themselves and relate to other animals and to the natural world as a whole. What I call the "animal standpoint" examines the origins and development of societies through the dynamic, symbiotic interrelationship between human and nonhuman animals.[6] It therefore interprets history not from a position that reifies human agency as the sole and autonomous force of history, but rather from a co-evolutionary perspective that sees nonhuman animals as inseparably embedded in human history and as dynamic agents in their own right.

The animal standpoint seeks to illuminate the origins and development of dominator cultures, to preserve the wisdom and heritage of egalitarian societies, and to discern what moral and social progress means in a far deeper sense than discernible through humanist historiography, anthropology, social theory, and philosophy. However "critical," "subversive," "groundbreaking," or "radical" the theoretical analysis of historical and social dynamics, few theorists have managed to see beyond the humanist bias in order to grasp co-evolutionary dynamics and the crucial role nonhuman animals have played in shaping

human history, whether as revered beings that stimulated thought, provided totemic group identities, and animated the earth or as crude utilitarian things exploited for food, clothing, labor, and warfare. Humanist theorists have failed, in other words, to grasp the crucial importance of nonhuman animals in virtually every facet of human life, as they remained oblivious to the profound ways in which the domination of humans over other animals created severe conflict, crisis, and disequilibrium in their relations to one another and to the earth as a whole.

Thus, the animal standpoint seeks to illuminate biological and social evolution in important new ways, such as reveal the origins, development, and dynamics of dominator cultures, economic and political inequalities, and asymmetrical structures of power that are inherently violent, exploitative, expansionist, and destructive. Providing perspectives and insights unattainable through other historical approaches, the animal standpoint analyzes how *the domination of humans over nonhuman animals is intimately linked to the domination of humans over one another*, as it also brings to light the psychological, social, and ecological impact of species extinction and the animal holocaust.

A key thesis of animal standpoint theory is that nonhuman animals have been key driving and shaping forces of human thought, psychology, moral and social life, and history overall, and that in fundamental ways, speciesism and the domination of humans over other animals is fundamental to sundry disasters, tragedies, and crises that ricochet, radiate, and reverberate throughout the social and natural worlds. Animal standpoint theory underscores the profound importance of veganism and animal liberation for human emancipation, peace and justice, and ecological healing and balance. It leads us ineluctably to understanding the commonalities of oppression, and hence to alliance politics and the systemic viewpoint and revolutionary politics of total liberation. [7]

A Critique of Pure Theory

“The contemporary effort to reduce the scope and the truth of philosophy is tremendous, and the philosophers themselves proclaim the modesty and inefficacy of philosophy. It leaves the established reality untouched; it abhors transgression.” (Herbert Marcuse)

CAS shares with MAS an interdisciplinary approach that examines our relationships with and representations of nonhuman animals. But CAS differs from MAS in its explicit normative and political focus; its critique of capitalism, imperialism, and hierarchical oppression in all forms; and its commitment to theory for the sake of revolutionary change, not for theory's sake alone. Animal standpoint theory is not "neutral" or "objective" in any pretentious, pseudo-scientific manner; like history, philosophy, sociology, and other

disciplines, it is always “value-laden” and never “value-free”; consequently it avows its normative and political commitments to espouse a total liberation politics designed to dismantle every oppressive hierarchical system that thwarts freedom, creativity, autonomy, spontaneity, self-organization, and diversification. Meanwhile, in the languid land of *laissez faire* MAS, where theoretical vivisectionists dissect animals to yield historical, sociological, and philosophical data. The abysmal state of MAS was blatantly on display in December 2007, as an international group of scholars debated a most curious issue on the H-animal list in language that could easily have come from a pro-vivisection, meat-eating, pet-breeding chat group, the Center for Consumer Freedom, or all-purpose animal exploitation site. The drumbeat of Orwellian Doublespeak reached a crescendo the day when Anita Guerrini, a University of California Santa Barbara Environmental Studies professor, unabashedly flaunted her ignorance and speciesist biases to a sizeable MAS chat community. Wholly earnest, this “educated” professor blurted out:

Does Animal Studies necessarily imply animal advocacy? Much, although not all, that I have read in this field takes some degree an animal rights/liberation/advocacy perspective. That is, the point of Animal Studies seems to be to advocate a certain political point of view, and this influences the kinds of work that have appeared thus far. Is there room in Animal Studies for people who, say, think eating meat is not wrong? Or that experimentation on animals in some circumstances is somehow justified? As someone who has written about animal experimentation quite a lot, but who has not unreservedly condemned it, I am not sure that I have a place in Animal Studies as it is currently defined. I don't think all uses of animals are good, and I don't think mistreating animals is ever justified. But I do think some human uses of animals are justified. [8]

Commending the field of animal studies for its "growing sophistication," Guerinni proclaimed herself a defender of vivisection, a carnivore, and a paleo-welfarist who believes humans – radiantly rational, supremely singular, stupendously superior, and positively privileged in essence -- can legitimately harm, exploit, and kill animals when “necessary” or “useful” to human purposes, so long as, she said, adding this merciful qualifier, as these dumb beasts and simple creatures were confined, invaded, injected, murdered, and sliced apart "humanely."

Appalling as this burlesque bigotry was, even more outrageous were the responses from the list, the vast majority of which were welcoming, supportive, inviting, and grateful “for such interesting questions!” The tone of those who commitment to animals extended no further than their books and computers was even apologetic, lest they possibly be rude or judgemental to the bigot in their midst, but Guerinni had found shelter in the perfect house of hypocrites. Fortunately, a few scholars evinced some measure of logical consistency

and moral outrage, and broke with the prevailing bourgeois decorum to challenge Guerinni's ignorance and moral bankruptcy and question her motivations and rationale for airing her atavistic and repugnant speciesism in a forum in which per chance here disdain for animals could be unwelcome, gauche, and utterly incongruent. Her arrogant and insulting questions, they suggested were no less outrageous, incongruous, and repulsive than misogynistic fans of violent pornography trying to ingratiate themselves in a Women's Studies forum or venomous racists logging onto an African-American Studies discussion, proudly admitted their support for the Ku Klux Klan and without a scintilla of impropriety asked if their belief Blacks are inferior to whites would prevent them from being contributing to the forums, conferences, and journals of the African-American Studies groups!

It seems there is always a speciesist double standard when it comes to respecting or representing nonhuman animals. Blatant forms of speciesist bias and supremacism are overlooked, accepted, integrated into, and prevail throughout animal studies in a way that would never be tolerated in Women's Studies, African-American Studies, Chicano/a Studies, Queer Studies, or Disability Studies. Rather than being politely received, Guerrini, should have been vilified, pilloried, reported, and banned from the H-list, if not run out of academia altogether. But speciesism is tolerated in Animal Studies because of the contradictions I noted earlier, namely, that a significant number of "animal studies" scholars, whether opportunists or passionate about the discipline, approach animals from a detached, historical, philosophical, literary, or sociological viewpoint, focusing on their own interests rather than the plight of animals, and feel no obligation to change their speciesist mindsets and lifestyles, nor do they sense an obligation to become animal advocates, as they identity is limited to scholars who write about animals, not struggle on their behalf; their role and responsibility is to be a scholar not an activist. Against, this schizophrenic bifurcation between theory and practice, analysis and action, studying about and struggling for, taking interest in theoretically without experience compassion for emotionally, seems unique to animal studies. Whereas speciesists are tolerated if viewed problematically at all in animal studies, one would find racists teaching in ethnic studies, misogynists welcomed into Women's Studies, homophobics ignored in Queer Studies, or ablests not expelled from Disability Studies.

