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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Critical Animal Studies (CAS) – An Overview	5
2.1	What is Anthropocentric Speciesism?	9
2.2	Farm Animal Exploitation and Capitalism	12
2.3	Meat Culture, Carnism, and the Role of Hegemonic Consent.....	15
2.4	“Ain’t I a Woman?”: Anthropocentric Speciesism, Sexism, Racism, Classism, and Ableism as Similar and Interlocking Modes of Oppression	21
3.	The Power of Sci-Fi in Problematizing Farm Animal Exploitation	29
3.1	Speculative Fiction, Sci-Fi, and Dystopia: Reclaiming Genre Boundaries	30
3.2	<i>Animals</i> and <i>Meat</i> : Narrative Situation, Setting, and Nova	34
4.	Industrial Farming in <i>Animals</i> and <i>Meat</i>	43
4.1	Disabled Human Children and Cattle Farm Factories	43
4.2	Speciesist Discourses Towards Building the Hegemonic Consent.....	52
4.2.1	“Maybe He’s a Mongrel”: Otherizing Discourse in <i>Animals</i>	52
4.2.2	“Their Flesh is Sacred”: Religious Discourse in <i>Meat</i>	56
4.3	Nonhuman Animal Sentience and Agency	60
4.3.1	Sam: The Anti-Speciesist Effect of a Single Story.....	61
4.3.2	“Sighing in the Most Urgent Tones”: When Cattle Unite in Power.....	64
4.4	Portrayals of Racism, Ableism, Sexism, and Classism.....	68
4.5	Human Agency and the Fight against Meat Culture.....	75
4.5.1	Individual Disapproval of Chattel Farming.....	76
4.5.2	Human Awareness and Direct Action Towards Nonhuman Suffering.....	79
5.	Conclusion.....	84
6.	Bibliography	86
	Abstract	90
	Zusammenfassung.....	91

1. Introduction

Critical Animal Studies (CAS) is an interdisciplinary academic field in the humanities and social sciences that seeks to bridge the ontological gap between human and nonhuman beings. The main task of CAS is to deconstruct anthropocentric speciesism, a system of belief wherein nonhuman animals are deemed to be inferior to humans and used solely as a means for their ends. This system of belief is used as an explanatory base and ethical justification for creating a system of commodification that leads to nonhuman and human exploitation in capitalism. As speciesism reflects discrimination based on species, CAS underlines its historical and contemporarily pivotal role in generating all other forms of socio-political hierarchical inequities, specifically sexism, racism, classism, ableism, slavery, colonialism, patriarchy, and “countless catastrophes including ecological collapse” (Best et al., *Introducing*). Besides its scholarly research, CAS constitutes a theory-to-activism discipline in the fight for animal liberation, a practical tool intended to cease all forms of methodical abuse such as the ones found in vivisection, flesh-food system, entertainment, hunting, cosmetic testing, and the clothing industry (Nibert xvii).

As underlined by J. S. Mill, “[e]very great movement must experience three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption” (qtd. in Regan vi). To consolidate the last stage (adoption), the tenets of CAS should be addressed in various forms of activism, among which are animal welfare campaigns, specialized documentaries on the matter of systematized animal mishandling, public debates on the subject of veganism, and specific types of online magazines and newspapers (VegNews, SentientMedia) aiming at the grassroots level. Another approach to activism is accomplished through literature even though it is not explicitly mentioned as a form of direct practice in CAS. Fictional works attending to animal welfare and liberation appeal to their readers in a non-academic and oftentimes emotional manner. On this provision, there is a broad scope of research on the power of fiction in reflecting anthropocentric

speciesism in the light of CAS while taking notice of the other aforementioned socio-political injustices. Two major research directions stem from the degree to which literary works critically engage in showing anthropocentric speciesism as a form of discrimination. The first direction consists of selecting fiction based on how this concept is normatively illustrated without the intention to be overturned. The second direction focuses on specific literary texts that seek to deconstruct this system of belief.

This thesis investigates how the subject of farm animal exploitation, as one of the major concerns of CAS, is tackled in the contemporary Anglophone sci-fi novel that follows the second aforementioned direction. The research question that I will explore is as follows: In what way is the CAS key topic of farm animal exploitation addressed in the contemporary Anglophone sci-fi novel? My point of reference as a basis for granting the unethical functionality of farm animal exploitation is anthropocentric speciesism, defined as a category of speciesism visible at the societal level.

Specifically, I focus on Joseph D'Lacey's *Meat* (2008) and Don LePan's *Animals* (2010) that portray the evils behind systemic nonhuman animal abuse from different angles. In Joseph D'Lacey's dystopian novel *Meat*, the action takes place in a fictitious small city, Abyrne, where farm animal meat is the sole commodified and sanctified means of nurture. The monopoly over meat production is held by a single company in which livestock exploitation along with human exploitation is morally justified by the holy institution of the Church. Don LePan's *Animals* illustrates a society where nonhuman animals went extinct. Consequently, intensive factory farming gradually revives and starts to operate with human-disabled children to produce meat for consumption. Both novels can be analyzed using the concept of hegemonic consent, as defined by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, to show the ability of humans to blindly accept cruel systematized practices (Clark and Ivanič 21).

In investigating how the contemporary Anglophone sci-fi novel operates in the light of CAS, I aim to reveal that the subject of farm animal exploitation in conjunction with other CAS key topics, such as nonhuman animal sentience and agency, speciesist discourses, human agency in debunking and fighting against the meat culture, are represented in the story. The exploitation of farm animals in the light of CAS also raises concerns over the origins and procedures of various forms of human abuse throughout history until the present time. As a result, this thesis aims to provide furthermore answers as to how social injustices, namely ableism, sexism, and classism, are portrayed in the selected works of fiction (Hodson and Costello 186). Therefore, I argue that both works of contemporary Anglophone sci-fi reflect the CAS subject of farm animal exploitation at the level of discourse and again at the content level. The nonhuman animal exploitation in the specified corpus of Anglophone sci-fi is considered at the discourse level with the aid of narrative techniques such as the narrative situation and point of view and at the content level through the unusual setting, nova, and the additionally mentioned CAS key topics.

The subject of nonhuman animal exploitation in these two literary works is rendered by different narratological approaches. *Meat* and *Animals* propound “cognitive estrangement,” a concept destined to create detachment from normalized societal attitudes and practices (Suvin 6). The objective of cognitive estrangement is to imagine different worlds as an alternative to the author’s empirical circumstances (7-8). In this regard, the novels engender divergent environments wherein the sufferance of vulnerable beings is exposed. Lacey’s narrative depicts a world in which cattle are systematically abused for financial gains and food, but ultimately revolt against their merciless exploitation with the aid of a group of people whose sole source of nutrition is garnered from sun rays. Such a story not only emphasizes nonhuman animal agency but also shows how the broadening of human awareness in the front of political and ethical mishandling of farm animals is established. Contrary to its title, LePan’s sci-fi does not

make use of a single animal character. Instead, it uncovers how morally unjustifiable business in capitalism, such as the development of intensive farm factories based on human children with impairments, is gradually accepted by society.

From a methodological perspective, close reading is employed in both sci-fi texts to reveal the extent to which the main focuses of CAS are reflected at the content and form level. As a theoretical background, chapter 2 provides an overview of CAS, a definition of the concept of speciesism, insights into farm animal exploitation in the light of capitalism followed by a presentation of the term “hegemonic consent” in a Gramscian vein and its role in reinforcing the societal habit of meat consumption. In addition, the underlying oppression behind speciesism is shown to have a resemblance with other injustices such as sexism, racism, classism, and ableism, and even constitute the first form of abuse from which all the other ones originated.

Chapter 3 tackles some of the controversies over the genre classification of speculative fiction, sci-fi, and dystopia, presents the concept of “cognitive estrangement” and nova as argued by Darko Suvin, and shows how sci-fi attends to critical political, social, and economical matters. Furthermore, this strand of theory is then applied to the novels *Meat* and *Animal* starting in the final subchapter of chapter 3, by examining the narrative situation, the setting, and the role of novum as a “strange newness” in addressing the subject of farm animal exploitation (Suvin 4). Thereafter, in chapter 4, the cruel operations behind intensive farm factories are analyzed in the light of CAS followed by how these procedures are buttressed by speciesist discourses with specific terminology. Such idioms help maintain and invigorate the cultural hegemony of meat. In front of the ongoing systemic exploitations in the fictional worlds, nonhuman animal sentience and agency are argumentatively proven. Moreover, as highlighted in the theoretical part and in conformity to CAS principles, social discriminations such as ableism, sexism, and classism are analyzed to bring forth the interrelation between all

types of unjust treatments. Last but not least, the effectiveness of human agency in deconstructing the meat culture and/or taking direct action against the status quo of systemic nonhuman abuse is examined in both novels as an example of how direct action, in contrast to exclusive scholarship, constitutes the real solution for animal welfare.

2. Critical Animal Studies (CAS) – An Overview

Various social movements such as the women's liberation struggle brought about gender equality studies, just as anti-racist and anti-slavery campaigns created African and Black studies while environmental problems led to the formation of environmental studies as academic programs and departments (Nocella et al. xxii). In the same vein, Critical Animal Studies, grounded on the total eradication of nonhuman and human animal abuse, seeks to establish its multidisciplinary intersectional approach in specialized degrees and university curricula worldwide. As a newly emerged field in humanities and social sciences (2001), CAS is founded once with the Centre for Animal Liberation Affairs by Anthony J. Nocella and Steven Best, an organization that in 2007 became the Institute for Critical Animal Studies (Taylor and Twine).

From a historical context, the animal liberation movement did not start with CAS. The Humanitarian League, a British advocacy community established by the English writer and campaigner Henry Stephens Salt, operated between 1891 and 1919 (Weinbren 86). Its members fought to promote a “well-defined and unmistakeable standard of humaneness” (qtd. in 86). Besides the advancement of humanitarianism to alleviate human suffering through altruistic acts and reforms in the fields of prison, schools, and economic institutions, their socio-political agenda included a compassionate view of the lives of nonhuman animals. On this account, Salt is one of the first explicit writers on animal rights who further argued on what the English jurist and philosopher Jeremy Bentham stated about the prospect of granting legal background to animals: “The legislator [...] ought to interdict everything which may serve to lead to cruelty.

[...] Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being? [...] We have begun by attending to the condition of slaves; we shall finish by softening that of all the animals which assist our labours or supply our wants” (qtd. in Salt ch.1). In pursuing the same lines of thought, CAS concerns itself ultimately with the end of all kinds of mistreatments, be it of human or nonhuman nature. As such, this interdisciplinary field is paramount to a total anti-oppression movement.

CAS deals with issues revolving around animal exploitation and liberation, speciesism, the inclusion of nonhuman beings in larger social emancipatory acts, principles and procedures behind animal advocacy, protection, and human-related policies (qtd. in Nocella et al. xxvi). However, some attempts to define the scope of CAS by the scholar Dawne McCance in her book *Critical Animal Studies: An Introduction* are harshly criticized by one of the founders of ICAS and other academicians (xxv). Besides erroneously attributing other scholars as CAS founders, McCance defines the CAS agenda to have a strictly theoretical purview while eschewing the practical part associated with activism and clear implementable strategies (xxv). In this sense, it is of utmost importance to clarify that CAS seeks 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” (Best, Rise). As such, this field differentiates itself from other disciplines related to the study of animals like Animal studies (AS) and Human-animal studies (HAS) focused on a theoretical level on the interactions and relationships between humans and animals (Nocella et al. xxiii-xxiv). In other words, these apolitical disciplines deal with the question of the animal instead of adding critical thought and action to the condition of the animal (Taylor and Twine).

Scholars of AS and HAS do not critically engage in deconstructing the human/nonhuman binary opposition nor challenge the status quo of animal misuse. Moreover, they lack the awareness of how all types of human and nonhuman oppression intertwine and

necessitate an urgent resolution. In failing to sense the holistic nature of social justice, some academics do reinforce discrimination by partaking in oppressive organizations, cultural traditions, corporate behemoths, and personal habits (xxiii-xxiv). According to Best and other academicians involved in creating CAS, these fields of study do not adhere to a coherent tie between research and ethical premises “such that personal and academic integrity [...] hardly demand normative and political commitments to veganism, animal liberation, and social transformation” (Best et al., *Introducing*).

Despite the contentious overview of what CAS targets are, I consider that this growing interdisciplinary field must expand its agenda of activism so that it covers the output of arts and literature as a form of creative manifestations that bear socio-political impact as the analysis of *Meat* and *Animals* novels reveal. In going back to McCance’s conceptualization of CAS and her unfortunate switch between AS and CAS when referring to the latter, she makes a valuable point when stating that literature, cultural studies, art, and architecture contribute “centrally to ‘the animal’ question” (ch. 9). Nonetheless, this line of inquiry is not truly adequate without adding the reasoning that literature and arts, as a form of activism, bulwark the aims of CAS if it touches upon the animal condition. To put it differently, these creative forms need to portray human and nonhuman predicaments under the concerns of CAS.

McCance rightly nominates J. M. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello* novel as an example of a narrative where animal exploitation of all kinds is critically surveyed. Through the eyes of the main protagonist, an elderly vegetarian woman writer who gives lectures on the role of poetry in comparison to philosophy as a means to morally tackle and rectify the way the human species mistreats other species for its own purpose, CAS considerations like animal sentience, agency, and suffering are feverishly brought forth and disputed. In addition, Costello presents herself as a writer and academic who practices ethical principles she has derived from her theoretical resolutions on the systematic cruelty of nonhuman animals, in alignment with the

recommendations of CAS. Thus, surrounded by her son, his wife, and other academics at the dinner that follows her speech, Costello “centers on the sacrifice, slaughter, and eating of animals” (McCance ch.9) proving through her demeanor what a veritable activist on animal rights she is.

A similarity between CAS and other fields of research such as feminist studies is informed by an attempt to readjust the normative understanding and limits of academia while actively trying to push progressive change into communities. Apart from their political activism, both studies are “similarly targeted against dispassionate, institutionalized scholarship based on a rationalist, liberal interpretation of (hegemonic) masculinity,” and engage in revealing and eliminating the normalized practices grounded on power misuse and oppression (Taylor and Twine). Another analogy concerned with scholarly revision and pragmatic change is given by the Frankfurt School (1929), an institution focused on critical theory and neo-Marxist considerations. Theorists including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal, and Erich Fromm included critical elements of political economy, sociology, history, and philosophy to engender an approach to cultural studies channeled on the social and ideological consequences of mass culture communications with the scope to emancipate people from the “conditions of suffering and domination” (Best et al., *Introducing*). This novel approach triggered a rupture from the apolitical methods of teaching at the time in the academic environment just like CAS did from the conformist noncommittal AS and HAS.

