

Academic “Dirty Work”:

Mapping Tainted Scholarly Labour in a Politicised Mixed-Species Field

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Abstract

Human-Animal Studies (HAS) is an innovative field, tarnished by its politicised mixed-species subject matter. This paper considers how animal scholars may also be tainted, for different reasons and to varying degrees, because of the academic “dirty work” they perform within HAS. As the field matures, tensions are emerging amongst this disparate scholarly group. These tensions are associated with the rise of Critical Animal Studies (CAS), the extent to which animal scholars should engage in emancipatory-type scholarship and the appearance of the *animal as such* – *animal as constructed* axis within HAS. This paper draws on these intra-field tensions to form a potential framework that maps scholarly labour within HAS. As scholars begin to debate what counts as “good” and “bad” human-animal scholarship, this may engender the appearance of scholarly-moral havens. These intellectual enclaves may partly mitigate the personal challenges and professional stigma of working in this tarnished academic field.

Keywords

creative marginality; dirty work; intraprofessional status; critical animal studies

Introduction

The interspecies vision of Human Animal Studies (HAS) has hastened the “animal turn” and destabilised the person-centred focus in social science disciplines (Franklin in Armstrong & Simmons, 2007, p.1; Carter & Charles, 2011; Cudworth 2011; Taylor & Signal, 2011).¹

Although this innovative field animalises our understanding of social life, it is “matter out of place” in a largely anthropocentric wing of the academy (Douglas, 1966, p. 35). It is also academically-tainted by its politicised mixed-species subject matter. By implication, those who study interspecies interfaces are engaged in polluted and risky scholarship; albeit for different reasons and to varying degrees. For the purpose of this paper, two types of tainted scholarly labour will be considered; the foundational labour of ethnographic researchers who study “dirty” interspecies work contexts, and the politicised labour of Critical Animal Studies (CAS) scholars who champion engaged theory and activist-orientated scholarship.

As HAS matures, tensions are materialising amongst this disparate scholarly group. These tensions appear to be associated with 1) the extent to which animal scholars should be engaged in emancipatory-type research, and 2) the emergence of the “animal as such – animal as constructed” axis (Shapiro, 2008, p.9). This paper draws on these tensions to create a potential framework that maps different types of scholarship within HAS. Colleagues may use this schema to demarcate “good” and “bad” scholarship; such scholarly-moral enclaves may also mitigate the professional challenges and stigma of working in a tarnished field.

Let’s begin, however, with a model of innovative scholarship, as this will show how scholars from a range of disciplinary backgrounds can provide the creative impetus to build a hybrid field.

“Creative Marginality”: Building a Tainted Hybrid Field

Since animal scholars are affiliated with a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, this “remind[s] us that innovative scholarship often presupposes intellectual cross-fertilization, as advances in one academic speciality area involve borrowing ideas, concepts, findings, and even metaphors from another” (Zerubavel, 1995, p. 1102). Although intellectual developments occur at the heart of a discipline the margins are more optimal sites for innovation. As the periphery is less densely populated, this opens up the creative space to amalgamate material at the junction of two or more fields of study; hence the notion of “creative marginality” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990). Three scholarly types provide the creative labour to build a hybrid field: “the pioneer, the builder, and the hybrid” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990, p. 172).

Pioneer scholars are the “first generation of specialists. They are marginals in the sense that they explore the boundaries of their growing field, claiming new ground in the direction of other fields” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990, p.172). Pioneers thus function within the confines of their discipline but identify gaps in their area. By opening up new lines of enquiry they break new ground for builders to work on. The builders “are important innovators in the maturing discipline. They may discover regularities and causal relations through empirical research, create theories, develop concepts and methods, or establish disciplinary organizations and journals” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990, pp.172-173). Although their contributions may be of interest to scholars located in other fields, the builders continue to work within their own discipline. Over time, as more builders move into this new terrain there comes a point of diminishing return. In other words, “Once masses of scholars enter a field, the major innovations have already been made. This is the ‘paradox of density’” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990,

p.1). This is where the role of hybrid scholars comes to the fore. Unlike their pioneering and building counterparts hybrid scholars traverse disciplinary boundaries to amalgamate knowledge from other fields. “Hybrids are, in a sense, pioneers at the intersection of two [or more] disciplines, and they may give rise to a second generation of builders within the hybrid field” (Dogan & Pahre, 1990, p.173). Such “hybrid specialization” and “hybrid scholars” are thought to lie at the heart of scientific advances (Dogan, 1997, p. 442).