But the Guerrini conversation deteriorated further -- not because hostility and resentment escalated, but rather because, with Guerrini showcasing her ignorance, MAS scholars felt they lift their moral masks of phony neutrality and show their true speciesist faces too. Emboldened by the contemptible complacency toward Guerrini's virulent supremacism, a disturbing number of hypocrites steeped forward unapologetically to justify their own support for vivisection, circuses, rodeos, hunting, and consuming animal flesh, "milk," and "eggs." But just when it seemed the speciesist spectacle of moral degeneration could not

become any more hideous that it already was, a new low in the moral degeneracy of the “educated” elite was reached, once again demonstrating the correlation between an overdeveloped intellect and atrophied ethical values, a contingent of PhDs who specialize in thinking about animals began to debate – as if a dilemma or issue with two valid viewpoints – whether it is acceptable to liquefy a goldfish in a blender for some unfathomably edifying “performance art”! [9]

Speciesists and opportunists whose interest in animals is strictly historical and theoretical, little more than a topic of interest and supply of academic capital, perceive no contradiction here. But for anyone who understands the enormity of the mounting animal holocaust, species extinction crisis, ecological devastation, and climate change, in conjunction with the appalling cowardice and apathy of either outright ignoring these unprecedented crises or observing them from the deplorable detachment that only veterinarians, medical doctors, and scholars have the numbing capacity to attain, the contradiction of speciesists working in the field of animal studies is startling. In this deplorable context, the old saying that “A rat is a thing into which you inject chemicals to produce a scientific paper” needs to be revised accordingly: “An animal is an object, sign, and historical referent that you exploit for publications and conference talks.”

Lacking a coherent moral context, and populated by careerists and opportunists climbing onto the trendy bandwagon, MAS is a field where theorists can examine human/animal relations as an intellectual exercise undertaken without social, ethical, and political meaning, contexts, or consequences. After all, it's fun, interesting, sexy, the new wave, and not only hip but smart career move. Thus, one finds carnivores, pro-vivisectionists, multifaceted speciesists operating in an academic terrain where theorists typically view animals as historical referents and research objects, rather than as beings who live and suffer now, who die in astronomical numbers, and who are teetering on the brink of extinction.

The Meaning of “Critical”

“Unfortunately, our education system is geared to prepare young people to become successful within the confines of the present society. It doesn't prepare them to question this present society, to ask if fundamental change is needed. And so I believe the most important thing education can do is to take the students out of this narrow concern with learning what they need to be successful in their profession and make them aware that the most important thing they can do in their lives is to play a role in creating a better society, whether it's stopping war, or ending racial inequality, or ending economic inequality. This is the most important thing that education can do.” (Howard Zinn)

I must emphasize that I do not use the word "critical" in some vague, generic, or redundant sense (animal studies to varying degrees "critically" counters speciesism and humanist biases); rather I espouse a position that is critical in two key senses. First, it is critical of (mainstream) *animal studies itself*, for its philosophical and moral incoherence, its fetishization of jargon and theory, its conceptual compartmentalization that allows theorists to constantly study speciesist violence toward animals without taking action against it. To the contrary, animal studies scholars add insult to injury and become just one more group of exploiters who profit from the animal holocaust.

The version of animal studies I promote is "critical" in a second sense of advocating the overthrow of global capitalism, of all systems of hierarchical oppression, and of the dysfunctional dominator cultures that have metastasized for ten thousand years on a global scale under the rubric of "civilization." CAS analyzes analogies, commonalities of oppression, and finds that sexism, racism, and other systems of domination have firm roots in speciesism, thereby showing that the domination of human over human is inseparable from the domination of human over animals and speciesism is a core cause of social crisis and ecological devastation. Not content with only undertaking a critical and deconstructive analysis, CAS advances a reconstructive approach that identifies anti-speciesism, veganism, and harmonizing the social and natural worlds as necessary conditions for viable post-capitalist radical democracies, the regeneration of biodiversity, and constructing an ecological society.

Thus, in conditions in which MAS is integrated, co-opted, domesticated, and stripped of the subversive potential of anti-speciesism or even a moderate challenge to humanism, CAS exposes the immense problems with this abstract, esoteric, and apolitical orientation and icy detachment to the animal holocaust, social breakdown, and ecological collapse. CAS provides the necessary pluralism, counter-balance, and critical conscience to expose the abdications, capitulations, bad faith, and methodical denial of planet soaked in blood and whipping up winds of fury that could make life in the decades ahead a harsh dystopian nightmare. MAS vaporizes the flesh and blood realities of animal existence and suffering and reduces torture, exploitation, and prodigious killing to reified signs and symbols. Rappelling down from the icy heights of elitism, narcissism, and bourgeois alienation, CAS insists we see animals. First and foremost, as sentient beings who live and die in the most sadistic, barbaric, and malevolent conditions that *Homo sapiens*, the cruellest of all species, could devise, exploiting its impaired forebrain and the malignant forces of instrumental reason and technical domination to shed oceans of blood and build mountains of corpses.

Thus, in bold contrast to the stagnant hegemony of MAS, as well as to reformist, single-issue, legalist, and state-based strategies prominent throughout the animal welfare and

animal rights movements, I collaborated (with Anthony J. Nocella II and Richard Kahn) on advancing a ten point platform which defined CAS as a critical, radical, and transformative praxis that:

1. Pursues interdisciplinary collaborative writing and research in a rich and comprehensive manner that includes perspectives typically ignored by animal studies, such as political economy and the critique of capitalism.

2. Rejects pseudo-objective academic analysis by explicitly clarifying its normative values and political commitments, such that there are no positivist illusions whatsoever that theory is disinterested or writing and research is non-political.

3. Eschews narrow academic viewpoints and the debilitating theory-for-theory's sake position in order to link theory to practice, analysis to politics, and the academy to the community.

4. Advances a holistic understanding of the commonality of oppressions, such that speciesism, sexism, racism, ablism, statism, classism, militarism and other hierarchical ideologies and institutions are viewed as parts of a larger, interlocking, global system of domination.

5. Rejects apolitical, conservative, and liberal positions in order to advance an anti-capitalist, and, more generally, a radical anti-hierarchical politics. This orientation seeks to dismantle all structures of exploitation, domination, oppression, torture, killing, and power in favor of decentralizing and democratizing society at all levels and on a global basis.

6. Rejects reformist, single-issue, nation-based, legislative, strictly animal interest politics in favor of alliance politics and solidarity with other struggles against oppression and hierarchy.

7. Champions a politics of total liberation which grasps the need for, and the inseparability of, human, nonhuman animal, and earth liberation in one comprehensive struggle (a unity in diversity and diversity in unity).

8. Deconstructs and reconstructs the socially constructed binary oppositions between human and nonhuman animals, a move basic to mainstream animal studies, but also looks to illuminate related dichotomies between culture and nature, civilization and wilderness and other dominator hierarchies to emphasize the historical limits placed upon humanity, nonhuman animals, cultural/political norms, and the liberation of nature as part of a transformative project that seeks to transcend these limits towards greater freedom and ecological harmony.