The next section examines the contentious conceptualization of speciesism and anthropocentrism, which some academics use interchangeably to refer to anthropocentric speciesism. Anthropocentric speciesism could be the focal point of CAS inasmuch as it contributes to the political, economic, and social power unbalances persistent in society and beyond, from historical times to the present moment, rather than dealing more with speciesism as a general type of species-based discrimination.

2.1 What is Anthropocentric Speciesism?

From the scholarly literature gathered in the last decades, it can be traced that the concepts of speciesism and anthropocentrism pose several problems in finding a clear definitional framework. Speciesism was coined by the English writer and animal advocate Richard Ryder in early 1970 as a stark reminder of the harmful way the human species relates to nonhuman beings in the areas of research, farming, entertainment, fashion, domestically, and in the wild (Fitzgerald and Pellow 30). According to Amy J. Fitzgerald and David Pellow, speciesism is useful for two salient reasons. First, it resembles the social inequalities exercised at the intrahuman level, of which can be mentioned sexism, classism, racism, and ableism. This resemblance reveals the interconnectedness and common base of all forms of oppression. Secondly, the term lends itself to the magnitude of the harm applied to nonhuman animals through the extant institutions and organizations in our society dealing with nonhuman animals beyond individual choices or socially prohibited acts that fit into the category of animal cruelty (30).

Oscar Horta, a Spanish animal activist, moral philosopher, and professor, uses the following definition: “Speciesism is the unjustified disadvantageous consideration or treatment of those who are not classified as belonging to one or more particular species” (244). Furthermore, he resorts to logical argumentation in showing the affiliation of anthropocentrism to speciesism since the former favor humans over any other species, but it is not otherwise conceptually different from the latter (261-264). As a subtype of speciesism, Horta argues that anthropocentrism is equivalent to anthropocentric speciesism.

In seeking to clarify the meanings of anthropocentrism and speciesism, Catia Faria and Eze Paez challenge the assumptions of analogy surrounding both notions, establish their lack of interchangeability, and emphasize their subordinate association as Horta does (98-99). However, Matthew Calarco, a professor of philosophy at California State University, contends

that the basic conceptual framework in pursuing an efficient and up-to-date investigation of the animal condition and activism is not speciesism, but anthropocentrism (14). The reason behind this radical shift is that anthropocentrism accounts for the societal deep structural organizations and practices at the core of human interest. It stands for systems of power and control unevenly distributed among both human and nonhuman populations. In other words, anthropocentrism upholds the preferential treatment of humans having the most desirable human characteristics such as high intellect and body vigor, and species reaching the closest to these traits.

In Calarco's view, speciesism mostly applies at the individual level as a prejudice, negative attitude, or ethical deficiency towards other species (15). While personal behavior can harbor nonhuman animal mistreatment, he believes that speciesism fails to explain the widespread systemic oppression waged against other species and the ideologies surrounding it. A strong argument for this belief resides in how cultural and economic institutions dealing with violence toward nonhuman animals exceed individual human lives and moral considerations, and, ultimately, shape the way prejudices and normativity are formed (16). In continuing this line of inquiry, anthropocentrism might be seen as a catch-all term for other types of intrahuman oppression including sexism, racism, classism, and ableism since, congruent with his standpoint, this system of belief functions beyond interspecies boundaries. However, in his feverish pursuit of establishing anthropocentrism as the central fallacy in accounting for the institutional forms of abuses practiced at both human and nonhuman stages, Calarco omits to underline that anthropocentrism, as "a kind of human narcissism," is a subcategory of speciesism (18). Contrariwise, CAS employs speciesism following Calarco's anthropocentric sense, to be understood as "a complex of institutions, discourses, and affects that structure human existence on a false, pathological reality" (Weitzenfeld and Joy 20).

What is considered to be a classic example of non-anthropocentric speciesism which can be traced when a human, say, favors and gives preferential treatment to dogs over pigs, I

argue that actually, it is a case of anthropocentric speciesism. In opposing the conclusions of Faria and Paez concerning what enters under the classification of non-anthropocentric speciesism, choosing a dog over a pig is still beneficial to humans as it mainly satisfies a human interest (102). Therefore, it alludes to anthropocentrism as long as human preferences are at stake and “the centrality and priority of human existence” are preserved (Weitzenfeld and Joy 4). As a result, most forms of speciesism are anthropocentric. Nonetheless, a sheer case of non-anthropocentric speciesism, in my view, matches the situation where a human individual selects another species over his very own. In this particular circumstance of misanthropy, the preferred nonhuman representatives are granted higher moral consideration in comparison with what is given to humans.

As a reminder that anthropocentrism does not equate to speciesism since, as seen, it is included in the latter, their definitions should not overlap. Hence, for the sake of this paper, I employ the term anthropocentric speciesism as a synonym for anthropocentrism when addressing the situation of farm animal exploitation. The reason is that farm animal exploitation reflects the systemic abuse of nonhuman animals at the institutional and discursive level, and denotes to what degree economic greediness is maintained and maximized according to the interests of a few human actors. In this sense, anthropocentric speciesism hinges on the aforementioned conceptual framework of anthropocentrism laid out by Matthew Calarco but is paramount to a subtype of speciesism as underpinned by Horta, Faria, and Paez.

Since it is established what kind of ideology fits best to the stimuli behind farm animal exploitation, the question that arises is: Why is anthropocentric speciesism not an ethical system of belief? Sentience is the capacity that transgresses speciesist boundaries, apart from autonomy, cognitive abilities, self-awareness, and other debatable aptitudes which are traceable outside the human realm and sometimes untraceable within. Any kind of being apt to experience positive and negative feelings should be granted moral consideration (Faria and Paez 101).

Considering that nonhuman animals are subjected to tremendous cruelty in the practices of farm factories for the purpose of commodification but do fully ascribe to sentience, they should be freed and, consequently, livestock agriculture eradicated. Concerning a prevalent anthropocentric rationale that prioritizes addressing societal issues over improving the treatment of nonhuman animals, this argument implies that human lives hold greater value than those of nonhuman animals. Otherwise, “if we believed that the lives of chickens, cows, and hogs were as valuable as—counted as much as—the lives of humans, where on our ‘to-do’ list would we place the abolition of factory farming?” (Bernstein 252).

2.2 Farm Animal Exploitation and Capitalism

In the context of our present-day political economy, any kind of ethical consideration covering the lives of nonhuman animals and the welfare of an appreciable amount of human beings loses ground in the face of measuring their potential as marketable factors. In broad strokes, today’s prevailing capitalist worldview seeks to morph “everything, living and nonliving” into exploitative resources (Mitchell 85). To do so, capitalism hinges on hierarchical power structures supported by a whole spectrum of organizational institutes and enterprises such as the government, mass media, advertisement, religion, school, and science. While more than 65 billion land-based animals and hundreds of billion water-based beings undergo violent deaths to be consumed and, therefore, monetized, this systematized oppression for food “is unquestionably the deadliest practice” ever (Nibert xi). On the subject of organized abuse, Steven Best and his colleagues rightly contend that even if the domination and management of nature hardly started with capitalism, it is in this political system that human alienation from, and disregard for, the natural world reaches its higher manifestation (Best et al., *Introducing*).

From a historical perspective, in the middle and late nineteenth century, farm animal exploitation and the industrialization of slaughter gained force and expanded in countries such as the United States where the moneyed class welcomed the surge of immigrants for

mechanized operations (Nibert xv). These newcomers along with people of color, women, and nonhuman animals struggled against their entangled and appalling oppression. The elite class at the time discovered a highly-profitable business in factory farming since, with the arrival of poor foreigners from places like Europe where beef and other types of meat were the nutritional sources exclusively of aristocracy, the demand for meat products grew consistently and came to be “a symbol of the newly attained wealth of better-off American workers and a rite of passage into the coveted American middle class” (Patterson ch.3).

In the early twentieth century, other important factors in the synergy of capitalism come into play: mass media and the use of advertisements. As a pivotal opinion-maker, the broadcast communication undergirded the interest of the dominant class to render meat and dairy merchandise as a nourishing necessity to the rest of the population. Furthermore, the control of public consciousness along with ensuring enough political and governmental support eased the containment of various disparate low-scale dissenting events at the grassroots level (Nibert xv).

Since the turn of the 21st century up until the present time, farm animal exploitation has reached unprecedented expansion in the US and throughout the globe. By introducing the functionality of neoliberalism, an ideology marked by government withdrawal from economic trades and corporate businesses, capitalists succeed in channeling the state powers in their favor for the so-called corporate welfare. The measures consist of tax breaks, deregulation, subsidies for feed crops, destruction of public lands for future agricultural investments, and the implementation of a legislative framework such as the ag-gag laws, open to control and silence animal advocates, activists, and journalists peering inside the business facilities (Nibert, *Introduction* xvi).

The aforementioned interlocking factors that bulwark the stage for institutionalized nonhuman practices are conceptually gathered under the notion of “animal-industrial complex,”

a term coined by Barbara Noske in 1989 (Sorenson xii). Richard Twine revives the term in 2012 and refers to it as “a partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate (agricultural) sector, governments, and public and private science” with an economic, cultural, social, and affective side, which “encompasses an extensive range of practices, technologies, images, identities and markets” (23). On this note, farm animal exploitation for food profits plays a major role in the animal-industrial complex. Tied in with Best’s recognition of our planet being close to ecological collapse, one critical side effect of this harmful industry lies in the way it affects the environment by causing air and water pollution as it generates nearly 15% of total worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and biodiversity loss (Conzachi It).

Another downside apart from the horrific harm applied to nonhuman animals lies in the health risk it brings to humans. In consuming red and other types of meat, people expose themselves to serious illnesses such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer. In conformity with WHO, these chronic ‘non-communicable’ diseases account for the largest cause of death in the world (Nibert, *Animal* ch.8). The predictions and scientific studies from before 2019 problematized already three major threats to human health: food shortage, climate crisis, and influenza pandemic (News). In addition to affecting indigenous, poor, and ill people mostly living in the Global South, food insecurity and climate change have also played a significant role in the emergence of COVID-19 (2019) as a deadly infection. Similar to other previous diseases such as the Spanish flu (1918-1919), Asian flu (1957), Hong Kong Flu (1968), and N1H1(2009), COVID-19 arose, namely, from the confinement of nonhuman animals for systemized food production (Nibert, *Animal* ch.8).

The meat culture formed through hegemonic consent at the grassroots level is the backbone of animal agriculture since any kind of commodification in capitalism ceases to exist once the consumers stop buying. To secure profit from the incessant sale of meat and dairy

products, the unchallenged assumptions linked to the human-nonhuman dichotomy need to be instilled and preserved in the masses.

I perceive capitalism to be one of the major drives for upholding the animal-industrial complex. Due to its neo-liberal market, capitalism does not focus on the welfare of the majority of human and nonhuman living beings. Profit is the key word in establishing various institutions and businesses despite the plight and the overwhelming number of nonhuman killings it brings about. I consider that a possible solution to capitalism comes from the realm of an equitable, non-hierarchical, and eco-conscious society concerned with the welfare of all people instead of the wealth of a few. Additionally, nonhuman animals and, ultimately, the planet itself should benefit from a fair social, economic, and political environment. The next section tackles the concept of meat culture and how it considerably hinges on hegemonic concurrence to be maintained and reinforced.

2.3 Meat Culture, Carnism, and the Role of Hegemonic Consent

As many types of cultural habits become naturalized over time, consuming certain meat products undergoes the same path and is mostly impacted by geolocation, religious belief, and globalized trends such as “McDonaldization,” a term developed by the sociologist George Ritzer in 1993. While billions of nonhuman lives are systematically taken away and/or exposed to harmful exploitation for eggs and dairy commodities, human interference in ceasing the ongoing mistreatment for profit is close to zero.

An explanatory framework pertinent to such mass disengagement finds shelter in the concept of hegemonic consent. According to the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, hegemony is defined as “essentially a relationship between social classes in which one class or section of a class exercises leadership over the other social classes by gaining their active consent for the policies and decisions they take” (Clark and Ivanič 22). Consequently, the meat

culture is upheld by grassroots acquiescence, a social phenomenon accomplished within the civil society and nurtured by the political society. In accounting for Gramsci's ideological terms, political society stands for the government and its apparatuses while civil society encompasses the educational and religious institutions, political groups, trade unions, and the press (Clark and Ivanič 23). Before analyzing the effects of hegemonic consent on the consumption of meat and veganism – its countermovement, some consideration regarding the adaptability character of human nature in any given unethical situation must be underlined.

From a psychological dimension, the question that arises is: “[W]hy do so many good, caring people still remain morally remote from the cruel and bloody outcomes of their actions?” (Mitchell 86). Even though most of the horrific operations applied to domesticated animals are concealed from the human eye due to governmental protection, the know-how is popularized through social media, grassroots activism, literature, and art. Apart from, say, Sue Coe's illustrations, Earthling Ed's public speeches, and Peter Singer's notorious view on animal ethics, the best insight into the animal-industrial complex is found in the supermarket refrigerator. And still, “[h]ow can the unimaginable become so readily imagined?” (qtd. in Mitchell 86).

In attempting to provide an answer, it can be stated that human consciousness rests on situational factors and tends to grant, against all odds, moral righteousness to dreadfully unapologetic operations as long as the state of affairs behind is collectively reinforced. Such cases occurred during the Second World War where “established companies worked on the construction of Auschwitz as they would have done on any other commercial project” or in Poland where ordinary middle-aged men of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 remorselessly executed thousands of women, children, and men (Mitchell 87).

Of significant importance is the inspiration that paved the way for “racial cleansing” and human genocide. Coming from agricultural studies, Henrich Himmler, the head of SS, explained that “we must proceed along lines similar to those followed in the propagation of plants and animals” (qtd. in Patterson ch.4). Another example of how an unjust status quo impinge on human ethics is given by one of the most famous experiments in psychology, namely, the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971), which renders substantial moral inconsistencies digestible and even defensible as long as they are authorized from above. The mock prison scenario played by students in the roles of guards and prisoners touches on the degree to which transformative situational markers such as the granting or reducing of social power de-individuates and, thus, can radically change human behavior irrespective of their previous ethical principles. It ultimately shows to which extent “normal people could behave in pathological ways” (qtd. in Le Texier 823) if the subjects are served with some kind of justification.