In this case, a generation of animal-orientated scholars have established a pioneering politicised field with an interspecies subject matter (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, p.313); this field-attribute makes HAS an atypical and tarnished area of expertise. In a largely anthropocentric culture, a mixed-species subject matter clearly deviates from the human-centric focus of normative social research; so much so that, HAS has been deemed “of secondary, if not trivial, importance” (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, p. 314).² This is unsurprising, given that different species and categories of nonhuman animals, albeit more or less socially-morally valued, are routinely ranked lower on the “sociozoologic scale” than people (Arluke & Sanders, 1996, pp.167-170). Because HAS attends to the “zoological connection”, i.e. the multifaceted nature of our symbolic and material relations with other animals, the field, and its scholars, are susceptible to a denigrated status within the social sciences (Bryant, 1979). For example, some sociologists have disparaged animal studies by referring to it as “boutique” sociology, whilst others have “experienced responses that range from amusement to derision” when they have informed peers of their research interests (Arluke, 2002, p.370; Kruse, 2002, p. 377). This indicates the double-edged nature of HAS. On the one hand, creative marginality affords its scholars an opportunity to engage in pioneering work; on the other hand, being associated with this politicised mixed-species field can tarnish their professional credibility.

Although lower status occupations such as nursing (Mills & Schejbal, 2007), prison work (Tracy & Scott, 2007) and slaughtering livestock (Thompson, 1983) are obvious types of “dirty work”, i.e. work that is “physically disgusting ... a symbol of degradation, [and/or] something that wounds one’s dignity” (Hughes, 1971, p. 343), Ashforth and Kreiner suggest “taint management ... transcends dirty work occupations, because all occupations ... [including high prestige occupations] face at least occasional threats to their identity-making and identity-sustaining activities” (1999, p.429). This means esteemed professionals such as doctors, vets and lawyers can be tarnished by the type of human/animal patients they treat or legally represent (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Laumann & Heinz, 1977; Hamilton, 2007). The status of colleagues within such occupations is also linked to their degree of “professional purity”. To illustrate, barristers who perform more abstract legal labour have a higher professional status than solicitors who apply the law “to immediate human concerns” (Abbott, 1981, p.824). This example indicates that

Intraprofessional status is in reality a function of professional purity. ... Over time, professional knowledge develops a system of such relative judgements of purity and impurity. ... [T]he accretion of such judgements produces a social structure in which these judgements are loosely associated with positions in a division of labour (in this case, a division of professional labour). The resultant hierarchy is, in fact, the status hierarchy that we observe within the professions (Abbott, 1981, pp. 823-824).

Likewise, the academy has its own scholarly pecking order. For example, the natural sciences have a higher status than the social sciences because they are thought to be more scientific (i.e. academically-pure). Within the social sciences, quantitative researchers who conduct large-scale surveys may have a higher status than qualitative colleagues who conduct small-

scale studies which rely on interactive methods such as unstructured interviews and ethnographic field work (i.e. academically-spoiled). Because qualitative researchers are interested in people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours they usually form first-hand relationships with those who are the focus of their studies. By breaching the norms of impartial scholarship these scholars engage in and produce academically-contaminated research. If "the lowest status professionals are those who deal with problems from which the human complexities are not or cannot be removed" (Abbott, 1981, p. 824), then what status do HAS scholars have given that they address interspecies problems from which the human and human-animal complexities cannot be removed?

HAS is academically-precarious because it is impure social science scholarship: "The impure is that which violates the categories and classifications of a given cultural system. Through amorphousness or ambiguity it brings together things that the cultural system wishes to separate" (Abbott, 1981, p.824). Given this, scholars who study interspecies interfaces are academically-polluted and engaged in risky scholarship, albeit for different reasons and to varying degrees, depending on the type of academic work they perform within the field. Two types of tainted scholarly labour will be considered here; the reconnaissance labour of ethnographic researchers who study "dirty" interspecies work contexts, and the politicised labour of Critical Animal Studies scholars who advocate activist-orientated scholarship.