9. *Openly engages controversial radical politics and militant strategies used in all kinds of social movements, such as those that involve economic sabotage and high-pressure direct action tactics.*

10. *Seeks to create openings for critical dialogue on issues relevant to animal liberation and the commonality of oppressions across a wide-range of academic groups; citizens and grassroots activists; the staffs of policy and social service organizations; and people in private, public, and non-profit sectors. Only through new paradigms of ecopedagogy, bridge-building with other social movements, and a solidarity-based alliance politics, does it strike me as possible to build the new forms of consciousness, knowledge, and social institutions that are necessary to dissolve the hierarchical society that has enslaved the life forms on this planet for the last ten thousand years.*

From Abolition of Speciesism to Abolition of Capitalism and Hierarchy

"We have to show the enemy that we are serious about defending what is sacred." (Earth Liberation Front, 1997)

Thus, CAS rejects liberal reformist visions rooted in the deep delusion that an inherently irrational, violent, and unsustainable system can be rendered rational, peaceful, and sustainable. Its revolutionary outlook sees "separate" problems as related to the larger system of global capitalism, and rejects the reformist concept of "green capitalism" as a naïve oxymoron. It repudiates the logics of marketization, economic growth, and industrialization as inherently violent, exploitative, and destructive, and seeks ecological, democratic, and egalitarian alternatives. The global capitalist world system is inherently destructive to people, animals, and nature. It cannot be humanized, civilized, or green-friendly, but rather must be transcended through revolution at all levels - economic, political, legal, cultural, technological, moral, and conceptual.

CAS aims to replace partial concepts of revolutionary change in favor of a far broader, deeper, more complex, and more inclusive concept of total revolution. We must exchange the critique of any one system of domination (be it speciesism, sexism, racism, or classism) with a critique of hierarchy as a multifaceted and systemic phenomenon. And as we seek to understand and transform various forms of hierarchy, we must recognize that capitalism is a grow-or-die system, inherently violent, destructive, exploitative, and unsustainable.

Of course, capitalism did not pioneer the reduction of living beings to things and exploitable resources. The domination of humans, animals, and the earth has ancient

institutional and ideological sources in Western culture and, ultimately, agricultural society (spawned some ten thousand years ago) that transcend class and economic dynamics. But while the domination of nature and nonhuman animals hardly began with capitalism, the capitalist system raises human alienation from, and contempt for, the natural world to its highest expression in a global system of individualistic property rights and an advanced technological empire governed by transnational corporations. And when ancient pathologies are conjoined to modern technologies; to an industrial paradigm that subjects work, production, and living processes to mechanized procedures (such as the transformation of agriculture into agribusiness and farming into factory farming); to a bureaucratic state driven by efficiency imperatives; and to an economic system organized solely around accumulation and profit, the result is an unprecedented crisis stemming from a culture of carcinogenic growth and murderous extermination imperatives.

Animal exploitation is part and parcel not only of capitalism, growth, profit, and property-ownership relations, but also of a mass technics and instrumental rationality that objectifies and quantifies nature, culture, and the human personality. And it is this vision - the abolition of both speciesism and every other oppressive hierarchy - that guides this radical critique of MAS and development of constructive alternatives. CAS seeks to abolish not only animal exploitation, but also the exploitation of humans and the natural world. It challenges not only the property status of animals, but the institution of (corporate controlled) "private property" itself. Therefore, it is crucial that we continue to develop alternative, broader, alliance-based, bridge-building, anti-capitalist, anti-hierarchical social movements. CAS is abolitionist, but in a far richer and more radical way than the bourgeois, consumerist, racist, elitist, single-issue lifestyle veganism dominant in the United States and elsewhere. The lack of diversity within the abolitionist camp exposes the broader movement to loud criticism, very much in keeping with other "progressive" and "radical" academic and activist movements.

A new revolutionary movement must therefore emerge, one that will build on the achievements of classical democratic, libertarian socialist, and anarchist traditions; incorporate radical green, critical race, feminist, and indigenous struggles; and synthesize earth, animal, and human liberation struggles and goals. It must reach out to radical academics, political prisoners, exploited workers, indigenous peoples, subsistence farmers, tribes pushed to the brink of extinction, guerrilla armies, armed insurgents, disenfranchised youth, and to everyone who struggles against the advancing juggernaut of global capitalism, neo-fascism, imperialism, militarism, and phony wars on terrorism that front attacks on dissent and democracy.

Animal liberation, vegan, and environmental movements must address radical anti-capitalist politics, just as social progressives and radicals must engage these issues in

sensitive, serious, holistic, and inclusive ways. Diverse interests can come together in recognition of the common goal of building a social-ecological revolution capable of replacing global capitalism and hierarchical systems with radically democratic, decentralized, and ecological societies. While standpoints such as deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, animal liberation, and Black liberation are all important, none can revolutionize society by itself. Working together, however, through a diversity of critiques, demands, and tactics that mobilize different communities and perspectives on peace, justice, equality, inclusiveness, democracy, and community, a flank of radical groups working throughout the globe can drive battering rams into the garrisons of power and hopefully open doors to a new future.

Mediating Theory with Practice

“[People] fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth, more than ruin, more even than death... Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habit. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of [humanity].” (Bertrand Russell)

To be perfectly clear, my position is not anti-theory, for theory provides the compasses, maps, and perspectives necessary to analyze, understand, and transform the world through social struggle and collective movements. My target, rather, is *theory-for-theory's sake*, the fetishism and reification of theory, inseparable from a reactionary and elitist intellectual vanguard politics. This is a psycho-academic disorder, a schizophrenia, which severs theory from practice and scholarship from citizenship.

I am vitally concerned with theory for two reasons. First, theory is indispensable to practice, and I stress the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, such that the two inform and deepen one another in and through dialectical mediation. Second, theory - as well as reading, learning, research, and critical thinking in general - is essential for a viable political movement. The anti-intellectualism that Russell Jacoby and others expose as pervasive throughout American society without question permeates activist culture in countries like the US, such that people lack the historical, philosophical, and political literacy necessary for the formidable dual task of critique and reconstruction, as they are vulnerable to internalizing the lies, inhibitions, and guilt complex of the capitalist superego; of introjecting pacifism and the Stockholm Syndrome (whereby they identify far more with animal exploiters than the militant in their own movement); and succumbing to the insidious influences and agendas of self-styled “leaders” whose goal is not animal

liberation but ego gratification and reproduce social pathologies into what are meant to be new liberatory cultures.

One cannot change a world one does not deeply understand. But let there be no mistake, there is a huge gulf between animal studies and animal advocacy, between theoretical intelligence and tactical knowledge. The controversies over whether animal studies theorists are obliged to be vegans, animal liberationists, or dissidents and activists challenging the prevailing order replicates debates in the nineteenth and early twentieth century art world, thus one finds parallels between critiques of art-for-art's sake and polemics against theory-for-theory's sake. Just as many artists rejected avant-garde demands to politicize their work, and insisted that politics would transform disinterested art into partisan propaganda, so academics reject arguments they should put theory in the service of social criticism and progressive change, countering that their sole responsibility is to analytic problems, however esoteric. I appreciate the desire to theorize freely apart from political ideologies, activist agendas, and party lines (the travesties of socialist realism and Lysenkoism immediately come to mind). But let us not forget that all research, theory, science, and even perception has a bias, interest, ideology, and agenda, whether recognized or not, and serves one political purpose or another. Nor does good political art, for instance, amount to crude propaganda, as demonstrated by Voltaire's *Candide*, Picasso's *Guernica*, John Heartfield's photomontages, Joseph Beuys' conceptual art, or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Moreover, whereas speciesists can produce quality work in animal studies, so vegans and animal liberationists can pen mediocre analyses. There is no law that links the worth of ideas to the integrity of ethics. But this does not dispel the jarring inconsistencies of speciesist animal studies scholars, a true academic and moral anomaly.

Academics are endlessly creative at rationalizing their narcissism and fabricating rationales for isolating themselves from a bloody holocaust and embattled planet. One typical apology bourgeois academics advance is that the production of quality scholarship demand full-time devotion to theory, research, and writing, and that in this solipsistic immersion in abstractions can actually benefit the activist community. For in a division of labor where theorists don't act and activists don't theorize, the immolation on scholars in ivory towers benefits activists, who can learn from and apply relevant insights and findings to political struggle. The labor of getting "dirty hands" in the practical affairs of politics the argument goes, takes away valuable time and focus from the all-important work of theory; practice, anyway, this outlook upholds, is better left to organizers and activists who operate on a "lower" intellectual scale.