The American psychologist and professor at Stanford University, Philip Zimbardo, refers to the premises served during his prison experiment as “the big lie” (qtd. in Mitchell 97). Without an ideological base, moral human disengagement cannot be exercised. Likewise, clients in supermarkets feel no remorse for the multitude of lifeless chunks that once belonged to various nonhuman individuals. Wrapped in transparent bags and tagged with a price, the products exposed in refrigerated showcases are not more than a nurturing product for the end customer and a financial source for the upper class. The question that ought to be asked is: Which actors partake in establishing the “big lie” when it comes to the meat culture?

In tight connection with the ideology and the actors behind meat consumption comes the concept of carnism. As a subcategory of speciesism, it seeks to divide nonhuman animals into “edible” and “inedible” ranks (Weitzenfeld and Joy 21). The American social psychologist who coined the term in 2001, Melanie Joy, argues that carnivorous habits revolve around a vast

mythology grounded on the “[t]hree Ns of Justification: eating meat is normal, natural, and necessary” (96). Repetitive practice transmitted through cultural legacy transforms popular opinions into universal tenets. Furthermore, capitalism pushes the boundaries of this violent ideology to serve the killings and abuse of billions of animal lives as needful to the overall human being welfare.

The internalization of carnism brings about carnistic defenses when challenged under a critical lens. The crux of this type of speciesism in matters of defense is denial. In refusing to acknowledge the conflictual character of flesh consumption the problems ascribed to it are automatically nullified. In other words, if there is no dilemma no action is required, no urgency to amend the system, no oppression within, and, therefore, no need for a counternarrative (Weitzenfeld and Joy 22).

Besides the internalization stage, carnism operates at the institutional level. The animal-industrial complex hegemonically maintains the premises of carnism through special terminology, advertisements, pseudo-scientific findings, religious beliefs, education, the justice system, and concealment practices. The stakes behind the commodification of animal products stem from one’s culture in that, for instance, the profit in the US and the West mainly comes from the slaughtering and exploitation of cattle, pigs, and chickens, the breeding for sale of dogs and other types of “cute” animals, while in China dogs are used for food and in India cows are mostly seen as sacred beings, thus left unharmed. In addition, the byproducts resulting from agribusinesses such as calfskin, fat, and meat remnants are processed for monetary gains in tanneries, the cosmetic industry, and the pet food industry.

The “meat paradox” underlines the inconsistencies of human empathy in such a way that one cares about animals and would go against open violence as in witnessing a dog being beaten on the street, but at the same time unquestioningly engages in a diet based on animal

torture (Loughnan et al. 104). This paradox accounts as well for the successful sales of food cans for dogs and cats based on bovine meat for animal lovers and reveals how carnism “enable[s] gross cognitive and affective distortions in order for human consumers to support the system” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 21). With a focus on present-day changes, globalization within the neoliberal market sets off the internationalization of fast-food products. Additional to the geolocational cultural specificities, a global cultural hegemony has been created by transnational food corporations to achieve unimaginable capital (Nibert 229).

As a counternarrative to carnism, veganism promotes a nutritional schema that filters out any kind of animal product. Unlike vegetarianism set to exclude meat but not eggs, dairy, and other animal-derivative products, veganism is the ideology best fitted to conform with the CAS principles as long as the motivation behind hinges on ethical concerns for nonhuman animals. In facing down carnistic discourses such as meat eating is natural, terms like “omnivore” and “carnivore” must be avoided. These notions highlight a human biological predisposition instead of showing them as ideological constructs. Hence, their usage in the vegan narrative leads only to the reinforcement of the extant cognitive perceptions and affects in the dominant culture (Weitzenfeld and Joy 24).

The co-founder of the Vegan Society in Leicester, UK, Donald Watson, is considered to have coined the term “vegan” in 1944 based on the word “vegetarian” by staking out the first and the last two letters (Wright 4). Historically, the Vegan Society separated from the Vegetarian Society when the request to add a section of its newsletter grounded on non-diary vegetarianism has been denied (Vegan). The Vegetarian Society was founded in 1847, but being a vegetarian has been quickly discredited “as a homogenous entity emptied of intellectual nuance and, therefore, made vegetarianism both easily quantified and dismissed” (Wright 2).

Veganism refers to a revolutionary transformation of human/nonhuman animal relations devoid of violence since it is desirable and ethically sound to attain a world “in which animals will live healthily, free from exploitation, mutilation, and slaughter” (qtd. in Cole 203). As such, a vegan praxis entails abstaining from any kind of product that, ultimately, involves animal abuse in its process. This transformation can be understood as an attempt to “balance the needs of the body with the cultivation of the spirit” (Wright 5).

Nonetheless, re-evaluating and taking action against the present anthropocentric interspecies interaction is very much hampered by stigmatizing discourses in the West. Focused on misrepresenting veganism, these discourses center on portraying vegans as eccentric people, touched by elitism. In proceeding so, the adoption of a cruelty-free lifestyle boils down unjustifiably to a personal choice instead of revealing and implementing what Watson truly meant with this movement, namely, to be regarded as an effect of a revolutionized relation with nonhuman animals, a fundamental re-ordering of human/nonhuman and intrahuman interplay, bereft of any kind of exploitation (Cole 204).

In fighting against the dominant rhetoric, vegans ought to form coalitions across social justice and environmental movements, and achieve an effective analysis of capitalism “as a key driver of animal exploitation” (qtd. in Nibert 286). On this provision, to become aware of the industrialized cruelties present in commodification processes is to first develop a “critical vegan gaze” through which to question how the food in the supermarket is produced. By complementing the critical vegan gaze with an effective analysis of the political status quo, the vegan praxis is eventually aimed at challenging “all oppressive power structures, externally – in the realm of material institutions—and internally—in discourse/perception/affect” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 25). A cruelty-free conduct strives after achieving true freedom in both human and nonhuman realms and it is grounded on empathy, justice, care, and a clean ethical agenda.

In sum, one side of the multiple effects of the hegemonic consent in the political scene of capitalism is embodied by the meat culture and how the society at large follows unchallenged habits as provided by the political and civil society. To fit the profit of transnational companies, “the big lie” is served at the grassroots level so that billions of nonhuman animals can be systemically mistreated. The naturalization and normalization of animal consumption and use find shelter in the concept of carnism.

As the meat paradox remains socially uncriticized, the commodification offer reaches its apex in the neoliberal market where humans happily buy meat products, wear leather clothes, and accessories, while worriedly caring after their pet companion. Even so, veganism gains new ground as a social movement germane to re-establishing human/nonhuman and intrahuman connections in a non-hierarchical anti-capitalistic manner. In assent with CAS principles, veganism along with fighting against other forms of oppression such as sexism, racism, classism, and ableism are set to bring about total liberation. Without this holistic approach, the meaning behind Martin Luther King Jr.’s quote., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” will always find correspondence in the real world (Nocella et al. xxviii).

2.4 “Ain’t I a Woman?”: Anthropocentric Speciesism, Sexism, Racism, Classism, and Ableism as Similar and Interlocking Modes of Oppression

Anthropocentric speciesism, as revealed in subchapter 2.1, is a form of systemic oppression applied to nonhuman animals in an ideological and institutional context. This powerful and violent mechanism transcends individual lives and forges how normativity is established in relation to the exploitation of the animal other. It is worth reminding that Matthew Callarco’s view on anthropocentrism highlights its overarching inclusion of inter- and intrahuman types of oppression such as sexism, racism, classism, and ableism. The motive behind his choice of expanding anthropocentrism’s theoretical boundary lies in the fact that only human traits marked by ableness are privileged and less subject to discrimination. This

section, however, focuses more on reading anthropocentric speciesism as an institutional bias against species and draws similarities between this and societal systemic inequities grounded on sexist, racist, classist, and ableist prejudice.

One major principle of CAS underpins the common roots of inter- and intrahuman organized forms of oppression. Historically, the normative desirable traits of what constitutes a human were drawn by a group of elite men, perceiving “themselves in opposition to those they ruled over and classified as their others: animals, women, foreigners, disabled people, and more” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 9). In other words, the founders of CAS avow that various dominant groups exerted the same speciesist discrimination on other humans as they proceeded with animal others. Therefore, elites formed by white male affluent supremacists “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” (Best et al., *Introducing*).

Another salient factor in rendering normative social and interspecies inequity is driven by the culture/nature hierarchical dichotomy. The dominant category marked by culture encompasses humans and it is considered superior in comparison with the nature realm under which most nonhuman animals fall. Even so, the realm of culture is not evenly distributed among humans since “hegemonic conceptions of masculinity have been associated with culture, whereas women and subordinated masculinities (e.g, those who belong to racialized or impoverished groups) have been largely identified with nature” (Fitzgerald and Pellow 29). Consequently, those making part of the nature classification were perceived as “others” and their interests and welfare downgraded.

It is vital to understand that CAS promotes an integrated approach to both social and nonhuman injustices. Hence, this interdisciplinary field becomes a “filter through which

oppression and domination of nonhuman animals, human animals, and the environment are examined and contested” (Socha and Mitchell 111). Moreover, its mission is to advance “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” (Best et al., *Introducing*).

Noteworthy is that the commonality of oppressions defined in CAS does not fully pinpoint the concept of intersectionality. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term was originally designed as an analytical framework meant to reflect on the multiple inequities applied to Black women in a structural, representational, and political sense (Duran and Jones 313). In time, this term has been scholarly confronted with a definitional dilemma since it “has become more about the intersections of identities” deviating from its “intention to serve as an analytical tool to comprehend intersecting structures of domination” (Duran and Jones 310).

Despite its flexible conceptualization and theoretical adjustments, academics did not expand yet the scope of intersectionality to include oppressive categories such as the one based on species. On this point, CAS scholars highlight the interconnectivity between identity markers including the speciesist one and raise the following question: “[I]f we define race, class, gender, and sexuality through each other, do we not also define these categories by drawing on images and popular understandings of nature, land, and nonhuman animals, and vice versa?” (Fitzgerald and Pellow 32). Intersectionality ultimately informs CAS that one type of oppression cannot be acknowledged without understanding others and “various forms of inequality interrelate and work together to produce advantages and disadvantages for individuals and groups” (31).

In understanding and fighting against all types of human and nonhuman institutionalized inequities, the expression “total liberation” comes to the forefront of CAS (Best et al.,

Introducing). Steven Best conceptualizes this term as a theoretical process seeking to holistically recognize that movements are related to one another, “to capitalism, and to other modes of oppression,” and as a political process involved in forming “alliances against common oppressors, across class, racial, gender, and national boundaries,” while pursuing to link “democracy to ecology and social justice to animal rights” (43). Total liberation implies a genuine revolutionary social change concerned not only with the emancipation of marginalized groups in society but also with the plight of all the other species on Earth, including the planet itself. Therefore, CAS positions animal liberation within the wider framework of total liberation and it stakes out the major significance of anti-speciesism and veganism to shape a sustainable and healthy future society (Best et al., *Introducing*).

Firstly, to call attention to the shared characteristics of oppression in line with CAS’s principles and with the concept of total liberation, the purpose of this remaining section is to briefly emphasize the common abusive structures underpinning various forms of systemic human abuse and to compare them with the predicaments of farm animals in the animal-industrial complex. Secondly, the interlocking character of social injustices together with the speciesist one is substantiated by scientific results.

When it comes to the history of women’s rights, the first wave of feminism mostly dealt with women’s political disenfranchisement, identity, and economic status in marriage and outside it (DuBois 68). During the US woman suffrage movement (1865-1875), suffragists channeled their critique on two major apparatuses that governed women’s oppression, namely, capitalism and male supremacy (69). It is noteworthy to mention that these two factors stand as the leading vehicles for the legal misuse of the animal other. There is a direct correlation between the level of vulnerability the targeted groups for exploitation have and the severity of the oppression exerted. To exemplify, in the antebellum US, women of color were impacted by at least two identity markers: gender and color.

The gendered exploitation by propertied white male supremacists reached its peak once the abolition of the international slave trade started to hamper the expansion of various industries in the South among which can be mentioned the young cotton-growing industry (Davis ch.1). In this regard, the slave-owning class took advantage of their control and focused on slave woman's reproductive capacity to refill the numbers of domestic slaves. In time, Black enslaved mothers came to be perceived as "breeders," "their infant children could be sold away from them like calves from cows." (ch.1). The analogy between the fate of African American enslaved women and domesticated female animals reveal the similarity of exploitation as regards to practices, oppressors and financial drives.

The institutionalized act of sexism expressed through the gender-differentiated treatment women of color received as slave workers in comparison to men was not a salient topic on the white feminists' political agenda. This lack of concern is underlined by 1848's first women's rights convention in the US, namely the Seneca Falls Convention, where not even one woman of color was present (Davis ch.3). The intersectionality of oppressions brought about by gender and color on the part of Black women entailed vigorous critique from the voice of ex-slave Sojourner Truth and her rhetorical question, "Ain't I a woman?" Repeated four times during her speech, it aimed "to expose the class-bias and racism of the new women's movement" (ch3). Through her reproachful interpellation of white middle-class women, Truth shows that irrespective of color or other identity markers, a black woman should benefit from the same rights and privileges as any other woman, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Her famous inquiry lends itself as a paradigm of thinking to the actual debate surrounding the grant of rights to nonhuman animals. In deep connection to the abolitionist approach laid out by the American academics Gary L. Francione and Anna E. Charlton which links "the moral status of nonhumans with sentience alone and not with any other cognitive

characteristic,” Truth’s question can be adjusted in a way that justifiably fits into the ethical framework concerned with ceasing both the exploitation of human and nonhuman animals. Solely based on the nonhuman and human individuals’ ability to experience pleasure, pain, and suffering, universal rights ought to be granted in an anti-speciesist manner (Principle Four). Therefore, “Ain’t I sentient?” morally points to the inclusion of nonhuman animals in the realm of universal rights and helps disclose the speciesist prejudice of the present-day anthropocentric society as Angela Davis argued Truth did during the inchoate phase of the US women’s rights movement.

In going further, prostitution stands as another institutionalized case of gender differentiation that still affects women nowadays and is akin with regard to male patriarchy, financial exploitation, and body objectification to the position of nonhuman animals in factory farms. Mainly normalized as a denigrating means of money-making while failing to notice the impoverished conditions sex workers usually experience, prostitution triggers all kinds of male abusive behavior. What is conspicuously true is that “[m]any women, whose bodies were profitably objectified and ‘commodified,’ experienced physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and widespread discrimination” (Nibert xvi).