Grounded Academic "Dirty Work": Surveying Sullied Human-Animal Borderlands

Just as building work requires labourers to carry out messy jobs, field-building in the academy is no different; it requires scholars to do dirty foundational labour too. In this case, the exploratory labour of qualitative researchers can nuance our understanding of

controversial mixed-species work contexts in contemporary society. Since ethnographers often use participant observation, which “depends on empathy, identification with the subjects of research, and the development of friendship ... [this] tends to nullify the processes of dehumanization ... [and deanimalization which] helps prevent an irreconcilable polarization in the perception of social reality” (Appell, 1980, p. 356). This is an important contribution to HAS scholarship because animal workers often have a “spoiled identity” (Goffman, 1963). For example, in recent years, animal advocacy groups, exposé type journalism and food scares have brought the darker side of producing “food with a face” to the fore (Baker 1993; Rollin, 1995; Franklin, 1999; Fraser 2001; Williams 2004, p.46). As work contexts and related-practices have been subjected to increased scrutiny, so have the reputations of animal practitioners: “Lurking behind such moral criticism are often implicit charges that these workers must be unprincipled or shameless to do what they do” (Birke, Arluke, & Michael 2007, p.154). Such assumptions also reinforce and perpetuate taken for granted perceptions that “bad” people do bad jobs or that “stigmatized occupations attract certain kinds of individuals, who because of their psychological or social characteristics contribute to the occupation’s reputation” (Davis, 1984, p.234).

However, delving into the (extra)ordinary experiences and (un)contested practices of animal practitioners has unearthed the multifaceted and paradoxical nature of interspecies relations in practice. For example, people’s working relationships with animals are frequently characterised by varying degrees of ambiguity and ambivalence (Arluke, 1988; Holloway, 2001; Convery, Bailey, Mort & Baxter, 2005; Sanders, 2006). Conflicting beliefs, attitudes and emotions are particularly evident in environments such as kill shelters, veterinary clinics, medical research and livestock farming, where workers have to negotiate the “caring-killing paradox” (Arluke & Sanders, 1996, p.85; Arluke, 1994; Sanders, 1995; Birke, Arluke, &

Michael, 2007; Wilkie, 2010; Morris, 2012). Mixed-species relations in institutional contexts are also typified by the “constant paradox”, i.e. “the definition and treatment of animals as functional objects, on the one hand, and sentient individuals, on the other” (Rowan in Arluke & Sanders, 2009, pp. xviii). This means that a worker, may hold multiple and diametrically opposed views of and feelings towards different species of animals, perhaps even the same animal at various times and in different contexts (Humphrey, 1995). In practice, working relations with different species of animals are epitomised by varying degrees of dominance and affection (Tuan, 1984).

These empirical findings cast doubt on the plausibility and representativeness of commonsense and polemic accounts that make clear-cut statements about, and provide one-dimensional depictions of interspecies work contexts. Ethnographic research can therefore play an enlightening role within the academy and beyond (Gans, 2010). By providing accessible information about the multifaceted nature of people’s tangible relationships with animals, from the perspective(s) of those engaged in such interactions, scholars can shed fresh light on longstanding debates about problematic human-animal borderlands. So long as modern industrialised societies use and abuse animals there is a need for grounded scholarly labour too. In other words, if HAS is to increase our understanding of the darker and dirtier sides of interspecies relations then some academics will have to get their hands dirty.

However, researchers who conduct fieldwork in dirty work contexts can find their personal integrity and professional status become tarnished too. If researchers can be dirty workers-through-association then ethnographic research is a form of academic dirty work (Sanders, 2010a; Drew & Mills 2007), as did the sociologist who was tarred with the same brush as the animal experimenters and care technicians he studied (Arluke, 1991). This makes sense given

that “Dirty work involves contacting ‘polluting’ substances; engaging in unpleasant tasks; and dealing with disvalued people, beings, or other objects” (Sanders, 2010a, p. 105). In this case, stigma-through-association was manifested when members of the audience asked Arluke to stop talking because they found his research “distasteful or offensive”. In light of this experience, Arluke notes, “I felt that my own moral sensibilities were questioned, since I could listen to people talk about their experiments and watch them work” (1991, p. 311; Sanders, 2010a & b). This indicates that dirty workers-through-association can also “personify dirt” and be plagued by implicit or explicit morally-loaded questions that ask “how can you do it?” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, p.417).