One could plausibly argue, for example, Einstein's immersion in abstraction produced incredibly important insights, and that his time was better spent in high-level mathematics

than feeding the poor. But this claim is wrong on two counts. First, it ignores the dialectical relation between theory and practice, such that social theorists could both bring and take knowledge from activism. Karl Marx, anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, and Rosa Luxemburg, and educators John Dewey and Paulo Freire, to give a few salient examples, stressed the dialectical interdependence of theory and practice, and the knowledge derived from political experience cannot be gained from any book. Second, there is an obvious false dilemma here, based on the assumption that one must commit *either* to theory *or* activism, but cannot do both well. The revolutionary achievements of Einstein did not preclude his involvement as a peace activist who wrote political tracts, dialogued with Freud on the question of *Why War?*, and warned of the grave dangers posed by atomic weapons.

News of the alleged incompatibility, rather than dialectical interplay, between theory and practice apparently did not reach the likes of Marx, Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Howard Zinn, Vandana Shiva, Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy, or Dr. Helen Caldicott. Each dismantled the insidious theory/practice opposition in favor of an organic unity of thought and action in the public realm. In sharp contrast to the academic dandies who glide from seminar rooms to hotel lounges to book conventions, Socrates fought with valour on the battlefield, and Sartre, Camus, and countless other French intellectuals joined the French Resistance, risking their lives by smuggling out oppositional writings.

One can only imagine what the effete intellectuals of today would do in the face of invasion, occupation, or armed conflict. I shudder to think how position and privilege rots the soul and weakens the will. And while the academic leisure class certainly experience nothing on the order of Nazi aggression or foreign occupation, they exist in far more dangerous, desperate-, and decisive times, for the entire human species not stands at crossroads of history in which we face *the gravest ecological crisis and challenge in our species' history*. Global climate change, and the whole constellation of related problems (including rainforest destruction, human overpopulation, resource scarcity, and species extinction) poses, in fact, *a far greater danger* to "civilization" and the future of life than Nazism, as it threatens not only nation states, but millions of species, billions of nonhuman animal individuals, all humankind, and the planetary ecosystem as a whole.

And yet consider the essay, 'One or Several Literary Animal Studies?', in which Susan McHugh uses the most obtuse and pretentious jargon possible to justify academic entrapment within the funhouse of theory and to construct an insidious argument against the very possibility of politics:

To be sure, this potential for literary animal studies has not always been clear. Deconstructive approaches trace how animal stories have been enmeshed in the

metaphysical presuppositions of humanism, but their primary concern with language can defer exploration of the ways in which poststructuralist approaches to animal literatures confront metaphysics with questions of multiplicity...

[A]nimal representations also foster uncertainties about the future of literary studies as disciplinary ways of knowing, and more basically the relationship of reading to maintaining institutional structures. Literary animal studies likely will continue to foster unpredictable (and often conflicted) positions on animal rights and welfare, establishing no clear foundations of political let alone epistemological solidarity among researchers. [10]

One might conclude from this Coltranesque sheet-of-jargon that she is only arguing the reasonable point that complex issues allow multiple interpretations which do not easily cohere into a theoretical or political consensus. But the overall tone of the essay - which reads like a parody, rather than serious engagement of postmodern theory - leaves the reader (or rather the few seminar-trained initiates into the arcane and ineffable) utterly disoriented among a sea of semantic opaqueness and disorienting discourse of incommensurability, undecideability, and indeterminism. Of course our consciousness, lives, and social; realities lack clarity in the Cartesian sense, but McHugh - in moving from an epistemological given to political nihilism, from undecideability of knowledge to impossibility of change - implies that it is better after all that the Theorist's responsibility is to insist that no action is better than uncertain action.

The reactionary effect of animal studies theorists such as McHugh is dispiriting, disabling, and numbing, Struggling through the opaque theory-babble of Continental animal studies, Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, Julia Kristeva, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, and Giorgio Agamben rumble in one's ears like industrial music, while obscuring the concrete realities of animal suffering, violence and exploitation, social domination and economic crisis, and accelerating ecological meltdown. In the hands of the academic - be it the self-described "radical" or apolitical apologist - history, research, philosophizing, and theory are just more diversions, distractions, and tools of pacification employed by the "society of the spectacle" (Guy Debord) to relegate potentially active and critical citizens to the barren deserts of isolation, self-absorption, domesticity, privatization, and marginalization. Little different from TV, movies, video games, gossip shows, or sports bonanzas, theory is another means of escape from disturbing and sobering realities into a hyperreality of texts, blogging, and social media Still brimming with potential for knowledge, enlightenment, autonomy, and provoking radical change, higher education more often promotes ignorance, conformism, egoism, and apathy.

The Crisis in Crisis Consciousness

“[T]he conditions of modern capitalist society have turned the practice of academic freedom into academic repression and used the ideal to cover its tracks.” (Bertell Ollman)

It is crucial to interject a radical perspective and to help ensure the political relevance and potential of animal studies and ethics before freeze into a homogenous outlook and dominant ideology, and become easily co-opted and contained by academia and its inherent bias toward abstraction, jargon, and value-neutrality or pseudo-radical politics. But arguably, it is already too late for this intervention (see the Epilogue below). This evisceration has happened with other "studies" programs. Barbara Epstein, for example, attributes the defeat of the "vital mass women's movement" in important part to its "institutionalization and marginalization" in academic Women's Studies programs, [11] and Russell Jacoby exposes how academics cloistered in Cultural Studies programs "merely end up celebrating the status quo" and brandish an arcane postmodern discourse accessible only to elite, seminar-trained cognoscenti. [12] Following a similar trajectory of co-optation and studied irrelevance, animal studies is becoming tamed, leashed, muzzled, canonized, commodified, reified, and rendered safe for academic production, consumption, and distribution.

Thus, it is vital that CAS advance a radical critique of and alternative to academic institutions and to MAS itself, as well as to capitalism and all other oppressive ideologies and institutions. But one must be clear about the dynamics of opportunism and co-optation that neutralize everything of political consequence, subversive import, or profit potential. Thus, a day may soon come when enough reformists and opportunists in the professorial class corrupt and dilute the radical ethical and political `substance of CAS to the extent that it will become no more than a variation on MAS. The crucial problem with MAS is not just the separation of theory from practice, but also the decontextualization of scholarship from the rapidly worsening crisis of species extinction, climate change, and the plague of suffering, disease, famine, extinction, violence, chaos, and warfare it will bring. The missing referent in animal studies is nothing less than the catastrophe staring us right in the face and nothing short of biological meltdown and ecological collapse. We are not living in any ordinary period of history, but rather the most remarkable, important, decisive, and challenging era of all time. Moreover, let us not forget, the enormity of animal suffering continues to build to the most severe and dire levels, especially with the globalization of agribusiness and meat/dairy/egg consumption, as every year seven billion people consume over 60 billion land animals and tens of billions more sea creatures..