Likewise, reported cases of animal abuse among stockmen were made possible with the aid of undercover investigations. In 2006, a video disclosed how sick cows too weak to stand at a southern California meat plant were being forklifted into an upright position so that they could be sent to slaughter (Fiber-Ostrow and Lovell 238). Other footage reveals workers at a turkey farm kicking, throwing, and slamming live turkeys into transport containers or at another farm herdsmen whipping cows in the face and “dragging them by their necks using chains attached to tractors.”

Apart from institutionalized sexism, racism stands as another systemic discrimination that incorporates in its mechanisms the same oppressive principles as speciesism. The enslavement of African Americans in the antebellum South epitomizes the abusive practices wealthy white men applied to the people of color who were debased of any legal rights. Once again, the exploitation of vulnerable others for the financial benefit of a few underlines the same greedy and violent drives attested to the ongoing nonhuman animal mistreatment. The anthropocentric excuse that the dominant class gave during those times consisted of downgrading African Americans to the status of animality and, therefore, to something inferior.

This process of otherizing so that any ethical consideration upon bondsmen can be easily dismantled was lawfully attained. On this note, the African American abolitionist and active campaigner, Frederick Douglass, summarizes in one of his public speeches the condition of the slave which amounts to “that of the brute beast. He is a piece of property—a marketable commodity in the language of the law, to be bought or sold at the will and caprice of the master who claims him to be his property.” Likewise, domesticated animals pertaining to the category of other, are confined, used, and slaughtered in a legitimate environment. When it comes to the ability to replicate the same tenets of oppression within the institution of slavery, Steven Best rightly avows that “[f]rom castration and chaining to branding and ear cropping, whites drew on a long history of subjugating animals to oppress blacks.” (Best, *Rethinking* 12). On a detailed note, humans first came up with a coping mechanism, thinking of themselves as morally superior to nonhuman animals. Later on, the same mechanism “legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were [also] in a supposedly animal condition” (qtd. in Patterson ch.1).

As a highly prevailing systemic oppression, classism underpins a further hierarchical and exploitative institutionalized system where the directives and wishes of a dominant affluent class are propagated and exerted upon vulnerable social groups for the sake of capital accumulation. Among the techniques behind maintaining classism are the ones embodying

well-institutionalized social arrangements of subjugated and dominant class positions and roles, various exploitative practices of capitalists conveyed to workers of all backgrounds, social privileges and power inequitably ascribed to rich people, and class inequity preservation through the legacy of social policies. All these factors are hegemonically undergirded by the presence of class biases, stereotypes, ideologies, advertisements, narratives, and interpretations of the “capitalistic class frame that prizes the capitalist class and rationalizes the everyday exploitation of working people” (Feagin and Ducey 28). Due to their defenseless status, nonhuman animals are in an analogous manner exposed to the mistreating maneuvers of capitalism, while their moral consideration is disregarded due to entrenched carnistic prejudices, such as the belief that eating meat is natural. This accumulation of nutritional biases results from the same coalition of factors that play a major role in the perpetuation of classism.

In capitalism, disability is yet another label normalized as downgrading for individuals with certain mental and/or body impairments. Additionally, it opens the floor to exploitation since it is rendered as a marker of vulnerability in a political system where anthropocentric power and maximization of profits weigh the most. As a reminder, I use the term anthropocentric in Matthew Calarco’s view, framed around the privileges and resources granted to humans and nonhumans with the most desirable body-mind features.

During the second quarter of the twentieth century, disability proved to be a fatal medical condition among the citizens of Germany. What is known as the T-4 Program dealt with the killing of handicapped adults to “rid the country once and for all of its mental and physical misfits” (Patterson ch.4). In line with the governing forces behind the T-4 Program, its successor, namely, the Holocaust, became “the ultimate expression of the principle of [patriarchal] domination that defines power as power over others” (ch.4).

Excluding the similitudes between systemic injustices, the interconnectedness of oppressions in the light of speciesism can be read from an intersectional angle if the unmarked categories include men, heterosexuality, and whiteness, among others (Fitzgerald and Pellow 32). At the individual level, research indicates that animal abuse can be an instrument for establishing dominance and control over humans, and studies on intimate partner violence conducted in Canada and the United States reveal that “from 25 percent [...] to 86 percent [...] of abused women with pets report their pet was also mistreated by their abuser” (Fitzgerald and Pellow 35).

As seen, these forms of intrahuman oppression share a common root in that they are all based on hierarchic power, a capitalist-driven economy channeled on profits, convenient laws, and the hegemonic integrity of the dominant ideas of the privileged people having the most desirable human traits. This commonality is in conformity with CAS precepts and reveals a similar exploitative infrastructure as the one found in the animal-industrial complex concerned with the appalling mistreatment of domesticated animals.

3. The Power of Sci-Fi in Problematizing Farm Animal Exploitation

Socio-political inequities shape the human world as we know it. Throughout history up to the present time, these systemic injustices were organized around speciesist, sexist, classist, and disablist prejudices among others, to serve the elite people in power – a dominant social force mainly represented by white male supremacists. The drive behind engendering an institutional and legislative context fertile to the organized maltreatment of vulnerable social groups was and still is for the benefit of a few. By expanding prejudices to human/nonhuman dynamics, the concept of anthropocentric speciesism or anthropocentrism comes to the forefront. As defined in subchapter 2.1, anthropocentrism lends itself to a paradigm for thinking

about human/nonhuman relations in a way that is detrimental to the animal other while seeking the unconditional welfare of a small percentage of the human species.

The coming sections examine the controversial nature of speculative fiction, sci-fi, and dystopia on the subject of classification, followed by explaining the concept of cognitive estrangement and nova as theorized by Darko Suvin. Finally, a narratological survey is applied to the novels *Meat* and *Animals* to reveal how the narrative situation, setting, and sci-fi elements participate in addressing one of the most salient themes of CAS, namely the exploitation of farm animals.

3.1 Speculative Fiction, Sci-Fi, and Dystopia: Reclaiming Genre Boundaries

In tackling socio-political inequities and their effect on the world's future, speculative fiction plays a major role. But what is speculative fiction? According to Gender and Women's studies scholar, Sami Schalk, this type of fiction "allows us to imagine otherwise, to envision an alternative world or future in which what exists now has changed or disappeared and what does not exist now, like the ability to live on the moon or interact with the gods, is suddenly real" or it can represent a space to envision the worst possible scenarios, to imagine how the society would develop if the current inequalities and injustices simply continue (2). So far, speculative fiction points to an overarching definitional framework under which sci-fi, fantasy, horror, and other genres fall into. However, immutable definitions concerning fiction genres are hard to achieve.

The theoretical dispute between Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin concerning the distinguishable traits between speculative fiction and sci-fi ultimately pushes the latter to contend that Atwood's novels such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Oryx and Crake*, and *The Year of the Flood* "exemplify one of the things science fiction does, which is to extrapolate imaginatively from current trends and events to a near-future" (qtd. in Thomas 15).

Nonetheless, she also admits that the author of these books believes otherwise (15). Namely, *The Handmaid's Tale's* writer thinks of her fiction as belonging to speculative fiction in general and not to sci-fi as a particular classification since the themes she touches upon might have happened already in the real world or are possible to happen (Atwood).

Perhaps what delineates speculative fiction from science fiction lies in the distinction between extrapolation and speculation as used by the American writer Robert A. Heinlein. In his account, extrapolation “means much the same in fiction writing as it does in mathematics: exploring a trend” while speculation “has far more elbowroom than extrapolation; it starts with a ‘What if?’” (qtd. in Latham 25). In extending Heinlein’s line of reasoning, extrapolation revolves more around the possibilities made by science and seems to inform the sci-fi genre as Isaac Asimov also confirms: “Science fiction can be defined as that branch of literature which deals with the reaction of human beings to changes in science and technology” (qtd. in Gillard et al. 156). In going back to Atwood – Le Guin debate in the light of Heinlein’s definitional variance of extrapolation and speculation, in Atwood’s literary works, no extrapolation in the rigid sense is present, as nothing new is invented based on any kind of scientific premise or hypothesis. At first glance, the previous statement seems valid. And yet, one needs to ask what is really meant by science. Does science that relates to the sci-fi genre involve only the use of futurological technologies, interstellar trips, and time travel?

The academic, writer, and critic, Darko Suvin, expands the purview of sci-fi stating that the type of science explored in this literary genre includes “not only natural but also all the cultural and historical sciences and even scholarship” (13). In his view, sciences like anthropology, sociology, and linguistics are equally dependent on scientific methods as: “the necessity and possibility of explicit, coherent, and immanent or nonsupernatural [sic] explanation of realities” (Suvin 68). Hence, Atwood’s literary output belongs to speculative fiction but at the same time, it can be considered sci-fi upheld as an umbrella term for all types

of extrapolative fiction including the ones based on social science as can be traced in her dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In further exposing Suvin's line of reasoning, utopias, and dystopias are included in the sci-fi genre and can be named "sociological fictions or social-science-fiction" (14). Exceptions from the sci-fi genre are fantasy, myth, folk tale, or fiction that entails only a supernatural or metaphysical estrangement (Suvin 7-8). Finally, it is worth noting that rigorously classifying genres such as speculative fiction, sci-fi, fantasy, and dystopian/utopian "can render moribund something vibrant" (Thomas 16). The literary genre borders are always blurred owing to the diversity of narratological elements the texts entail. Irrespective of how much credit Suvin gives to sci-fi as a genre, utopias, and dystopias must not always, for instance, follow a logical social scientific hypothesis, they do not invariably require to be scientifically gratified. These genres can be grounded on inexplicable or fantastical elements that, ultimately, help or hinder human existence. Therefore, it is inaccurate to assert that utopian and dystopian fiction are always classified under the sci-fi genre.

The dominant modes of organizing society and relating to the world are not universal and indisputable. Humanity should be constantly questioning the theories and concepts developed "not only for the motives of their makers but for the ways that they reinforce already-existing conceptions of the world, of persons and institutions, power relations, and particular forms of speculating about the present and the future" (Wolf-Meyer 9). Alternative socio-political developments are possible and they are literarily handled by fiction. The same applies to the animal-industrial complex where human/nonhuman relations ought to be reconsidered and sci-fi by definition stands as a productive site for throwing a critique at the status quo and/or helping conceive other possibilities of relating to the world of the animal other.

Dystopias are often considered “inverted or negative utopias, or anti-utopias,” on the premise that they seek to satirize the ineffective measures of applying utopias in real life (Claeys 61). Utopias are mostly fictional constructions of a particular supposedly human community where the conditions of living contingent on sociopolitical institutions, norms, and intrahuman relations, are better suited to the welfare of humanity than in the author’s empirical environment and are based on “estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (Suvin 49).

With the amendment that dystopia as well as utopia belong to speculative fiction, but can be included in the sci-fi genre since their narrative infrastructure attends to a justifiable premise, the concept of cognitive estrangement comes into play. In his academic writing, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979), Darko Suvin defines the notion of estrangement by arguing that sci-fi employs a fictional hypothesis and develops it within the parameters of scientific precision to challenge a normative system from the angle of a fictitious one having new sets of values (6). At the same time, sci-fi is tightly linked to the conception that prevalent norms of the real world are historically unique and changeable, hence subject to a cognitive view (7).

The main crutch for holding up the cognitive estrangement (or dissonance) is the novum, understood as a mechanism used to challenge the preconceived ethos of the reader. Coined by Darko, this narrative device “must be a scientifically or technologically plausible [...] such as a new technology, scarcity scenario, distant location, or future time that provides the catalyst sparking examination of our beliefs and expectations” (Thomas 39). The presence of the novum is central to the story, it is hegemonic, and its significance dictates the whole narrative logic (Suvin 70).

In brief, the unethical situation in which domesticated animals are systemically abused by humans can be reconsidered by bringing forth alternatives based on or at least inspired by

plausible literary novums. Even though in the real world, people tend to minimize, amend or simply ignore cognitive dissonances, in fiction they can safely acknowledge and place them under a critical view. A work of speculative fiction cannot always be categorized under an exclusive subgenre due to its possible complex and diverse literary devices contributing to the narrative landscape.

Even though the debate between Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin brought about controversial statements surrounding the fictional labeling of certain prose narratives, the explanation offered by Darko Suvin, namely that sci-fi can be widened to comprise extrapolations grounded on all types of sciences including the humanities, could convincingly sustain Le Guin's position. With this reclamation of boundaries, the dystopic novels *Meat* and *Animals* pertain to the sci-fi genre and, as it will be seen in the coming subchapter, their narratological particularities subscribe to addressing the current predicaments farm animals experience in our empirical world.

3.2 *Animals and Meat: Narrative Situation, Setting, and Nova*

Literature can be employed as a powerful tool in foregrounding societal critical problems and it operates both at the content and discourse level. In bringing to the forefront of its audiences one of the most vital concerns of CAS, specifically the exploitation of farm animals, the novels *Meat* and *Animals* hinge on a particular narrative situation, setting, and nova. What stays conspicuously true is that good sci-fi does not “violate scientific principles, but relies on them to spark discussion of not only ‘what if’ but also ‘so what?’” (Thomas 41).

One important aspect in positioning the narrative into narratological parameters is to present the structure of the exposition, the way the story resolves to an end, and reveal the type of narrating instances and point of view. *Animals* opens *in ultimas res* with the declaration of Broderick, “many years later,” on the unfortunate unfolding of events in Sam's life, his brother,

who came to be perceived by the world as a disabled boy instead of what actually was: a young child hard of hearing (LePan). The novel has a closed end since the deaf child gets eventually slaughtered, and features a two-strand plot set to appeal to the reader from different angles, namely, one rational and the other one emotional.

In the first narrative thread, Broderick, as an extradiegetic narrator, conveys an objective account concerning the historical formation of disabled human children factories. However, he often appears at the level of narrative transmission through ironic remarks or interpellations such as: “But let me go back a step, and run over what actually happened so far as mongrels are concerned. I am sure it’s familiar ground for some of you, but others may not know the history” (LePan). The second story in third-person, marked by an intra-heterodiegetic narrating instance, follows the confessions in the form of a manuscript of a fictitious novelist and professor of creative writing, Naomi Okun, about her childhood experiences with Sam, which at that time was an adopted child in her family. The technique of *mise en abyme* with which Naomi’s work of fiction is framed within the larger story of the novel helps in reflecting that literature can be a powerful tool in activism and has the potential to draw attention to the existing problems in human/nonhuman relations as already described by CAS. Naomi’s account provides multiple perspectives of the fictional world. However, more weight is put on the characters that seem to gradually disagree with the status quo of how disabled human children are handled by society.