Although workers are aware of their stigmatised status they can still feel positive about the dirty work they perform (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, p.416-417). If they belong to tight-knit and supportive work cultures this affords them the symbolic and material resources to sculpt an affirmative identity (Mills, Drew, & Gassaway, 2007, p.5). For example, studies show that slaughtermen and butchers can express pride in their work; by reframing dirtiness, deviant work can be transformed into a “badge of honor” (Ackroyd & Crowdy, 2007; Meara, 1974; Mills, Drew, & Gassaway, 2007, p.5). Tainted workers may also carve out “moral havens” to insulate themselves from more problematic aspects of their work (Birke, Arluke, & Michael, 2007, p.158). For example, because slaughterers are responsible for turning farm animals-into-meat, farmers may distance themselves from the stigma associated with killing animals (Wilkie, 2010). The division of labour within the livestock sector facilitates this process of boundary demarcation. However, farmers are not all the same; they work with different species of animals, in different stages of the production process and adopt different types and scales of productive contexts. These productive differences enable them to associate with or disassociate from what they see as “good” or “bad” practices (Wilkie, 2010; Holloway,

2002). Such differences inform the accounts farmers tell themselves and others to justify the work they do and how they do it (Scott & Lyman, 1968). By engaging in what sociologists call “motive talk” dirty workers can reframe and neutralize their involvement in stigmatised work settings (Mills, 1940; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Such findings may apply to sullied academic workers too. In this case, because HAS is impure scholarship its scholars have a deviant academic status. However, when they interact with like-minded colleagues they can draw on intra-field norms to cultivate an affirmative scholarly identity and turn human-animal scholarship into a badge of academic honour. The diverse nature of the field also means colleagues are engaged in different types of scholarly labour (e.g. grounded, politicised and theoretical), and adhere to varying ideological and moral positions as to the rightness or wrongness of using animals in contemporary society. Just as the division of agricultural labour enabled pre-slaughter workers to carve out moral havens within the livestock sector, the division of academic labour may enable peers to carve out scholarly-moral havens within HAS. Such havens may mitigate the professional stigma associated with impure scholarship and demarcate “good” and “bad” scholarly positions within this field. It is the scholarly-moral tensions within HAS and the rise of Critical Animal Studies that is now considered.

Critical Academic “Dirty Work”: Politicised Labour in a Maturing Interspecies Field

The deluge of “new books, journals, conferences, organizations, college programs, listserves, and courses, both in the United States and throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada” indicates a flourishing and maturing field (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, p. 307). It also means a second generation can perpetuate this eclectic field. Then again, such eclecticism has

contributed to the “Wild West” state of the field where “anything goes”; the flip side of a broad scholarly church is that “*Animals Studies is everything to everyone* – including welfarists, carnivores, speciesists, pro-vivisectionists, and sundry human supremacists and animal exploiters” (Best, 2009, p.13). The common field-building purpose that once enabled this disparate assemblage of scholars to coalesce is splintering. A key fault line is the extent to which scholars should engage in activist-scholarship. The following intra-field distinction highlights this point:

If animal studies can be seen as work that explores representations of animality and related discourses with an emphasis on advocacy for nonhuman animals, animality studies becomes work that emphasises the history of animality in relation to human cultural studies, without an explicit call for nonhuman advocacy (Lundblad, 2009, p. 500).

DeMello notes “while activism to better the lives of nonhuman animals is not a key component of Human-Animal Studies, many HAS scholars are themselves activists” (2010, p. xiv). Although advocacy scholars are likely to champion “ethical veganism and may work with ... civil society groups or individuals who campaign against animal exploitation” (Twine, 2010, p. 8), non-activist scholars may also, albeit to varying degrees, be vegetarian, vegan, involved in policy-orientated and/or politically-engaged scholarship (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, pp. 316-317). Because academics do pro-animal scholarly work this does not mean they necessarily support animal-related politics and activism (Aaltola, 2011). Nonetheless, some colleagues do combine their academic role with activism. This signals a radicalisation and politicisation of scholarly labour within HAS and is associated with the rise of Critical Animal Studies (CAS).

According to the Institute for Critical Animal Studies' (ICAS) website, CAS "is the academic field of study dedicated to the abolition of animal and ecological exploitation, oppression, and domination. CAS is grounded in a broad global emancipatory inclusionary movement for total liberation and freedom" (ICAS, 2012). Founded in 2007, the Institute started out 6 years earlier as the Center for Animal Liberation Affairs (CALA). At that time, activists within the academy linked up with like-minded scholars, and fellow animal activists, to counterbalance disinformation about the Animal Liberation Front (ALF).³ When Anthony Nocella, II, circulated a call for papers about the ALF he met Steve Best (Chair of Philosophy, at the University of Texas). Together, they edited the landmark volume entitled *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals* published in 2004. Since this project indicated sufficient academic interest to have an "open dialogue" about the ALF, this cemented the establishment of CALA: "an academically-orientated animal liberation research and advocacy organization". Although its members were not affiliated to the ALF they "len[t] their skills, support, and institutional positions to discuss the ALF and its profound social and historical significance" (Editorial Board, 2003, p.2).