As academics pour through volumes in cavernous libraries or stare bleary-eyed into their computer screens and iPads; and as they read their tedious papers and chat in swank hotel bars, something is happening outside the temperature-controlled glass and steel

boxes enclosures, as human, biodiversity, and ecological crises mount and millions; the diversity and stability of ecological systems that allowed humans to rise and flourish are coming undone at the seams, a staggering fact, turbulent process and rapidly changing conditions irrevocably altering life as we have know it on this planet and which the majority of academics (like the public in general) chose to ignore to focus instead on the poverty of their everyday life. In the most egregious possible case of *bad faith*, the professoriate conducts their arcane research as the earth initiates a massive adjustment that will render the existence of *Homo sapiens* difficult, dangerous, deadly for billions, and perhaps impossible for the entire primate community to which we belong. While academics play their theoretical fiddles, social and ecological systems are rapidly collapsing under the impact of neoliberalism, US imperialism, population pressures, climate change, and sharpening scarcity wars. While scholars perpetually live in past, it is the troubled present and imperilled future that demands our urgent attention and the most militant implacable, and radical action possible. We live in this incredible, singular, unprecedented, do-or-die era that places the most extreme obligations and demands on us that we cannot ignore. As we confront the decisive historical crossroads before which we now stand, what we do, or fail to do, will determine the fate of biodiversity, the health of ecosystems, and the world we hand down to future generations, a world which most likely will be not only challenging and oppressive, but utterly nightmarish, dystopian, and a grim embodiment of Hobbes' war-of-all-against-all.

Thus, the question inexorably surges forth: do we have the luxury to be "merely" theorists or academics when our responsibilities and political demands are so great? Of course theories are crucial for understanding the world, and a politics without reflexivity, study, history, philosophy, social theory, and vigorous debate is no politics I would embrace. At the same time one cannot discount the important role of spontaneity in revolt and revolution. And it is not as if we need to work out a detailed social ontology before we can proceed to act. Although we live in a complex post-industrial global capitalist society, one without centers of power, it is nevertheless apparent what the main dynamics, forces, and corporate-organizational forces of domination and destruction are, and in the collective political wisdom there are potent suggestions and ideas about how to begin resisting anthropocentrism, speciesism, global capitalism, and hierarchical systems in all forms, and how to move from negative resistance to positive transformation of decadent systems toward vibrant new societies. And knowledge will deepen in practice, only in and through political struggle and social movements, and cannot mature only in libraries and seminar rooms.

One may argue we are not obliged to give up theory, research, and writing in order to spend all of our time in political meetings, demonstrations, actions, and litigations. But can scholars continue to be as isolated from politics and advocacy as they typically are? Can

they persist in their cold complacency about social and ecological realities as they rapidly deteriorate before our eyes? Can they continue to watch or read reports of Arctic ice shelves crashing into the sea, rainforests burning, and perpetual bloodbaths and return to their Aristotle or Derrida manuscripts as if all they witnessed was another heartburn or scalp itch commercial?

Theodor Adorno quipped that "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." Could we not pass the same judgment about academic immersion in animal studies or any other topic not directly related, in clear practical and political ways, to transcending this grim time of planetary entropy, biological meltdown, corporate-military domination, fascist power systems, capitalist nihilism, and pathological omnicide?

Rewilding Animal Studies?

"The end of all education should surely be service to others. We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about the progress and prosperity of our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others for their sake and for our own." (Cesar Chavez)

MAS has already solidified into a tame and domesticated commodity assimilated into academia, funded by speciesist organizations, and exploited by the publishing industry. The conditions that brought about its success as an innovative research topic are the very factors that ensured its demise as a critical theory of any consequence. This is a tragedy as animal studies could potentially be shaped into a subversive, political, and radical perspective that can illuminate core structures of hierarchical domination and key dynamics of human alienation, violence, and all facets of destruction and domination.

But MAS has squandered and forfeited its subversive potential to become another form of abstract, specialized, insular, and elite knowledge; it emerged and evolved as yet another institutionalized "studies" paradigm that exists in peaceful harmony with, rather than fierce opposition to, the prevailing systems of power in academia and society overall. This state of affairs must be resisted. Animal studies, animal ethics, and the animal standpoint must not become a safe and sanitized discourse that co-exists with and legitimates a pivotal ideological state apparatus and institution that grows ever more insidious as it morphs into a capitalist industry and merges with Big Pharma and the military. It must use its unique perspective to advance a radical, critical, and oppositional discourse that engages the many profound theoretical, environmental, and political issues embedded in the human exploitation of other animals. It is thus crucial that a radical animal studies emerge in opposition to MAS, the academic-industrial complex, and society as a whole, in order to

realize the critical potential of the animal standpoint in as concrete and subversive form as possible, able to deconstruct the agricultural-humanist-capitalist order and contribute significantly to the reconstruction of our lifeways, mindsets, and relations to one another, other animals, and the natural world.

My critique of MAS is inseparable from a critique of academia, a capitalist and conformist institution (which is nevertheless still a contested space partially open to critical interventions), a microcosm of a market-dominated society. No matter what discipline, department, or research area, the tacit taboo hardly wavers. “True,” “serious,” and “professional” scholarship eschews commitment, involvement, advocacy, and activism it involves, rather, purity of reason, specialization, reified discourse, scholastic dullness, bifurcation of theory from practice, and robotic detachment from a world reeling in pain and crisis. While the subject, research method, and content may differ – be it physics or philosophy, anthropology or animal studies - the same oppressive, one-dimensional, and fetishized definition of “scholarship”; the same disciplinary measures and systems of rewards and punishment; and the same dualistic divisions exist, all of which encapsulate the hyperreal, pretentious, delusional, fallacious, hierarchical, repressive, and fear-laden system of “higher education” in the US, Europe, and beyond. [13]

Clearly, the goal of CAS is to do more than merely criticize the dominant paradigm in animal studies; it is to advance a positive and radically different vision of what animal studies could and should be, in addition to sharply different normative conceptions of education and society as a whole. The alternative model of CAS emerges from a broad political context that shatters the insularity of academia, and underscores the urgency of the current era defined by mass slaughter, species extinction, and deepening and irreversible social and ecological crisis. To merit its name and demonstrate its worth, CAS, must be rooted in a deep and explicit commitment to animal liberation, and more generally promote a diverse range of tactics and politics directed to overturning capitalism and hierarchical oppression in all forms.

CAS and the Frankfurt School

“Thinking is not the intellectual reproduction of what already exists anyway. As long as it doesn’t break off, thinking has a secure hold on possibility. Its insatiable aspect, its aversion to being quickly and easily satisfied, refuses the foolish wisdom of resignation. The utopian moment in thinking is stronger the less it...objectifies itself into a utopia and hence sabotages its realization. Open thinking points beyond itself.” (Theodor W. Adorno)

In fact, there are interesting historical and theoretical parallels between the emergence of the Frankfurt School and their "critical theory" approach against positivist academia and conformist cultures in Europe and the US, and the CAS polemic directed against MAS and the positivism and apolitical culture that continues to dominate academia in the present day.

Beginning in 1923, theorists including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal and Erich Fromm formed the "Institute for Social Research" in Frankfurt, Germany. The Frankfurt School abandoned the ahistorical, abstract, positivist, and pseudo-objective research and methods prevalent in philosophy and the social sciences in favor of a historical, critical, and interdisciplinary approach that analyzed the interrelationships among culture, technology, and the capitalist economy. Frankfurt School theorists synthesized political economy, sociology, history, and philosophy, and pioneered a "cultural studies" approach that analyzed the social and ideological effects of mass culture communications. Against the staid and allegedly apolitical and "neutral" forms of "traditional theory," the Frankfurt School developed a "critical theory" distinguished from "traditional theory" by its explicit normative and political commitments, namely, to emancipate human beings from conditions of suffering and domination. Recognizing the limitations of "orthodox" or "classical" Marxism, Frankfurt theorists developed a "neo-Marxist" orientation that retained valid theoretical and political premises, but updated Marxism in light of twentieth century realities and supplemented the economic interpretation of history and the critique of capitalism with new perspectives such as psychoanalysis and existentialism.