As one of the main internal focalizers, Naomi’s non-hegemonic perceptions, thoughts, and actions share a similarity with some of the CAS precepts that revolve around readjusting the boundaries between human and nonhuman animals through direct action. To exemplify, the child Naomi acknowledges Sam’s sentience despite the societal deep convictions over the contrary when she admits to herself, based on what she noticed at him, that she “couldn’t explain it all now, not while so much was rushing in her brain. She was glowing inside and out, radiant. It was not as it had been, everything was entirely new now, she could tell Mommy

everything now, Mommy could not be shocked or horrified or fearful, there was nothing freakish about Sam now” (LePan). Subsequently, she convinces her father to take her to the chattel farm where Sam was furtively sent by her drastic mother. Both are trying to save Sam, an act that matches with CAS’ “call for a response to diverse situations of injustice in terms of acting ethically whenever an individual or group is oppressed, thereby encompassing a greater understanding of how authority is formed and wielded. Only then [...] a call to action and [...] solidarity among social justice movements” can transpire (Socha and Mitchell 110).

The action in *Meat* starts *in medias res* with the protagonist, Richard Shanti, running home from the place he works, namely the company Magnus Meat Processing, after a normal working day. He already bears the tension and guilt of his daily task which consists in killing over a hundred cattle with a stun gun. The novel comprises multiple third-person storylines that are related by an extra-heterodiegetic narrator. These narrative threads ultimately converge in *poetic justice*, meaning that the ending consists of a fair amount of rewards and punishments applied to the characters such as the cattle being freed and the Magnus Meat Processing becoming ruined as a business.

Similar to LePan’s sci-fi, the story offers variable focalization, in other words, it reveals the thoughts and perceptions of several characters during the course of events. By way of different points of view, the reader has the flexibility to discern between the righteous and unethical acts the plot entails on a more intimate level, to engage deeper in the characters’ rationales concerned with meat consumption and cattle farming. As a result, the possibility of the audience aligning their own ethos with that of the protagonists involved in changing the hegemonic organization of the city by dismantling the farm factory and the institution of the Church grows consistently.

In addition, the main protagonist, Richard Shanti, undergoes a radical change throughout the narrative, from being one of the most prominent stun gunners in the history of the meat company to becoming one of the leaders of the rebellious group of sun feeders that ultimately release the cattle and march with them outside the town. His gradual conversion is unveiled through internal focalization: “Richard Shanti had blood on his hands. Unlike his co-workers *he didn’t deny it*. [...] While they absolved themselves with placatory readings from the Book of Giving or the Gut Psalter, *he bore his guilt fully, at least in his own mind*. [...] There was *no way to atone for it*. *No punishment* in this world that could repay him for his evils” (D’Lacey; emphasis added). This steady emotional and rational switch can impel the reader to proceed likewise. By mirroring the main character’s inner constellation, the reader attunes his own discernment and affection to some of the targets sought by CAS, namely, to acknowledge the sentience of domesticated animals and the iniquitous nature of systemic killings and exploitation in intensive animal husbandry.

Concerning the fictional representation of time, D’Lacey’s sci-fi hinges on a chronological narrative where the order of happenings is in alignment with the natural temporal unfolding of the action. LePan’s text presents an anachronic narrative owing to the sequential development of events interspersed with Brodericks’ flashbacks on how the new factory farms were produced. The setting in both sci-fi is partially built with the aid of nova. While *Animals* has no exact data about the year or the location, Broderick mentions that the Great Extinction, where all nonhuman animals died, “happened many decades ago,” and he is “very aware that for many younger people today the past is largely unfamiliar territory” (LePan).

One anchor to our non-diegetic contemporary reality of intensive factory farming is given by a few references throughout the story. To illustrate, Broderick mentions how the population of one century ago would be appalled by the present-time narrative reality marked by practices of subjugating infirmed children. Simultaneously, the human species living in the

current diegetic time could also remember how they harmed the domesticated animals, how by “the dawn of the twenty-first century the lives of all those creatures had been made uniformly wretched” (LePan).

The second novel does not betray any specific time, just an elusive reference to the history of a fictitious city where the action takes place, Abyrne, settled by “a few generations before, when the first families of the townsfolk were brought into existence” (D’Lacey). In the latter spatial context, one of the nova illustrated by the Book of the Giving, a scriptural text containing precepts on meat consumption and its sanctified character, made the citizens of Abyrne to “live in the town in the way God required” with no major social reforms for “[v]ery little had changed [...] since then” (D’Lacey). Apart from this locality, “there was nowhere else to go. The wasteland surrounded the town and there was nothing out there. [...] Nothing could survive except within the confines of Abyrne” (D’Lacey). However, inside this area, there is a place where the dominant rules of the city are not significant. The Derelict Quartier inhabited by “starving vagrants” is devoid of “running water or sewers, no power lines. Just blocks and blocks of crumbling, abandoned buildings and heaps of rubble” (D’Lacey).

After acknowledging the ‘What if?’ the next question for which a satisfactory answer must be given in order to attest to a good sci-fi scenario is ‘So what?’ (Thomas 41). For achieving an appropriate response, the novum needs to be charged with meaningful significations pertinent to giving a hint to our real-world societal problems. Hence, it is worth stating that “a novum can be both superficially sweeping and cognitively validated as not impossible, and yet of very limited or brief relevance” (Suvin 81). The nova in both *Animals* and *Meat* articulate a particular cognitive estrangement compatible with the CAS principles in that it partakes in redefining the norms concerned with the human/nonhuman relation, more specifically, with how farm animals are handled in factories and why factory farms exist in the first place.

In LePan's sci-fi, the mechanisms employed to overturn the preconceived beliefs of the reader revolve around the notion of "mongrel". In a plausible etymological explanation, the primary meaning of this word as used in the current time narrative reality refers to disabled human children, but, historically, it evolved from "mongo (or the variant mongoid) [...]" a very precise term for a certain sort of defective, a subclass" human species (LePan). In alignment with Darko's definition of a veritable sci-fi text, the hypothesis does offer more credible and sufficient information to undergird the course of events in the story. Hence, the coinage of the word "mongo" bears racist connotations since it "originated when James Langford Peake published his 'Inquiry Into the Ethnic Element of Idiocy' in 1870; he quite rightly observed the degree to which the creatures he was describing, though born to Caucasian parents, resembled the peoples of the Mongo River region of North Africa" (LePan). Moreover, they were not deemed human "or at least not to be human in the same way and to the same extent as you and I. Not only did they look different; they typically had far lower levels of intelligence" (LePan).

Other nova contribute to the dystopic picture offered by the novel, namely, "the great extinction," "the reproductive revolution," "the Repositories," "chattel farming," "pet mongrel," "yurn," and "fland" (LePan). During the great extinction, "the meat animals and the meat birds and almost all the fish species that humans had consumed died out" due to a disease that "wouldn't have spread so quickly if the creatures hadn't been packed thousands upon thousands together in feedlots or in dark and poorly ventilated sheds" (LePan). To diminish the nutritional shortages and the lack of proteins in human diet, "the old giants of the meat business would reemerge and do everything they could to feed the growth of the new industry" (LePan). This trend marks the advent of chattel farming where disabled juveniles, if they would not be adopted as pet mongrels by wealthy families during their short stay at a place that filters them called the Repository, would work as chattel until they reach a certain age and then be

slaughtered. The resulting meat in “North America [...] became known as yurn, in Britan and in Australia as fland” (LePan).

By reversing the normally used groups of nonhuman animals in such industries with human children, the whole business can trigger great disturbance and could impel the reader to go in the direction desired by CAS, which is to reassess the normalcy of flesh production and consumption in the empirical world. As chattel, disabled children must undertake menial work since “no conceivable purpose could be served by [...] [them] developing any mental skills above and beyond the ability to understand and follow very simple commands” (LePan). With the aim that chattel production could flourish, science paved the way for the reproductive revolution which consistently increased the number of mongrels through cloning. From obtaining “chattel from chattel,” the meat industry specializes in “[s]horter lifecycles and harvest times” so that “animals could be perfectly bulked out in the weeks prior to” killing (LePan).

The nova in D’Lacey’s sci-fi does not revolve around an unfamiliar choice of living beings as prime material for the farm factories since it operates with cattle, a type of domesticated animal that finds perfect correspondence with the reader’s empirical world. However, the socio-political context belongs to the realm of cognitive dissonance. The company Magnus Meat Processing or MMP with its owner, Rory Magnus, holds a monopoly over the fictitious city of Abyrne. MMP is the only meat provider in the town and its citizens’ nutritional intake is regulated by the Welfare, a religious organization preaching the Book of the Giving, sometimes called the Gut Psalter. According to this scripture and reinforced by Parsons, the inhabitants must nurture solely from the meat of selected cattle named the Chosen (D’Lacey). The consequence is that “[e]very house exuded the smell of grilled, fried, roasted or boiled meat. Cuts of the Chosen on every table in every household that could afford it” (D’Lacey).

The novel proposes a particular type of cognitive estrangement based on zooming in on and problematizing meat consumption by filtering out all other types of foods. In doing so, the social norms around eating habits from the reader's real world are placed under a CAS critical lens. Moreover, capitalism is emulated in the story through the discrepancy between the rich and the poor for "the ones that were starving—the ones that might really have needed the protein to survive—they rarely got it. Meat went to those who could afford it. Life went to those who could afford it and so it had always been" (D'Lacey). One of the significant downsides of using meat as the sole nutritional sustenance is represented by the Shakes. Due to this disease, "[f]ew in the town lived past the age fifty but for Parsons it was more like forty-five" (D'Lacey). The novum that reflects Abyrne's majority of residents exclusively nourishing on cattle's flesh and, consequently, subjecting their health to a deadly disease, bears reproachful significations that are pertinently calibrated to the aim of CAS to deem meat consumption not only as immoral but harmful as well.

On top of this sci-fi newness, two more nova are in line with the CAS key topics, namely, the capacity of people rebelling against the town's totalitarian rules by solely feeding from sunrays and cattle's ability to express themselves through hissing and sighing. The first argument concerning nutritional autonomy and deliberate acting against societal eating norms points to veganism as an ethical way of conducting oneself in the non-diegetic world. Veganism stands as the only suitable solution according to CAS that does not imply hurting animals or exploiting them for dairy or other types of products. The second argument relates to assigning language capabilities to domesticated animals and upholds the idea of sentience and agency on their part. These are the most compelling facets in fighting against systemic and non-systemic abuse of nonhuman animals in the reader's empirical world.

In the novel, nurturing from sunbeams consists of a simple procedure as shown by one of the main characters, John Collins, sitting on his balcony in the Derelict Quartier: "A warmth

began in the skin of his hands at the mere promise of light [...] As the radiance grew he drew it from the atmosphere into his hands. The heat spread up his wrists. As the light below the horizon gathered, the vibration in the center of his head, in the nucleus of his brain, increased” (D’Lacey). Akin to how plants convert light into chemical energy through photosynthesis, “his belly filled with light. [...] *Everything blasted white* and the store of light in his abdomen released, flowing out to every part of his body, filling his organs, *energizing his limbs*” (D’Lacey; emphasis added).

Cattle’s sentience is augmented through their power to almost verbalize their thoughts and feelings, an ability that, in time, is understood by Richard Shanti who stopped being a carnivore and became very close to them. He reasons that the animals’ sounds “would have been prevalent in every part of the factory, penetrating the unconscious mind of every worker” and “it would only take a little extra effort to begin interpreting the sounds and rhythms the Chosen made, translating them into the language of the townsfolk” (D’Lacey).

As seen, CAS key aspects are illustrated in both sci-fi through the narrative situation and various points of view meant to redefine the dynamics between human and nonhuman interaction by highlighting the sentience character of the latter and the degree of acknowledging animal suffering and commitment to action of the former. Coupled with the mentioned narrative techniques comes the interplay linking the stories’ setting, in part encompassing innovative mechanisms such as the Great Extinction, with the rest of the nova. These credible innovations create a dystopic narrative environment that echoes the appalling conditions farm animals experience in the actual world. Under the influence of cognitive estrangement, the current state of non-diegetic affairs involving systemic livestock exploitation can be unforcedly scrutinized by the reader. The next chapter focuses on how the CAS key topics concerned with factory farming are reflected by each novel at the content level.

4. Industrial Farming in *Animals* and *Meat*

D'Lacey's and LePan's novels present the subject of farm animal exploitation using different vulnerable categories of living beings. In *Animals*, the flesh of disabled human children becomes the single source of meat for consumption while in *Meat* cattle stand as the unique species destined to be slaughtered. Irrespective of the prime material used in this industry, the operations for meat processing are streamlined in both stories for the sake of capitalistic profit.

The CAS key topic I explore in the novels is farm animal exploitation. In addition, I investigate four other CAS concerns that revolve around the predicament of domesticated animals, namely speciesist discourses, nonhuman animal sentience and agency, the portrayal of speciesism, ableism, sexism, and classism as interlocking systems of oppression and/or their commonality in connection with abusive factors/agents, and human agency in debunking and fighting against the meat culture.

4.1 Disabled Human Children and Cattle Farm Factories

The plight of farm animals is reflected in both sci-fi novels by disclosing how the institutionalized nonhuman practices work. *Animals* follows the historical engendering of chattel farms and their development towards more efficient processes to ensure the delivery of higher amounts of meat for consumption. In *Meat*, a high standard of productivity is already established and is mainly contingent on the performance of a stun gunner. What remains conspicuously true in the narratives is that the impetus behind the well-organized slaughtering and farming procedures bears on financial gains.

The inception of chattel farms can be traced back to the nutritional shortages and medical expenditures designated for the treatment of disabled offspring. Apparently, "it seemed to be everyone's advantage to keep a minimum the number of humans suffering from conditions

that were expensive to treat” (LePan). Humanness is suppressed in favor of the welfare of the people exhibiting the most desirable human characteristics. Therefore, in accruing finance for the benefit of able-bodied and able-minded individuals, “[d]eformed creatures who not long before would have led a prolonged if hardly pleasant existence at vast public expense were now allowed to expire quietly early in life” (LePan). Even though the abnormalities were of various types, over time these medical deviations “were more and more frequently lumped in the class of mongrels and chattels” (LePan). Once people are invited to taste the mongrel meat at elegant dinner parties or at clubs under names such as “yurn,” the rich invitees make generous donations to ensure they receive a larger portion.