In 2002, CALA held a conference entitled "One Struggle". This event focused on the shared features of oppression and attracted delegates from a wide range of human and animal rights/liberation groups. By moving beyond the insular vision of single-issue politics the interconnected nature of exploitative systems (e.g. human, animal and environmental) and the need for alliance-type politics came to the fore (Best, 2002/2003; Gaard, 1993). Unlike animal welfare and rights-orientated approaches which "are largely apolitical beyond their own causes", and typically "proceed without a systemic vision and political critique of the society and global system", animal liberationists espouse a more inclusive, systemic and critical approach (Best, 2006, p.12). These political-ideological differences mark a key

watershed within the animal advocacy movement and inform the politicised liberationist agenda of CAS:

its defense of direct action tactics, its willingness to engage and debate controversial issues such as anti-capitalism, academic repression, and the use of sabotage as a resistance tactic; its emphasis on the need for total liberation stressing the commonalities binding various oppressed groups; and the importance of learning from and with activists (Best, 2009, p.13).

Given that activist-scholars are quite candid about their politicised positions they tend to disparage more orthodox and reform-orientated scholarship. Since “scholarly curiosity” has directed much of the research in the field (Arluke, 2002; Best, 2009, p.22), many interspecies studies in sociology has been described as “nonemancipatory”, i.e. not informed by or designed to address the concerns of animal activists, animal practitioners or the needs of nonhuman animals (Peggs, 2012, p. 149). Although nonemancipatory research enhances our understanding of interspecies contexts it does not tackle the oppression of animals, and is likely to draw on “disinterested knowledge” which has been dryly described as “innocent knowledge, untainted by political agenda” (Humphries, 1997, p.2).

In contrast, CAS’s activist roots means that it prioritises “emancipatory” research and “engaged theory” (Humphries, 1997; Best, 2009). As its scholars draw on the critical theoretical tradition of the Frankfurt School, which was founded in 1923 by Felix Weil, who interestingly was the son of a businessman who gained his wealth in the meat trade, they reject the distinction between facts and values made by more positivist-leaning social scientists: “Rather than feign a neutral or disinterested stance toward the world ... the *critical*

theorist sets out instead from a prior standpoint of normative sociological critique” (Sanbonmatsu, 2011, p.5). Thus, unlike nonemancipatory scholarship, which perpetuates the status quo, CAS is critical of existing social arrangements and institutions because it perceives them to be fundamentally corrupt and unjust. This partly explains the urgency to repoliticise or “rewild” HAS because “mainstream animal studies” (MAS) is perceived to be “solidify[ing] into something tame and domesticated by academia” (Best, 2009, p.36; ICAS, 2009).

CAS’s confrontational stance and transformative agenda places much more emphasis on “generat[ing] forms of knowledge and practice that are themselves “real” – which is to say, adequate to the task of comprehending, and changing, the totality of existing social fact” (Sanbonmatsu, 2011, p.5). Given this standpoint, it is unacceptable for animal scholars to just describe or explain animal exploitation; they need to do something about it; CAS is interspecies studies-in-action. Inspired by Marx’s notion of praxis, CAS scholars typically combine theory with action (Turner, 1991, p. 255). While some in HAS may see “engaged theory” as “amateurish in comparison to the ‘rigor’ of detached and ‘disinterested’ theory”, within CAS its deviant status is converted into a badge of academic honour (Best, 2009, p. 30).