CAS surfaced in academic settings still dominated by positivism, scholasticism, abstraction, the illusion that "rigorous" research was "objective" not "partisan" or "committed," and the disparagement of attempts to politicize research to engage conditions of oppression, inequality, and injustice. In sharp contrast to the positivism, theoretical fetishism, and bourgeois values hegemonic in academia, CAS rejected pseudo-objectivity and the bifurcation between theory and practice in order to explicitly support and help advance liberation struggles. Just as in the 1930s and beyond Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Fromm, and others confronted a situation of growing totalitarianism, the domination of nature, the defeat of revolutionary movements, consumerism and conformism, the co-optation of dissent and opposition, and the occlusion of emancipatory alternatives and possibilities, CAS confronts the same conditions today, but only in more menacing and destructive forms given the advance of global capitalism and deepening of social and ecological crisis and breakdown. Like the Frankfurt School, CAS seeks a multidisciplinary theory. MAS is also interdisciplinary, but it typically leaves out political economy, whereas CAS incorporates it as central to its outlook. Like the Frankfurt School, but unlike MAS, CAS synthesizes social theory, politics, *and* the critique of capitalist

domination in a revolutionary project to transform society and psychology alike. CAS shares with MAS an interdisciplinary approach and engages human-nonhuman animal relationships. But CAS differs from MAS in its explicit normative and political focus, as well as its critique of academia, capitalism, imperialism, and hierarchical oppression in all forms. Whereas MAS remains entombed in the catacombs of abstraction and morgues of academia, CAS seeks to breakdown and mediate oppositions between theory and practice, college and community, and scholarship and citizenship, in order to make philosophy and critical social theory again a force of change and to repatriate intellectuals to the public realm and organic involvement in social movements. Against MAS, CAS seeks to illuminate problems and pose solutions through vivid, concrete, and accessible language. It openly avows its explicit ethical and practical commitment to (total) liberation politics. It thereby supports protests, demonstrations, occupations, disruption, civil disobedience, direct action, liberation, sabotage, and social revolution. And it promotes bridge-building and alliance politics as the only viable means to create diverse, inclusive, and systematic transformation of dominator cultures. CAS is not meant to be mainstream, popular, embraced, respected, or rewarded for its ruthless criticism of everything existing. Rather, as a non-compromising revolutionary praxis, it must stay relentlessly negative and implacable in its critique of speciesism, academia, the state, corporate globalization, and all facets of oppression, as it exploits any and all possibilities of resistance and transformation. The ultimate purpose of CAS is not to uncover hidden histories, to touch hearts with moving stories, to deconstruct oppositions and contradictions, or expose the indeterminacy of meaning, and so on, but rather to advance the animal standpoint, animal liberation, and veganism as essential to total liberation, psychological health, moral evolution, harmonization, democratization, a universal ethics of respect and equality, the deepest and most inclusive concept of community, and a sustainable and ecological society.

At its best, the Frankfurt School applied critical theory and interdisciplinary research to engage the crucial problems of the day in language that while sometimes technical or difficult was not intentionally obscure. Many of their virtues unfortunately have been lost in recent decades in the elitist pomposity of cultural studies, postmodernism, and animal studies, with the dominant approach being inscrutable discourse, aloofness from world-historical crises and catastrophes, isolation from social movements, and inability to edify and inspire the public. One hardly imagines a consummate obscurantist like Donna Haraway as a compelling public intellectual, embodying Gramsci's "organic intellectual" or Freire's critical pedagogy whose involvement with oppressed communities facilitated critical analysis and political action.

Through the institutional biases of universities, institutions which are but microcosms of societies dominated by bureaucratic domination, administrative rationality, capitalist

imperatives, and bourgeois hostility to political action and informed citizenry, academics have become increasingly technical, specialized, professionalized, conformist, and apolitical functionaries of system dominated by rightwing, military, technical, and corporate interests they fear taking controversial positions, they blanch from public involvement, and they severed ties with the tradition of public intellectual. Consequently, they reinforce stereotypes of intellectuals as effete, sterile, pompous, and ethereal; as solipsistic narcissists preoccupied with quantification algorithms but not the quality of life; as obsessed with metaphysics but indifferent to pressing problems in the social and natural worlds all around them. Hardly displaying the vigor, *joie de vivre*, and practical applications of a thinking, learned, and philosophical life, they actually exacerbate the anti-intellectualism prevalent in cultures like the US and perpetuate the fallacy of the uselessness of history, theory, research, and philosophy for action and social change. But of course theory - clear, concrete, and engaged - is indispensable to practice, just as practice is vital to theory, such that, to paraphrase Kant, one must say that theory without practice is empty, as practice without theory is "blind." Instead of using critical thinking as a weapon that targets oppression and injustice, the arid languages of the intelligentsia function as a wall that isolates specialists from laypeople and separates universities from communities. [14]

The End of a Geologic Era

“Starting from the very reasonable, but unfortunately revolutionary concept that social practices which threaten the continuation of life on Earth must be changed, we need a theory of revolutionary ecology that will encompass social and biological issues, class struggle, and a recognition of the role of global corporate capitalism in the oppression of peoples, [animals], and the destruction of nature.” (Judi Bari)

As global temperatures climb each year, as icecaps and glaciers melt and erode into rock, as sea-levels rise and forests fall, the short-lived global human empire has begun to implode, devour itself, and destroy everything in the process of massive collapse. The earth itself – the bulk of which has been domesticated, colonized, commodified, bred and cross-bred, genetically engineered, cloned, and transformed into forces of mass destruction – is refuting the myths and fallacies of Progress, Development, Science, Technology, the Free Market, and Neoliberalism.

At this late point in history, it is time to abandon false hope and facile optimism, in order to confront the harsh realities of the 21st century and the severity of the social and ecological crises brought on principally by a moribund industrial capitalist order unravelling at the seams. We need completely new paradigms that shatter the basic ideologies,

assumptions, values, identities, and fallacies which have informed “civilization” for over ten thousand years. Reform is not an option; we must revolutionize moral systems, psychological identities, and all institutional structures.

Despite four decades of animal advocacy and environmental movements (each of which emerged in organized form almost two centuries ago), we are nevertheless *losing ground* in the battle to preserve species, protect wilderness, and save ecosystems. Increasingly, calls for moderation, compromise, and the slow march through the institutions – the political and legal bureaucracies bankrolled by capitalism and dominated by elite agenda -- can be seen as treacherously naive and grotesquely inadequate. In the midst of a metastasizing planetary crisis, “reasonableness” and “moderation” seem entirely unreasonable and immoderate, while conversely “extreme” and “radical” actions appear simply as necessary and appropriate.

Politics as usual won't cut it anymore. We will always lose if we play by their rules rather than invent new forms of struggle. We are in a massive and bloody war. The manifold resistance we need to mount requires decisive direct action: logging roads need to be blocked, driftnets need to be cut, and cages need to be emptied. But these are defensive, rear-guard, ad hoc, and piecemeal measures, hardly capable of stopping the machines of destruction. And so we must build revolutionary movements capable of systematic transformation of the culture of death otherwise known as “civilization.” The revolution that this planet so desperately needs after ten thousand years of agricultural society must involve, among other things, a transcendence of anthropocentrism, speciesism, patriarchy, racism, classism, homophobia, ablism, prejudices and hierarchies of all kinds, and institutions rooted in markets, private property, and growth imperatives. We must revolutionize both our *psychologies* (in post-anthropocentric, post-speciesist, and post-discriminatory form) and our institutions (in post-capitalist form that promotes autonomy, self-determination, decentralization, and radical direct democracy).