The old meat-based industries seize the opportunity to produce yurn for mass consumption as soon as the practice becomes to send the newly born mongrels, that no one would adopt as company pets, from the clinics to the maisons de préparation. Steadily, the chattel industry began “to find the routines that resulted in the highest levels of productivity in the adjunct businesses with little or no negative impact on flesh quality” (LePan). Through Broderick’s voice, the story provides an indirect rebuke of how factory farms functioned in the narrative past that corresponds to our present time. Probing into the lives of farm animals unearths a tremendous level of suffering. Sentient beings such as “[b]eef cattle spent much of their lives tramping through their own feces in overcrowded feedlots, eating food that was not easy for them to digest but that would make their flesh more fully marbled with fat when humans ate that flesh” (LePan).

Furthermore, the sheer lack of freedom brought about misery to pigs “confined for their entire lives in tiny steel and concrete pens,” to the dairy cattle “bred so that their massive udders inhibited almost any movement” while the laying hens were “[c]rammed together in wire cages stacked several rows high, with each tiny cage holding several chickens and with the droppings from the upper cages falling on those below” (LePan). Pamela Fiber-Ostrow and Jarret S. Lovell

rightly contend that under such business guidelines farm animals are not perceived as “sentient beings capable of feeling pleasure and pain, happiness and loss, but as units of production” (234). All these appalling measures are taken for economic interest and the novel mongrel industry carries on with the same abusive parameters.

The former livestock agribusinesses take their handling of domesticated animals for profit maximization further and apply it to disabled juveniles. The nature of capitalism is shown to have no limits in finding new opportunities for exploitation as in the case of chattels and their lifespan. *Animals* reveals a caustic portrayal of how the mindset of business owners in the meat industry operates in cooperation with the law and other enterprises. The cost of chattels during their development is limited to food expenditure since “waiting ten years for a chattel to mature wasn’t like waiting ten years for a vineyard to grow in properly” (LePan). The legislative milieu comes into the equation once “it had been established that a chattel was not a human person” and it “didn’t need a lot of mental acuity to pick an orange or to tend a tomato plant or to harvest a head of lettuce” (LePan). Therefore, “[t]he great innovation was simply to realize the labor potential of chattel prior to harvesting” (LePan). On this matter, Sherryl Vint rightly acknowledges that the narrative stakes out the expansionist role of capitalism in commodifying any potential workforce for it delineates how the “massive factory farming of mongrels became economically feasible only when combined with other industries, most often mixed agriculture” which misuse the labor force of disabled children for almost a decade before their slaughtering (43).

The institutionalized operations applied to offspring with impairment for financial gains in chattel farms echo how farm animals in the non-diegetic world are subjected to harmful procedures. In order for the industries to bloom financially and to produce at cost-effective prices, farm animals are “confined in cramped spaces, raised in artificial settings, fed unnatural diets, and fattened with growth hormones” (Fiber-Ostrow and Lovell 234). In the same vein,

Animals discloses the extent to which human living beings are placed “into small pens where [they] could not move” and when they reach “the final finishing stage [...] are typically allowed no more than two and a half square yards apiece when the pens are full” (LePan).

Moreover, confining animals in closed spaces is beneficial to attaining higher amounts of sellable flesh because if the “chattels were free to roam about over a larger area during the final finishing stage, too much of the nourishment that had been put into them would go toward fueling physical activity, too little *toward the product itself*” (LePan; emphasis added). Chattels are given antibiotics “intended as preventative medicine” and “a hyperantibiotic ‘cocktail’” at the first trace of serious infection, but the risk of infection can hardly be avoided since “for efficiency there had to be strict limits on how much space you gave the chattels” (LePan).

From a nutritional perspective, the techniques related to the former feed processes of domesticated animals are rejuvenated with disabled children. Chattels are obliged to sleep in bunk beds made of “thin sheets of steel-reinforced aluminium” and besides each “was a cube that would dispense three times per day a precisely measured amount of purée into a detachable plastic trough” (LePan). With these scant living conditions, it is blatant that “the suffering of the animals becomes a concern only when it impacts productivity” (Fitzgerald and Pellow 41). In the final year of the mongrel’s life, the nourishment intensifies, and the story focuses on an environment marked by obese incapacitated children unable to walk: “Fat was everywhere; it sagged and surged from every body. The closer the chattels were to harvesting, the more they slumped, the more slowly they moved” (LePan).

One salient feature of intensive animal husbandry in the real capitalistic world lies in its capacity to obscure the inner violence associated with meat processing from the public eye. Another notable trait of the industry is how they calibrate societal demands to ensure satisfactory revenue in meat sales. The hegemonic maintenance of hidden customary operations

and consumer desires is accomplished through the synergy of various official establishments such as mass media, science, law, advertisements, and religion. For instance, liberal democracies entail a higher degree of freedom and lack of constraint from the state in comparison to authoritarian forms of government, “yet they ‘freely’ articulate themselves around definitions that generally favour the hegemony of the dominant class” (Clark and Ivanič 33).

In *Animals*, Broderick highlights that the “truth of what went on in the intensive farms of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries may have been an open secret, but it was largely kept secret” (LePan). In conformity with the hegemonic consent defined by Antonio Gramsci, where the powerful meat industries obtain active consent at the institutional and grassroots level for their policies and directives, the narrative reveals that “not many reporters did want to tell those particular truths, and not many newspapers or television stations wanted to print or broadcast them, and not many people wanted to read about them or see them” (LePan). However, if a reporter sought to investigate the ongoing practices on livestock and “tell the truth about what went on behind those fences and walls, it was extraordinarily difficult for her or for him to do so” (LePan). Such a purposeful hampering against disclosing the horrific procedures applied to farm animals resonates with Ag-Gag legislation in the US. This group of laws facilitates America’s animal agriculture industry to criminalize undercover investigations of factory farms (Fiber-Ostrow and Lovell 239).

Another factor that plays a major role in perpetuating and enhancing intensive animal husbandry is the scientific enterprise. In this regard, CAS notes that research can be marked by biases as in the case of vivisection which “is viewed as objective science even though the researchers almost always have personal financial gain tied into their research by way of funding from pharmaceutical companies or government agencies” (Glasser and Roy 99). In the fictional world of chattel farming, science aligns with the meat industry to ensure minimum

health risks among mongrels preceding the killing. Hence, for the betterment of production, a “number of studies [...] indicated that in the circumstances necessitated by this final stage, clothing was not only irrelevant and unnecessary, but indeed served as a breeding ground for infection and disease” (LePan).

The second novel, *Meat*, taking place in the fictitious city of Abyrne, deals only with cattle. The animal-industrial complex in the narrative boils down to two main actors, namely the Magnus Meat Processing (MMP) and the Church. To maintain the financial monopoly, “Abyrne’s business and its religion [...] are strange bedfellows” since they “tolerate each other because without each other neither would survive” (D’Lacey). As in LePan’s sci-fi novel, factory farms hinge solely on cost-effective, streamlined processes that disregard the excruciating pain caused to the livestock. The most important person in assuring the undisturbed functioning of the operations is the stun gunner, Richard Shanti, who controls the number of cattle being killed. The meat industry in the story revolves around the question: “What’s the chain speed today?” (D’Lacey). Asked by the chain manager, Shanti “checked the stun-counter beside the access panel against the main clock” and replied accurately in numbers (D’Lacey). The short conversation between the two workers reveals the extent to which, in capitalism, the notion of time is securely connected to that of productivity.

Hampering streamlined productivity comes with high costs to the workers. Even though “stockmen and slaughtermen were a valuable commodity,” some of them “retard the factory’s chain speed” (D’Lacey). As a consequence, the meat produced could be “pale, soft and exudative,” a “sort of meat people didn’t want to buy because it tasted bad and the texture was all wrong” (D’Lacey). In industrialized livestock farming, any kind of disruption in the quality of the final product results in lower sales which ultimately affects the capital gains of the business.

The lexicon accompanying smooth-running slaughtering procedures in the diegetic context reflects the compulsory efficiency associated with the preparation of meat. As in the real world, the assembly line for meat preparation needs to function at the highest pace without a glitch. Words like “quickly,” “speed,” “efficiency,” “productivity,” and “swiftly” become customary designations when depicting the steps involved in obtaining meat from domesticated animals. Hence, the trucks full of cattle “empty quick, the speed at which they do so directly affecting efficiency and productivity” (D’Lacey). After the captive bolt gun is used, “a process that should take no more than a two or three seconds,” the exsanguination method follows which occurs “more swiftly if the animal is left horizontal” (D’Lacey). All the workers partaking in the slaughtering must act promptly. P. Fiber-Ostrow and J. S. Lovell befittingly assert that farm animal agriculture is “charged with the visually unpleasant task of converting animals into food with much efficiency and rapidity” (233).

Besides the multitudes of synonyms describing the brisk procedure of rendering animals into meat, the story employs figurative language that evokes the sounds made by automatized processes and by the vulnerable cattle. This collection of stylistic devices underlines the control of cold, human-made tools over life, marked by frailty, and sufferance: “the *sighs* and *hisses* of the Chosen milling in the crowd pens, the *hollow knock* of *struggling* knees and elbows on *buckling metal* panels, the pneumatic *stamping* of the bolt gun, the *rattle* of chains, the *harsh breath* of the scalding vats, the *succulent drawing* of blades through *warm* flesh” (D’Lacey; emphasis added).

Behind the mechanized operations of slaughtering, another significant aspect contributing to the plight of nonhuman animals is that of maiming. In the real world, farm animals are crippled to reduce self-harm or injuring each other due to their constant distress. On a more detailed note, dairy cows “have up to two-thirds of their tails removed, a procedure intended to keep the udders clean for milk production,” cattle “raised for beef typically have

their horns amputated” and are also castrated (Fiber-Ostrow and Lovell 234). In the fictional context of *Meat*, Richard Shanti fantasizes that calves’ “fingers weren’t clipped down to the second knuckle, their thumbs weren’t removed, their tongues were whole and their vocal cords intact. The males weren’t castrated and none of them were hobbled by the removal of their big toes” (D’Lacey).

One major downside of capitalism among many others is that in case of overproduction, the surplus is not given to the indigent population but discharged. This unfortunate facet is well exemplified in *Meat* when “a few cuts of meat went unsold in butcher’s shops around the town” and began “rotting in their displays while poor people all over [...] starved” (D’Lacey). The excess meat must be disposed of to “stop the price [...] going down” (D’Lacey). As such, the relentless industry immersed in accumulating capital rejects all kinds of philanthropic acts if no financial gains are at stake.

Apart from animal abuse and capital interest, the livestock industries are detrimental to human health in that the marketable flesh, especially red meat consumed in high amounts may be linked to an increased risk of major chronic diseases such as “type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer and increased mortality risk,” according to new scientific evidence (Wolk 106). In D’Lacey’s sci-fi, the human population feeds exclusively on red meat resulting from the slaughtering of cattle. As a result, “the Shakes was a common illness in every district of Abyrne” (D’Lacey). There was no remedy for this fictitious chronic sickness. It could progress “gradually over years or swiftly within months, reducing its victims to quivering, man-shaped lumps of gelatine,” unable “to look after themselves—to eat, dress or shit without help. Eventually, they had no say in whether they held their shit in or not. Then they laid down to die” (D’Lacey).

Notwithstanding the scientific research pointing in the direction that at least the regular consumption of red meat carries significant health risks, “[n]o one talked about it much” (D’Lacey). The status quo related to nutrition and food commodification remains unchanged and openly unchallenged irrespective of the medical consequences it can bring to the population. In the same vein, in the non-diegetic reality, the majority of humans continue to give their active consent to buying and consuming meat despite the ever-growing collection of research that corroborates the increased mortality risk as a result of this normative habit. Apart from the general description of the Shakes, the novel exposes the disease at the individual level.

Two main characters are becoming ill with the Shakes, and both symbolize victims in the monopoly over the lives of cattle in different but symbiotic ways. The Parson Mary Simonson from the Church awoke each morning “to the nibbling in her stomach” with that “sensation of being devoured from the inside” (D’Lacey). In time, she was “unable to hold a pan or spatula steady” and “the trembling had spread to other parts of her body” but continued to eat “three meals a day of the flesh of the Chosen” (D’Lacey). Rory Magnus, the owner of Magnus Meat Processing, “tried to remember the first time he’d noticed that his hand wasn’t dead steady but he couldn’t pinpoint it” while in “his other hand a roughly rolled cheroot vibrated” (D’Lacey). John Collins, the leader of the countermovement, warns the holder of MMP of the health repercussions arising from a carnivorous diet but is unable to alter the leader’s convictions as long as the business provides him with financial gains and absolute control. He bluntly tells Magnus that “[m]eat causes illness. Flesh of the Chosen is toxic. Removing it from the diet ensures a longer, healthier life” (D’Lacey). He also states that he “never met anyone else, man or woman, that made it to sixty” (D’Lacey).

As seen, human and nonhuman farm animals are subjected to agonizing pains through institutionalized practices which include streamlined operations prior to slaughtering, maiming, low-quality living conditions and nutrition, and sporadic acts of abuse at the individual level.

The animal-industrial complex, besides the meat industry itself, is established by means of the contribution of several actors and networks such as mass media, the legislative milieu, science, and religion. The meat industry maintains hegemonic governance over the human population. It normalizes the act of killing vulnerable living beings and, at the same time, dexterously conceals the violence which is at the core. Both novels skillfully encapsulate the CAS key topic of farm animal exploitation while not losing their grip on the harmful consequences the capitalist mode of commodifying meat exert on human health.

4.2 Speciesist Discourses Towards Building the Hegemonic Consent

4.2.1 “Maybe He’s a Mongrel”: Otherizing Discourse in *Animals*

LePan’s sci-fi novel portrays an alternative future to our real world by depicting disabled human children as workers for menial tasks in the agriculture industry and as primary material for slaughterhouses. The novum “mongrel” functions as an umbrella term for all various sorts of mental and physical illnesses detected in human offspring. The transition between a human being to a subhuman is informed by Broderick’s account of the etymological evolution of the word “mongrel” and the manner in which it was embedded in the customary usage of various institutions and official establishments.

The socially constructed dichotomy human/nonhuman animal facilitates a taxonomical shift of children once deemed humans to the position of nonhuman. This radical readjustment reinforces the notion that any living being that falls prey to the category of nonhuman or subhuman is otherized. By otherized I refer to the extent to which humans, having the most desirable features for thriving in capitalism, create specific conditions to distinguish themselves from the vulnerable human and nonhuman living beings in order to subjugate and exploit the latter. In forging the ontological gap between what is human and nonhuman or subhuman the objectification of vulnerable groups comes into play. This presupposes an affective detachment and lack of empathy towards the plight of the oppressed other.