Even so, critical labour is another form of academic “dirty work”. Just as ethnographers are tainted by associating with frontline animal workers, CAS scholars have been stigmatised for writing about the “motivations, philosophies, and tactics” of radical ecopolitical activists such as the ALF (Kahn, 2010, p 206). For example, Steve Best, a high profile scholar-activist who co-founded ICAS, was labelled a “domestic terrorist” by the US government and as an “international terrorist” by the British government and lost his Chair of the Philosophy

Department at the University of Texas (Kahn, 2010, p.208). Kahn suggests, “One can hardly blame Best’s suspicion that the loss of his position was more likely a by-product of the Green Scare and linked to the political nature of his research and activism” (2010, p.208). Although the “Green Scare” usually refers to the political repression of ecopolitical activists perhaps a parallel notion of Academe Scare could be coined to denote the academic repression of “engaged scholar”-activists within the academy (Nocella, 2012, p 147; Kahn, 2010, p. 209). Clearly, questioning the status quo and being involved “in the practical affairs of politics and activism” not only soils the hands of scholar-activists it can seriously discredit their personal and professional reputations too (Best, 2009, p.30).

CAS scholars appear to have, and may even cultivate, a more precarious and tainted academic status than MAS scholars. This makes sense, given that MAS typically works within the existing system; hence its reform-orientated approach, its single-issue focus and nonemancipatory-type scholarship. In contrast, CAS’s more revolutionary approach, “multiperspectival” focus and emancipatory-type scholarship seeks to challenge and dismantle the existing social order (Best, 2002/2003, p.3). These divergent visions about the focus, nature and purpose of human-animal scholarship are creating tensions within HAS.

Scholarly-Moral Havens: Academic Tensions in a Maturing Tainted Field

The appearance of intra-field tensions and factionalism may be an inevitable part of field formation, maturation and differentiation. One way of understanding these tensions is to draw on analogous findings from the social movement literature. According to Haines, “nearly all social movements divide into ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ factions at some point in their development” (1984, p.31). This field-tension may generate two main effects in terms of how

HAS is viewed. If CAS engenders a “positive radical flank effect” MAS scholarship may appear more reasonable and credible. Alternatively, if CAS triggers a “negative radical flank effect” this may tarnish all HAS scholarship because it becomes synonymous with animal rights and liberationist agendas (Haines, 1984, p.32; Shapiro & DeMello, 2010). However, because CAS has links with grass roots activists this also ensures HAS remains germane to “those who work to lessen the suffering and exploitation of animals” (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, p.311).

Such an analysis is useful but is based on a static understanding of the field. In practice, HAS scholars are not affiliated to mutually exclusive or homogenous positions. A more dynamic view would recognise that colleagues may be located at different points along a MAS-CAS continuum at different times depending on what disciplinary resources, theoretical perspectives and activist positions they draw upon to frame and inform their work. Having said this, Best suggests MAS should be “superseded” by CAS because it

Lack[s] a coherent moral context, and [is] 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 contexts or consequences (Best, 2009, pp. 22).

He also suggests if CAS loses its radical edge it should be renamed “‘radical animal studies’ to thwart dilettantes in search of something trendy and safe” (Best, 2009, p.28). A more nuanced appraisal of the strained relationship between CAS and MAS suggests,

In practice there is not a strict boundary between animal studies and CAS, but the latter wishes to distance itself from what is probably a minority of animal studies scholars whose work is detached from any appreciation of the material experiences of nonhuman animals for which humans are significantly responsible (Twine, 2010, p. 8).

It is suggested that the complexity of human-animal issues demands a wide range of intellectual, disciplinary and political positions. Given this, it is unrealistic for any faction in this maturing field, be it more moderate or critical, to insinuate it can single-handedly address all dimensions of this challenging area. There may even be times when it is beneficial for “The head of animal studies ... to be united with the heart of animal advocacy” (Stallwood, 2010, p. 2). Although the demarcation between CAS and MAS is imprecise and open to dispute, Best and Twine are pointing to another thorny issue within HAS, the role of theoretical scholarly labour and whether human-animal relations should be studied as an “intellectual exercise” (Best, 2009, p.22).

Scholarship uncoupled from the material, ethical and political aspects of mixed-species relations may have a precarious status in the field because the tangible presence of animals is partly or completely eclipsed during the theorising process. As one scholar notes: “where exactly are real, material animals in our theorizing *of* them? ... [animals] are not only ‘good to think with’, but are also crucially partners *in* the making of our world. How we theorize that, without marginalizing or trivializing them” is one of the key challenges facing those working in this field (Birke, 2011, pp. xix-xx). This maps onto a distinction about animals within HAS: “‘animals as constructed’ and ‘animals as such’ where the latter refers to animals as they live and experience the world independently of our constructions of them”

(Shapiro, 2008, p.9; Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, pp. 312-313). The real-constructed animal axis may also enable scholars to evaluate and differentiate different approaches within HAS. In due course, such judgements may engender a status hierarchy of human-animal scholars and their scholarship.