But for dramatic transformation to be possible, we must build radical social movements that are diverse and multidimensional and yet unified and cooperative. For global revolutionary struggles to emerge with a power appropriate to their task, it cannot be emphasized enough that these movements must dialogue, educate one another, understand commonalities of oppression and shared enemies, and on this basis forge alliances – *such as have never existed before but must now come into being* -- among human, animal, and earth liberation movements. Approaches involving pluralism, multiperspectival understandings of domination, and alliance politics have been taken in some form or another by, for instance, Judi Bari and Earth First!, the US environmental justice movement, the international Green movement, the Zapatistas, alter-globalization struggles, the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front, and, more recently, in

many cases, the 2011 resistance and occupation movements sweeping across Europe, the US, and elsewhere. [15]

Narrow windows of opportunity are rapidly closing. The actions that human beings now collectively take or fail to take will determine whether the future is hopeful or bleak, whether, in David Korten's phrasing, we have Empire or Earth community, a Great Unravelling or a Great Turning. [16] While the result is difficult to contemplate, our species may not meet this challenge and could instead drive itself into the same oblivion as it pushed countless other species. But if we cannot learn how to live on this planet, then we deserve to die, and the sooner the better for the regeneration of biodiversity and revivification of the earth. There is no economic or technological fix for the crises we confront, the only solution lies in radical conceptual and institutional change at all levels through global revolutionary movements working in alliance, solidarity, and common purpose. This is clearly no easy task, and there is no guarantee that we will win, rather than lose; live, rather than die.

We need the boldest and most systemic, holistic, and inclusive vision possible, one that transcends the destructive alienation, dualism, power pathology, and hubris of humanism itself. We need the most uncompromising and radical form of politics we can muster, such that we can revolutionize what cannot be reformed, or, we shall all just be washed away by rising tides or buried by the chaos and violence of a dying world. The task of CAS, as I see it, is to confront escalating social and ecological crises unflinchingly and head-on, and contribute decisively to providing the context and catalyst for a multiperspectival critique of hierarchy (including the powerful insights attained through the animal standpoint) and a radical alliance politics that transcends the pathetic limitations of the "human community" to include the sentient community of millions of other animal species, and indeed the biocommunity – or Gaia – that encompasses our entire planet.

Epilogue: Eulogy for Critical Animal Studies

"The capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination is an integral part of the given society." (Herbert Marcuse)

I formulated CAS as a distinct perspective that diverges from speciesism as well as its academic critique and the field of MAS. CAS, as I envisioned it, unites theory and practice; analyzes a complex constellation of issues in a historical, social, political, and economic context; and situates animal liberation within the broader framework of total liberation and social revolution, while emphasizing the critical importance of anti-speciesism and veganism to forging a sane, sustainable, and viable future society.

Without pretense of legislating essentialist definitions or dogmatically imposing necessary and sufficient conditions of CAS, I nevertheless attempted to characterize the key values, goals, and methods of a new critical praxis. While of course any can disagree with the specifics of my definition, method, tactics, and politics, I believe there are nevertheless core principles, characteristics, and approaches integral to the CAS paradigm that cannot be cherry-picked, altered, or discarded as one pleases without effacing its unique orientation, especially if one insists – as do so many fashionistas today – on calling oneself a “critical animal studies” theorist!

Yet, to my dismay, precisely the opposite approach took hold, as academics appropriated CAS it as a signifier without substance, a concept without context. From a vilified, marginal, and radical discourse CAS metamorphosed into a trendy, safe, and respectable discourse. CAS degenerated from a principled and coherent position into something so loose, vague, amorphous, subjective, and arbitrary in definition, it was emptied of meaning and specificity, able to be anything for anyone.

Fully aware of the corporate, conservative, and closed universe of the academy; of the anxieties and narcissism of academics who must publish or perish; and of how universities, like capitalism generally co-opt, canonize, and commodify critical discourses they cannot outright repress, I anticipated that CAS could be corrupted, perverted, domesticated, and colonized by university bureaucrats, by opportunists eager to exploit novel discourses to survive in a cutthroat environment, and by a moribund publishing industry dependent on an endless succession of transitory celebrities and ephemeral fads.

But never in my worst nightmares did I anticipate how quickly CAS would be domesticated and absorbed into personal agendas and conservative paradigms and programs. The goal to promote a new critical theory, animal liberation, a structural critique of academia, and revolutionary politics degenerated into a deplorable drive to mainstream ICAS and expand the empire of CAS. Willing to bear the heavy costs of betrayal, selling-out, betraying animals and militant activists, and irreparable loss of integrity and credibility, ICAS was reformed as a safe, marketable, official non-profit organization ready to receive donations and funding. Most importantly, ICAS offered rich opportunities for academics struggling amidst scarcity of opportunities, boasting a journal, annual conferences (including in Europe), a book series, and bestower of funds and awards.[17]

Yet alliances were made for short-term gain, then dissolved for new constellations of people, as the revolving door of personnel and constant policy shifts spun round and round in a tempest of incoherence. But, predictably, the cynical opportunism and exploitation ran

both ways, for the ambitious academics that were recruited for such purposes in turn exploited ICAS for the new affiliations, positions, and publishing opportunities afforded by the project.

By 2010, ICAS generated new journal issues, held conferences in various European countries, and acquired a book series, but the expanded output and range of influence yielded an incoherent, reformist, abstract, jargon-laden, and depoliticized assemblage of texts indistinguishable from MAS except for an occasional forays into topics such as race and speciesism. In many if not most cases, the new generation of parasites either abandoned a structural critique of capitalism or obfuscated its barbaric and all-too concrete realities in trendy Continental theory-babble, and certainly research on and support for the ALF or ELF vanished from the journal pages. Indeed, participant at ICAS conferences not only failed to support militant direct action but frequently condemned it.

As CAS became the hot new trend among the professoriate class, an inbred, mutually promoting network of bloggers (all young ambitious graduate students anxious about job and career prospects) began to colonize “CAS” rhetoric for their own purposes, publishing their masturbatory musings under blog titles such as “Critical Animal.” They glibly exploited CAS discourse, but (1) never defined the “critical” approach to animal studies which was directed against the abstract discourse and complacent academic positions they held or aspired to; or (2) defined it in arbitrary, incoherent, and amorphous terms (such that the pantheon of CAS included only their favored bourgeois theorists) that erased the history, originators, and political intent of CAS; or (3) formulated tendentious and straw man critiques of my essay (above). None of these opportunistic parasites acknowledged the importance of a radical intervention in the academic-industrial complex; none grasped the fundmental point that “critical” animal studies was directed against the academic institutions and discourse they coveted; and none had a problem dismissing my work and essay while appropriating my discourse for their own agendas.

Thus, with shock, horror, and nausea, I witnessed ICAS morph into exactly what we set out to criticize, becoming little but a superfluous variant of MAS that sometimes simulated political discourse, but never put it into practice and remained firmly wedded to an esoteric, jargon-laden, abstract discourse that satisfies academic performance principles but is meaningless to political communities and the public and powerless to effect change. Like every other bland academic approach to “human-animal relations,” the CAS model fetishized abstract theory, occluded politics, jettisoned commitments, and distanced itself from animal liberation and social revolution.

True to the insights of Marcuse’s still-timely book, *One Dimensional Man* (1964), CAS was stripped of its subversive character, denuded of its oppositional qualities, and

transmogrified into a pseudo-negativity that legitimates the status quo and assumes its place in the “marketplace of ideas.” In this eviscerated and domesticated form, CAS degenerated into self-parody, becoming something no longer threatening, subversive, and alienating, a “new” paradigm that could be safely embraced by the bourgeois professoriate, exploited by publishers, and mass-marketed for academic and financial capital alike.