The origins of the novum “mongrel” carries racist significations that are examined in detail in section 4.4. However, the extent to which people of the narrative past that is akin to our nineteenth, twentieth, and present centuries relate to the terminological development of the term is of high importance. Broderick’s account follows a fluid classificatory system that historically revolves around young children with impairments. Hence, “[n]ot in those days, but not all that long before, no more than a few decades earlier, mongo (or the variant mongoid) was a very precise term for a certain sort of defective, a subclass of what we would now call a mongrel” (LePan).

The collective perception of incapacitated children changes radically in time as the conflicts over dominant ideas take place and reach a resolution only for a limited period. The narrative tells of the mongans during “the nineteenth century” not being “subjected to unnatural cruelty, to systematic mistreatment and crammed into factory farms as they are now” (LePan). The “twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Western civilization went to unnatural extremes, in entirely opposite directions,” a proof that “rhetoric belied reality” (LePan). One segment of the population banned the expression “mongoids” once they agreed that this vulnerable group is not “subhuman at all” and “for several generations people referred to mongoids as ‘people with Peake’s syndrome’” (LePan).

Nevertheless, in “the mid-twenty-first century, of course, the pendulum started to swing back toward where it had been in the nineteenth century—at least when it came to the treatment of mongrels” (LePan). Acknowledging the ontological root of dysfunctional children to pertain to the realm of the subhuman or the nonhuman other made people alter their perception and attitude towards mongrels. Paul Keen avows that it “is one thing to exist in a state of becoming whose very fluidity resists hegemonic pressures; it is quite a different thing, in the theatre of global politics, to suffer the consequences of becoming animal as a consequence of others’ decisions” (158).

The dominant speciesist ideology under which disabled offspring fall triggers a specific mongrel/human social dynamic at the grassroots level. Excluding the whole bureaucratic process involved in keeping a mongrel as a pet in a family, once established the child could never have “the same name as it had had before—you couldn’t have a mongrel with the same name you’d given it when you thought it was human. Or the same food. Any pet had to eat pet food, that was obvious. To be sure, there were families that would feed them scraps from the table” (LePan). The hegemonic adjustments and readjustments over time undergird the notion that all the classificatory systems operate as social constructs dictated by the dominant political and economic forces. Therefore, to satisfy the needs of chattel farming in obtaining higher amounts of raw material, a “wide range of congenital conditions, syndromes, and disorders” affecting those “with physical deformities as well as those with cognitive ones” came to be “slowly reclassified” as mongrels (LePan). Once this label broadens and becomes an overarching word for children suffering various types of illnesses, “there could be no significant barrier [...] so that it could serve in its present capacity” (LePan).

Apart from its racist and malleable connotations, the term “mongrel” draws on the meat paradox. As seen in subchapter 2.3, the meat paradox implies treating nonhuman animals in an anthropocentric speciesist manner. More specifically, it grants human compassion and excessive care to certain species such as dogs and cats while subjecting to killing and consumption of other types of living beings. In *Animals*, denying disabled children their human roots entails a process of otherizing marked by a compartmentalization of this vulnerable group into two subcategories: pet mongrels and chattels. The dualistic rhetoric that shapes their life is reflective of the unexamined inconsistencies of our attitudes and behavior towards nonhuman animals subsumed under the ideology of carnism (Joy 27-28).

In the narrative, the human population suffers equally from the extinction of pet animals as for the one of domesticated animals. The meat paradox is typified by Broderick’s account

when he states that it “was asserted on a variety of fronts that the loss of dogs and of cats was in its way as great a loss to humanity as that of beef or pork or cod or chicken, some said an even greater loss” (LePan). Since to no longer have “a cat or dog was an emotional loss for many families and even more so for many single people, a deeply and profoundly emotional loss,” humans immediately recognize that “mongrels could look cute, and many discovered that their warmth and their whimpering could be as comforting as that of a Pekinese or a Labrador” (LePan).

On the one hand, a solution for alleviating the affective side of humans can be found in assigning the role of animal pets to children with an impairment. On the other hand, the nutrition shortage can also be easily remedied by making a perceptual and rhetorical shift of the same vulnerable category to the former attributions domesticated animals had in the meat industry. Thus, the speciesist discourse represented by “a number of cogent voices” underlines “a potential connection between the alleged shortage of protein and the evident surplus of mongrels” (LePan). The seeming credibility of an actual incongruent discourse originates from the dominant class that is invested in making a profit out of the predicament of disabled children by all necessary means, including through manipulative speeches. In the story, “these *cogent* voices *plausibly argued* that it was *merely practical* and *not in any way cruel* to look at the big picture, to see the surplus mongrels not simply as a key part of a large problem, but as a key part of a *potential solution*” to what was “being seen as a *great crisis* in nutrition” (LePan; emphasis added).

The preservation of hegemonic consent lies in the deceitful use of specialized vocabulary. In the meat industry, the violent and cruel practices employed on nonhuman animals are concealed through a special idiom designed to instill emotional and rational numbness in the consumers. Melanie Joy reveals that, in mass media, words alluding to slaughtering or maiming are carefully chosen to prevent any discomfort in meat eaters (48).

Instead of “debeaking” a chicken the expression “beak conditioning” serves better the purpose of belittling nonhuman pain and makes the process seem “more like a spa treatment than a disfiguration” (Joy 48).

The corpse of a nonhuman animal is rarely referred to as a dead body and its body parts are assigned special names such as “sweetmeats,” “rump,” “silverside,” “steak,” “tripe,” or “T-bones” (Mitchell 74). In *Animals*, the discourse tied to the formation of chattel farms bears the same veiled traces of organized violence. Subduing vulnerable groups at an institutionalized level starts with enterprising intermediaries that “began to offer their services to catering companies, and to wealthy individuals and families, *couching their pitch in language* that made the whole enterprise seem almost *charitable*” (LePan; emphasis added). As in the real world, “the product was not called mongrel or mongrel meat. Just as in the old days people had distanced themselves from the animals they were eating by calling a cow beef and a pig pork, so too did they find other names for mongrel meat” (LePan). The previous meat industry revives with all its abusive parameters. Once the legislative milieu has been readjusted to fit the scope of producing and selling mongrel meat known as “yurn” or “fland”, the former slaughtermen “established the new cuts, and adapted the old butchers’ vocabulary to describe them” (LePan). Hence, “[t]erms such as rolled roast or circle steak or Denver slice were used in preference to flank steak, say, or shoulder roast” (LePan).

4.2.2 “Their Flesh is Sacred”: Religious Discourse in *Meat*

In D’Lacey’s sci-fi, the animal-industrial complex is presented as a simple constellation governed by the meat monopoly and the Church. The factory farm in the city of Abyrne uses cattle as the primary material for its violent operations and a scriptural book called “the Gut Psalter” or “the Book of Giving” as an emotional crutch or exemplary conduct for accepting the systematic killing of nonhuman animals at the grassroots level. The novel portrays religion as an authoritative discourse that, ultimately, serves the financial gains of the cattle industry.

Both the Magnus Meat Processing and the Church work symbiotically to keep the citizens within the hegemonic limits of purchasing and nurturing exclusively from cattle meat. How religion is depicted and used as a reinforcement tool for the economic interest of the meat plant in the narrative is reminiscent of some of the most widespread religious confessions in the real world such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam that traditionally engage in a violent interaction with certain types of domesticated animals as seen in their bodies of writing.

In the name of God, the violence applied to nonhuman animals becomes an indisputable sacramental operation. The speciesist religious discourse in the novel is contained in a scriptural book and its words are spread by the parsons of the Church. The speech, covering the slaughtering of cattle, bears commanding precepts and appears written in an archaic form of English that conveys the historical immutability of the text. The sanctified rhetoric functions as a “big lie” examined in subchapter 2.3 and is equivalent to “a cover-up for the procedures [...] which might not make sense on their own” (Mitchell 88). Maiming of the cattle is antagonistically informed by holistic guidelines imbued with sheer brutality: “Thou shalt keep my children silent by paring the reeds in their throats at the time of birth [...] Thou shalt keep my children from mischief by taking two bones from each finger in their first week [...] Thou shalt keep all other male calves chaste by castrating them in their ninth year” (D’Lacey).

Furthermore, the inception of the human population under God’s mighty protection and dominion is also depicted in the scriptural book. The simple tale epitomizes a narrative based on anthropocentric speciesism where God loves people and to satisfy their needs, he approves and ordains the killing of cattle. The scriptural story also specifies how the city of Abyrne and its citizens were created by a divine being—a supreme life-giver and taker. At first, “there was the promise and the promise was God. God filled the void with His presence. He commanded fire and fire arose in the void. From the fire He commanded the wasteland and the wasteland was so. But the wasteland was without life” (D’Lacey). However, “the townsfolk hungered and

their hunger filled God's heart with great sorrow. He commanded the Chosen that the townsfolk might never be hungry again" (D'Lacey).

As a key topic of CAS, industrial farming is maintained in *Meat* under the same pattern as it is in the real world, namely by multiple agents acting in mutual aid. While in the non-diegetic environment, the animal-industrial complex thrives through the capitalistic synergy of various official representatives. In the novel the meat monopoly relies on a religious rhetoric reinforced by the Parsons. The owner of the meat plant is a knavish individual positioned at the top of the financial ladder. Rory Magnus is fully aware of the disingenuity of the Book of Giving and the supremacy of his industry when he confesses that the "religion of the Welfare is an aid to business. Business comes before anything else in the world. Before love, before men and long before God" (D'Lacey). Magnus encourages readings from the scriptural book around the processing plant only to have the "things [...] maintained, to run smoothly" (D'Lacey). The apparent unshakeable monopoly system backed by unvarying religious tenets resonates with the entrenched convictions prevalent in our real world, with creeds that shape how capitalism and, more specifically, the farming industry works. The feigned plausibility of the religious rhetoric speaks to how nothing is essential about the world that dictates how things should be, "nothing that condones or excuses our conduct or exonerates us in any way [...] and the myth of hierarchy provides no refuge from that stark reality" (Mitchell 89).

The hegemonic consent, as argued by Antonio Gramsci and explained in section 2.3, is maintained in the novel by the civil society which includes the education and the religious system. Of significant importance is to clarify that for Gramsci the civil society includes "not the whole complex of material relations, of commercial and industrial life, but the whole ideological-cultural relations, of spiritual and intellectual life" (qtd. in Woolcock 203-204). The leader of the anti-meat group, John Collins, confesses to Rory Magnus that his critical view on the destiny of the cattle began at an early stage of his life: "We learnt about the Chosen, God's

sacred gift to us, when we were at school. The similarity between them and us seemed obvious but the teachers and the Parsons always played upon the differences—the lack of hair, the deformed hands and feet, the inability to communicate with us or each other. But I always had my doubts” (D’Lacey).

The dichotomy human/nonhuman animal is permanently reinforced by the scriptural book and the beliefs of the citizens are policed by educators and parsons. In fortifying the speciesist rhetoric, the Church representatives have the duty “to instill in people the importance of the words in the Book of Giving” (D’Lacey). Apart from the dominant ideology rooted in religious discourse, no other knowledge surrounding the lives of cattle is accessible to ordinary people. On this note, Collins admits that “in fact it’s almost impossible to get any information about what really happens to the Chosen. No such information is available” (D’Lacey). The concealment of the institutionalized operations on cattle is reminiscent of the hidden nature of factory farms in our empirical world.

The religious rhetoric is not only upheld by members of the civil society, it is adjusted and internalized by ordinary citizens. To exemplify, the stockmen in their spare time at a bar make a speciesist toast speech with the following words: “To the blood of the Chosen. Long may it nourish the town” (D’Lacey). In addition, the stunning operation at the meat plant must be accompanied by a particular wording rooted in religious precepts, meant to toughen the drives behind systematic killing and to numb the consciousness of the executor: “‘God is supreme. The flesh is sacred.’ He placed the bolt gun to the centre of its forehead, pulled the trigger” (D’Lacey). This habitual phraseology reflects the degree to which the ruling speciesist ideology in the narrative permeates all levels of societal interaction.

To sum up, in *Meat*, cattle are not reified as nutritive products devoid of any sentience as in *Animals* but are subjected to religious guidelines and sanctified assurance that eating them

does not correspond to an evil practice. In both sci-fi, the anthropocentric speciesist rhetoric is controlled by powerful agents having their streamlined operations concealed from the consumers. LePan's novel hinges on a fluid classificatory system and a taxonomical shift of disabled children while the second narrative takes on a religious approach when exploiting nonhuman animals. Both otherizing speeches are informed by specialized vocabulary which seeks to augment the socially constructed chasm between humans and other beings such as mongrels and the Chosen.

4.3 Nonhuman Animal Sentience and Agency

The deindividuation of nonhuman animals presupposes a total denial of their sentience and existential drive. Industrial farming operates by otherizing domesticated animals at the grassroots level to impel consumers to buy meat products. With the aid of several actors and networks such as mass media, the legislature apparatus, and advertisements, the animal industrial complex succeeds to instill in the minds of ordinary people a desensitized version of farm animals. Aiming to disrupt the hegemonic carnistic belief does not suffice to only present scientific evidence of the nonhuman animal ability to feel but to provide a close-up of the livestock and zoom in on individual cases.

The ensuing two sections focus on examples from both novels of particular vulnerable beings intended as primary material for industrial farming. Contrary to the overspread conviction that nonhuman animals are not cognizant of the environment in which they partake, do not possess distinct personalities nor are responsive enough, the narratives support the CAS anti-speciesist principle that human and nonhuman animals share "a common evolutionary heritage and sentience" (K. Davis 224).

4.3.1 Sam: The Anti-Speciesist Effect of a Single Story

The imbricated narrative threads in the sci-fi *Animals* operate, on the one hand, by showing the world of industrial farming from an almost objective yet ironical point of view, on the other hand by taking into account the life and predicaments of a young deaf boy. In a mixture between psycho-narration and free indirect discourse, Sam's thoughts, experiences, and feelings are supplied on a more detailed note. His agency and unique personality uphold the notion that each individual has a relatively distinctive behavior. Nonetheless, the wealthy class is interested in perpetuating the exploitation of otherized beings through institutionalized prejudice among which sexism, racism, classism, ableism, and ultimately speciesism can be named.

Sam becomes an adopted mongrel in an affluent family with three members: a married couple, Carrie and Zayne, and their small daughter, Naomi. The young child, who has a hearing impairment, is left unattended in front of their house by his poor mother. Sam "missed his mother so much, where was she [...] the things that went through his mind were like pain, it was so dark" (LePan). Soon, Naomi befriends Sam even though her mother's hegemonic stance concerning how mongrels should be exclusively treated as pet animals reverberates in her mind. His agency and drive to reciprocate the girl's affection evince his autonomous character in an anti-speciesist vein: "He was always *smiling*, always *friendly*, always *trying to help* [...]. And he hugged her *in return*, and *loved her*, she thought of it as holding him but *really he was holding her too*, and *loving her too*. He was always darting glances at her to see if she was happy, *what could he do to make her happy?*" (LePan; emphasis added).