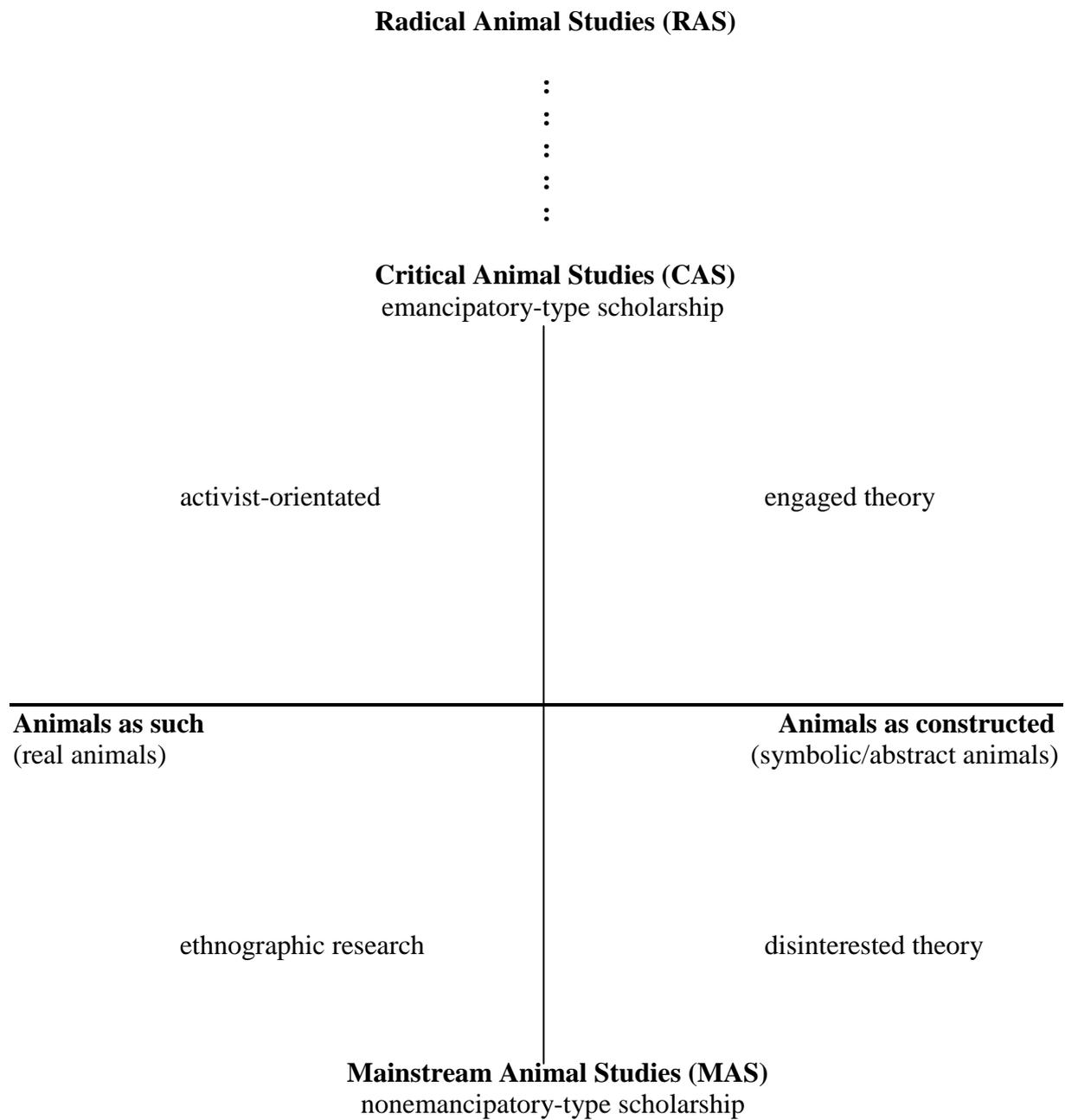
For example, scholarship that does not engage with the material experiences of animals or the political and ethical problems associated with interspecies issues may have the lowest ranking in the field, and thus theorists who sidestep such problems may be at most risk of a denigrated scholarly status. This may partly explain the low standing of theoretical labour in HAS, even though it is usually quite prestigious within the academy. Alternatively, scholars who engage in activist-orientated scholarship and ethnographic research that grapples with the material, political and/or ethical complexities of interspecies relations are likely to have more prestige than conceptually-orientated scholarship. If as Abbott (1981) suggests professional purity is equated with high status and professional impurity is equated with low status then the inverse appears to be occurring in HAS, i.e. scholars who perform academic “dirty work” (grounded and critical labour) have a higher scholarly status than those engaged in purer forms of scholarship (theoretical labour).