Modestly modeled on the genesis and nature of the Frankfurt School, our original goal was to rattle academic cages, not to gain respect and influence in university country clubs; to thrive on the margins, not to luxuriate in the center; to assemble a small group of like-minded revolutionaries, not to pander to everyone and everything; to focus on the animal holocaust, ecological catastrophe, and capitalist crisis, not to advance personal ambition and build careers. Formulated as a dialectical negation of MAS, CAS was nevertheless absorbed into regnant academic paradigms and degenerated into a mainstream morass, becoming a distinction without a difference. ICAS members and supporters joined the ranks of opportunists who exploit the Animal Holocaust Industry for their own gain and build a career on the backs of animals. [18]

In disgust, I left ICAS to work independently on the politics of total liberation, apart from any group or institution, and I no longer identify my work as part of “critical animal studies.” More to the point, I repudiate ICAS, its journal and conference structures, and its entire editorial board as this institution and discourse quickly became irredeemably corrupt and meaningless. I believe that any radical project or institute is doomed to die in the repressive, conformist, career-driven, one-dimensional capitalist world of academia, especially in the post-9/11 era marked by intense repression of free speech and the consequent fear of controversial work and political activism.

Indeed, I have grown skeptical of the possibility of developing any genuinely “critical studies” approach in academia, as invariably it privileges theory over politics and entombs radical critique within the crypts of academia. Should a truly radical institute emerge today, it would perhaps have to emulate the efforts of Felix Weil and others who acquired the funds to build the Institute for Social Research as an autonomous research center, independent of the conservative economic and political constraints of the university system.

Endnotes

1. This essay was originally published as “The Rise of Critical Animal Studies: Putting Theory into Action and Animal Liberation into Higher Education,” in the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, Volume VII, Issue 1, 2009. It was published very near the end of my ten year involvement -- as co-founder, President, and Chief Journal Editor -- with the Institute for Critical Animal Studies [ICAS] (originally called the Center on Animal Liberation Affairs [CALA], which Nocella, Richard Kahn, and I began in 2001 and renamed ICAS in 2007. Also in 2007, I began to use and define the term “critical animal studies” in various publications, leading to this somewhat lengthy manifesto. To my knowledge, this essay was the first left political critique of mainstream animal studies (and its dry empiricist, wooden analytic, and abstruse Continental-postmodern variants), attempting not only to lay bare the problems inherent in this framework, but also to sketch a radical alternative in the form of “critical animal studies.” For this issue of *Liberazione*, I extensively revised the essay and included a new epilogue that describes why I left ICAS and renounced both the organization and critical animal studies theory I did much to pioneer.

2. For clear examples of CAS, see my essays: 'Rethinking Revolution: Animal Liberation, Human Liberation, and the Future of the Left', *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol.2, No.3, June 2006

http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol2/vol2_no3_Best_rethinking_revolution.htm)'

The Killing Fields of South Africa: Eco Wars, Species Apartheid, and Total Liberation', *Fast Capitalism*, Issue 2, Volume 2, 2007

(http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/2_2-/home.html); and 'Minding the Animals:

Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism', *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Volume 5, Number 2, Spring 2009

(http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol5/vol5_no2_best_minding_animals.htm).

3. See Best, 'Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism.'

4. Matthew Calarco, 'Animals in Continental Philosophy'

(http://www.hnet.org/~animal/ruminations_calarco.html).

5. See Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981); Jim Mason, *An Unnatural Order: Uncovering the Roots of Our Domination of Nature and Each Other* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); and Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002). All three books develop penetrating critiques

of dualism and speciesism, and grasp commonalities of oppression, but they also lack a political viewpoint and response to the immense problems they raise, and disappointingly collapse into idealist, individualist, moralistic, spiritualist pseudo-solutions, as they ignore the need for systemic institutional change and collective struggle.

6. I develop this concept of the animal standpoint in great detail in my forthcoming book, *Animal Liberation and Moral Progress: The Struggle for Human Evolution* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2012).

7. See Best, 'Rethinking Revolution' and 'The Killing Fields of South Africa.'

8. These and other exchanges are archived at: <http://www.h-net.org/~animal>.

9. There is, unfortunately, a growing trend among "artists" to exploit, genetically modify, or kill animals as a legitimate means to the end of their debased and deplorable "art."

10. McHugh, cited at: http://www.h-net.org/~animal/ruminations_mchugh.html.

11. Barbara Epstein, 'The Decline of the Women's Movement', in Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds., *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (Malden MA and Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 328-334.

12. Russell Jacoby, *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in and Age of Apathy* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

13. See Steven Best, Anthony J. Nocella II, and Peter McLaren, eds., *Academic Repression: Reflections on the Academic-Industrial Complex* (Berkeley, CA: AK Press, 2009).

14. For a powerful critique of the turn toward abstraction in Western intellectual culture, see Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Temple University Press, 1990). Theodor Adorno clearly anticipated this critique in his 1964 work, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1983), which principally attacks the obfuscations of Heideggerian discourse as used in existentialist and phenomenological philosophy. For analysis of the theoretical and political advantages and disadvantages of postmodern theories, see the trilogy of works I have co-authored with Douglas Kellner: *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991); *The Postmodern Turn* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997); and *The Postmodern Adventure: Science and*

Technology Studies at the Third Millennium (New York: Guilford Press, 2001). Russell Jacoby, among others, has chronicled the steady debasement and decline of the "public intellectual" in American culture since Dewey; see, for instance, *The Last Intellectual: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

15. On these new movements and alliances, see my introductory essay to *Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defence of the Earth* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2010).

16. David Korten, *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007).

17. To be fair, the CAS program at Brock University in Canada has retained some political integrity and a total liberation (or "intersectional") focus, but safely ensconced within the realm of theory, conferences, educational events, and an occasional law-abiding demonstration, all of which, of course, are safely ensconced within acceptable social and academic parameters. Similarly, Nocella and ICAS have consistently attempted to organize political campaigns on university campuses and have organized one or two demonstrations a year, but it is pretty tame stuff compared to the original militant praxis envisioned for ICAS. In contrast, for the last ten years, I have travelled throughout the world, speaking in two dozen countries, giving unambiguous support for the ALF, ELF, SHAC, militant actions, and social revolution "by any means necessary." Not surprisingly, I paid a steep cost for my politics, including being banned from the UK for life, harassed to testify before the US Ecoterrorism Hearings (I refused), losing my Department Chair position, denied promotion to full professor, and blacklisted on the US academic job market. I do not regret destroying my academic career, yet, in truth, I do resent the hundreds of fawning students and untenured professors exploiting my work (in its now sanitized and "respectable" form) to *build* their academic careers, for, once again, the original intent of ICAS was to advance a militant critique of academia, speciesism, hierarchical domination, and global capitalism, not to create a launching pad for spineless opportunist to join the very institution we set out to ruthlessly criticize as essential structures of the "ideological state apparatus" (Althusser) and as crucial to the building and functioning of the global killing machines.

18. The phrase "Animal Holocaust Industry" is a deliberate and apt parallel to the (Jewish) "Holocaust Industry" criticized by Norman Finkelstein in his book, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (New York: Verso, 2003). In a bold provocation that cost him his job at De Paul University in Chicago, Finkelstein argued that sundry fraudulent Jewish intellectuals and guardians of historical memory exploited the Nazi Holocaust for their own purposes and career goals. A very similar scandal has been unfolding in academia, and now in CAS as well, in which scholars – whether relatively

apolitical and “neutral” or explicitly “radical” or “liberationist” – are researching and theorizing the world’s oldest and still ongoing Holocaust, not with the aim to change it, but to produce the essays, blogs, books, and conference papers that advance their career in the trendy fields of “human-animal relations” and “animal studies.”