Moreover, if we revisit status differences amongst legal professionals, it is possible that “the division of labour among lawyers is as much one of respectability (hence of self concept and role) as of specialized knowledge and skills. One might even call it a moral division of labour” (Hughes, 1958, p.71). Likewise, a moral division of labour may materialise within HAS as emancipatory and nonemancipatory scholars tussle over what counts as “good” and “bad” scholarship, i.e. some types of scholarly labour may be deemed more or less reputable than others. The misgivings of studying human-animal relations as an “intellectual exercise”

indicates that disengaged scholarly labour is currently not well thought-of within HAS. In contrast, engaged scholarly labour is more highly regarded. Having said this, the extent to which scholars should combine their academic role with a radical activist agenda is open to debate. Although the scholarly-activist dilemma may engender varying degrees of personal dissonance and professional stigma it is becoming an important source of status differentiation between, and possibly amongst, CAS and MAS scholars. If we cross-reference the nonemancipatory-emancipatory axis with the real-constructed animal axis then this creates a potential framework for mapping different types of HAS scholarship (Figure 1).

Figure 1:

HAS Scholarly Labour Grid



HAS scholars may also use this emergent schema to demarcate intellectual enclaves within this tainted field. Just as pre-slaughter workers carved out practical-moral havens by identifying with live animals, the intellectual equivalent may occur within HAS. It is speculated that CAS scholars will typically disassociate from sanitised MAS scholarship that

theoretically eclipses animals, but align with activist scholarship and engaged theory that focuses on sentient animals. The inverse may also apply. Some scholars may combine MAS and CAS scholarly labour (e.g. ethnographic research with engaged theory) whilst others may adhere purely to emancipatory or nonemancipatory-type approaches. However, if CAS loses its radical edge this may hasten scholar-activists with an animal liberationist outlook (i.e. an abolitionist, anti-academic and non-statist agenda) to form radical animal studies (Best, 2006); anarchistic scholars are likely to associate with the most radically-orientated scholars and scholarship in CAS. These types of intra-field differentiations and scholarly-labour permutations may influence the narratives colleagues tell themselves and each other to justify the type of human-animal scholarship they do and why they do it (Scott & Lyman, 1968). By engaging in “motive talk” some scholars may neutralize their involvement in this academically-polluted field, whilst others may actively cultivate their deviant academic status to accentuate their more radical scholarly credentials (Mills, 1940; Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Conclusion

HAS “disturb[s] the comfortable certitudes of life by asking questions no one can remember asking and those with vested interests resent even being asked” (Bauman & May, 2001, p.10). By breaching anthropocentric norms, animal scholars, nonhuman animals, and animal-related issues are all “matter out of place” in the social sciences. To traverse disciplinary and species margins is thus creative and polluting; this is the double-edged nature of human-animal scholarship. Tainted by the “dirty work” scholars perform within HAS, the extent to which CAS’s radical agenda may further accentuate the field’s spoiled academic status remains to be seen. As HAS matures, flashpoints are emerging about the extent to which colleagues should engage with the animal as such and/or emancipatory-type scholarship. This

paper has drawn on these intra-field tensions to create a potential framework that maps different types of HAS scholarship and demarcates scholarly-moral havens within this tainted field. If, as some suggest, this burgeoning field is to consolidate itself within the academy, then “scholars cannot just devote themselves to scholarship. ...We must descend from the ivy tower and brave the murky moats of economics and politics” (Shapiro & DeMello, 2010, p.315). Similarly, since animals continue to be used and abused in modern industrialised societies, the field needs grounded scholarship that engages with the messy nature of human-animal relations in practice and critical scholarship that will challenge and transform the status quo. In other words, as long as people do animal dirty work we need academic dirty workers too.

¹ I am using HAS as an overarching field descriptor to incorporate different positions within the field.

² The existing division of academic labour may be perpetuated by scholars who have non-speciest and subject-specific reasons for not incorporating animals into their work.

³ For a history of the ALF see Henshaw (1989).

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