Through Naomi's reasoning marked by unbiased rhetorical questions and observations, she bridges the socially constructed gap between humans and mongrels, an act that correlates to effacing the human/nonhuman dichotomy in the real world: "How different was he? How different were all of them, the mongrels? Maybe they weren't really that different at all, maybe

they could think things and feel things almost as we can. Well, feel things, that much she felt sure about, they could feel almost the way that humans did, maybe more than some humans” (LePan). This rationale undergirds the position CAS has on the similitudes between humans and other animals including insects: “planning for a future, long-term memory, deception, a sense of fairness, abstract reasoning, tool use, material culture, agriculture, language use, self-recognition, and even a relationship with the dead” (Weitzenfeld and Joy 7).

The boy’s alertness and affectability are emphasized when Naomi explains to him outside, near a fire pit and picnic table, what “yurn” is and how the operations at chattel farms function. Sam immediately senses the cruelty behind the hegemonic beliefs. While the girl “wrinkled her nose and made a face” at the meat on “the grill, a lot of meat and the smell was very strong”, Sam’s “face go all funny” when she clarifies “all about what the smell was, what they were cooking and all about where it came from” (LePan). Moreover, the boy “couldn’t get away from the thoughts, and from the nightmares” since his owner described to him where mongrels are sent, “how they lived [...] of what happened in the Repositories and at the chattel farms, and what happened to them at the end before they were packaged in pieces for the supermarket shelves” (LePan).

The novel reveals not only the joy and happiness of an adopted mongrel but his predicaments too. Once Naomi’s mother no longer desires to keep Sam as a pet animal, she takes him furtively to a place responsible for sending abandoned mongrels as flesh material for chattel farms. The meat paradox and its consequences transpire in the narrative when Sam has his ear cut to mark the shift from an adopted mongrel to chattel: “Not the metal tag on the collar ring, the tag that you attached to the leash and that had Sam’s name on it. [...] No, the problem would be the code tattooed inside the ear. They had used to do the same to dogs and cats in the old days, the days before the great extinctions, and now every mongrel had one, [...] so that if it got lost it could be easily identified” (LePan). Sam’s train of thought is revealed: “The corners

of the room were dark, and he could not quite make out the shapes along the walls. Machines of some sort? Garden tools? Sam tried to give them shape” (LePan). Before having his ear clipped, the boy speculates over the new devices inside the darkened place until “a bright light shone on his head [...] the hands were on him again, holding him, and some sort of clamp was lowered from a fixture bolted to the ceiling” (LePan). Ultimately, “the apprentice flinched at the animal’s scream, and the young man felt a twitching in some muscles in his chest” (LePan).

The anti-speciesist effect of a single mongrel story can be regarded as equivalent to a one similar tale of a domesticated nonhuman animal trapped in real-world factory farms. Through the eyes of the young child now labeled as chattel, the slaughterhouse system is depicted and viewed from the angle of a vulnerable being systematically subjected to excruciating pain and killing. One single account from billions of other unknown and lost forever tales could have an intensified the emotional effect on the reader.

As Sherryl Vint contends, “[w]ithout the individualization of suffering accomplished through the character of Sam, readers are perhaps given little reason to be motivated to learn more about animal suffering in factory farms and may not be inclined to read through page after unrelenting page of bleak commentary” (45). The boy is overwhelmed by the sensory conditions in the slaughterhouse pens and he “could not escape the smell, it was everywhere, it got into everything. It was old sweat, it was rot, it was pee, but mostly it was the other one, the really smelly one that everyone did [...] it was over a grate but you could see the turds bulging out as an animal squatted” (LePan). Sam is not aware of the location he finds himself in but notices that the place is filled with “hundreds of them, that he could see, hundreds and hundreds and a barrier all round” and on “the fourth side [...] there was a huge building” where “you went when it ended [...] Sammy thought” (LePan).

The boy’s high attentiveness and interior monologue provide a precise account of the most dreadful operations germane to the processes in the non-diegetic meat-packing industry.

Sam sees a “window in the huge dark building behind the pens, a single window, and always there was light behind it, and pink and red hunks of meat gliding by, on some sort of conveyor hoist it must be, red oozing from the flesh, it must be right near where the line began” (LePan). Furthermore, the fully conscious child keeps conjecturing on the suffering each individual undergoes before dying from the mechanized procedures.

The anti-speciesist effect is established by rendering Sam’s thoughts with the use of second-person pronouns meant to force the reader into the narrative. As such, the individual hardship and tormenting reasoning endured by disabled children labeled as chattel are channeled towards the audience to fictitiously subject the addressee to experience this well-organized mass torture. Sam knew that “*your* body would be caught by hooks and swung upside down. But *you* would be knocked out by the stun gun, and maybe *you wouldn’t feel much*, maybe *you would feel nothing* and the knife would slice across *your neck* and that would be that, but *you might be twitching*, and there was always some movement until the blood ran out” (LePan; emphasis added). If, at the beginning of the line “you were almost whole, then the limbs were gone, the guts, after that there would still be something on the hook, one large chunk on its hook on the line, still something that could be called your remains, and then not anything recognizable as part of a creature” (LePan).

4.3.2 “Sighing in the Most Urgent Tones”: When Cattle Unite in Power

The representational strategy employed in D’Lacey’s sci-fi about nonhuman animal sentience and agency counts on cattle as an over-arching concept including all kinds of domesticated animals. The close-up narrative technique on the lives and predicaments of this type of livestock helps disclose yet another anti-speciesist evidence that all living beings own unique personalities and matter individually.

Meat attempts to debunk the hegemonic affective numbness of the global society in front of the billions of nonhuman animals slaughtered annually. The narrative portrays two individual cattle. Their physiological and behavioral distinctness strives to broaden the reader's awareness and empathy towards nonhuman animals. The male BLUE-792 is "round-headed. He is grim-mouthed. He is bulldog-faced [...]. But sometimes, like now, he does allow an upcurling of the lips and an opening of the mouth into a grin. The smile reveals his slickened, toothless gums and behind them his yellow-coated tongue. Soft drumming comes to him" (D'Lacey). The female cattle, WHITE-047, is supposed to mate with BLUE-792. Thus, she "was standing unusually straight for a cow," her "eyes flashed excitement. They signalled astonishment. A kind of hunger and recognition [...]. It was as though the pair had known each other for years and were reuniting after too long apart" (D'Lacey). Their memory and ability to form relationships is corroborated by non-diegetic scientific evidence showing that "cows have a secret mental life in which they bear grudges, nurture friendships and become excited over intellectual challenges" (Townsend 449).

Another aspect of the complex personalities of cattle is their ability to express themselves. If in the real world, cattle display body language or their expressivity rest on various moves and particular sounds, in the sci-fi, these domesticated animals are furthermore endowed with verbal communication. Richard Shanti, the stun-gunner of MMP, begins to understand their language and hears their "prayer hundreds of times per day: Hhaah, Ssuuh. [...] May you go forward into your time with great dignity. May you hold your head up before the deft ones and welcome their shining points and blades. [...] We will see you in a land where pain is not even a memory, where what we go to give will not be asked for again" (D'Lacey). The veal calves create their own communication system, they "used similar sounds to communicate but their language differed from the rest of the herd because they were isolated and had created words for things only they experienced" (D'Lacey). At first, Shanti was unable

to decrypt their particular sounds, their “low percussion on steel panels and harsh, muffled breathing as row upon row of calves fed, grew, waited their turn” (D’Lacey). After being a while in their presence and paying heed, “[h]e could hear them. He learned their tongue” and acknowledged their worries as the cattle “neared their time and then the hisses and taps would become a kind of harmonized prayer to give them strength and courage” (D’Lacey). This intimate interspecies bonding under certain circumstances is recognized outside the narrative world by CAS and goes against anthropocentric speciesist scripts: “In that place of presence, of paying attention, of embodied listening, people actually hear the voices of nonhuman animals” (Corman and Vandrovcová 142-143).

The sci-fi augments nonhuman animal agency through the introduction of another novum, namely the power of cattle to rebel against the main actors of the meat monopoly. As a vulnerable group whose voice can barely be heard in the non-diegetic factory farms and whose drive to escape from violent mechanized operations is easily contained, in the narrative, the domesticated animals disrupt the hegemonic order and the anthropocentric hierarchy. In line with CAS scholarly work, nonhuman animals in the corporeal world are able to communicate their suffering in various manners such as “pigs in farms resist by escaping their pens and speak by screaming when their babies are taken from them. Cows will call loudly for days and even weeks after their calves have been taken from them” (Drew and Taylor 171). In the novel, “the Chosen began to leave their barns [...] In every field the Chosen stood next to each other, touching. Some leaned their heads together” (D’Lacey). Now the former stunner, Richard Shanti, becomes their guide into freedom: “One bolt was all it took to set every one of them free” and the male bovines followed him “as though he were the biggest bull among them” until they mixed with the dairy herd “touching frantically and sighing in the most urgent tones” (D’Lacey).

The radical twist of beliefs, the repudiation of the previous religious rhetoric by the cattle under the instruction of the prior captive bolt gunner who now conversed to an anti-speciesist citizen feeding from sunrays, triggers an organized nonhuman animal rebellion marked by a noise “greater, more penetrating than the shouts of the townsfolk or the retorts of the stockmen” (D’Lacey). The nonhuman animals choose, as proof of agency and commitment, to “follow the man of peace to this land” since they “who gave will give no longer” (D’Lacey). Unfettered, the “Chosen walked with the great dignity that they often spoke of to each other. They were no longer afraid to hold up their heads and let their eyes scan the horizon. It was hard on their mutilated feet but they did not falter” (D’Lacey).

Both novels share a representational model of anti-speciesism comprised of individual cases of vulnerable beings with distinct physical traits that are capable of a complex set of feelings, thoughts, and perceptions. In proceeding so, the socially constructed borders between human and nonhuman animals become blurred. At the same time, *Animals* and *Meat* draw on sci-fi innovations to ultimately defend the lives and rights of domesticated animals. The first novel ironically illustrates the degree to which people with economic interest and financial resources succeed in shifting the perception of disabled infants from human to subhuman or animal other and manage to create plausible rhetoric centered on their lack of sentience against all odds. This hegemonic twist enables juveniles to be subjected to the horrendous procedures of factory farming.

However, a close-up of the joyous moments and the suffering of a single child with an impairment in a slaughterhouse system can trigger a double shock for the reader. The emotional distress can be caused by fictitiously witnessing a human infant being trapped in an institutionalized practice normally dedicated to certain types of domesticated animals in our real world. But the distress can also be from an up-close exposure to meat procedures that are

normatively hidden from the public eye. The second novel delineates the sentience, unique personalities, and agency of domesticated animals and zooms in on the appearance and distinct gestures of a female and male bovine. From an anti-speciesist angle, the nova in *Meat* rest on the sociality of nonhuman animals and their power to act. Hence, the cattle not only acquire intra- and inter-species communication through verbal and corporal language but also manage to organize and revolt against human exploitation.

4.4 Portrayals of Racism, Ableism, Sexism, and Classism

A representation of societal biases and interlocking systems of oppression are present in both sci-fi and narratively corroborate the CAS academic entanglement with intersectionality by introducing anthropocentric speciesism in the equation concerned with intersecting degrees of power access. In *Animals*, the collective perception of human disability is morphed into hegemonic repulsiveness. The anthropocentric speciesist view of the elite class brought about ableism for capitalistic economic interest and maintained a classist mode of production. The second novel illustrates the intersectionality of unmarked categories such as speciesism, sexism, and classism stemming from the monopoly of the meat plant over a small fictitious locality. As defined by CAS, a just framework and theory-to-practice activism firstly implies recognizing all human and nonhuman systemic prejudices and secondly holistically abolishing them in order to reach what Steven Best means by the concept of total liberation, explained in subchapter 2.4.

The intersectionality between ableism and racism in LePan's novel is informed, in part, by the etymological evolution of the novum "mongrel" out of the word "mongo" and "mongoid," already touched in subchapter 3.2, and by how society reacts to humans classified under this imaginative category. The sci-fi presents a racist association of handicapped humans with "creatures [...] though born to Caucasian parents, resembled the peoples of the Mongo River region of North Africa" (LePan). Science interferes with this interlocking system of

oppression since the expression “mongan idiocy” invented by a fictitious academic, James Langford Peake, refer to the people he was describing in his book titled “Inquiry Into the Ethnic Element of Idiocy.” Moreover, Peake “saw them as a subspecies” (LePan). The hegemonically perceived downgrading of certain vulnerable human groups reminds us of the “political history of Western racism and its imbrication with discourses of speciesism its use of animals as technologies of human social division; and above all, perhaps, its metaphorization and deployment of ‘the animal’ as a derogatory term in genocidal and marginalizing discourses” (Keen 158).

The narrative underpins a significant connection between how Western society reacts to children branded as mongrels and how it responded, in the diegetic past mirroring back to, at least, our last two centuries, to other vulnerable groups of human beings. Rooted in economic unviability and anthropocentric speciesism, “[t]o more and more people the very idea of giving jobs, or government grants, or hospital beds to mongrels was like the idea of giving such things to cows or pigs in an earlier era. How could one justify lavishing attention on such creatures when too little attention was being paid to humans who needed help?” (LePan). Therefore, societal attitudes against disabled children become in time “stronger, for example, than had been most of the waves of anti-immigrant or race-based feeling that had periodically swept through most nations in earlier times. [...] White people used to hate the thought of a black person touching the water they swam in; Christians and Muslims had for long periods thought of each other as less than fully human—and thought of Jews as lower still” (LePan).

A bona fide case from Nazi Germany draws on the economic and ideological interests of the affluent class and resembles how disabled children in the narrative labeled as subhuman are legitimately killed after being exempted from social and medical rights. The new eugenics campaign called the T4 Program “initiated the systematic murder of mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and physically infirm Germans who were an embarrassment to the myth

of Aryan supremacy” (qtd. in Patterson ch.4). In the narrative, the medical treatment destined for extending the lifespan of disabled children becomes a societal burden. Due to the taxonomical shift of the word “mongrel,” children with impairment “could for a time still get the existing drugs and treatments, but as soon as new ones were developed it seemed that more insurance plans (government-run as well as private) were excluding mongrels from coverage. And before long the “grandfathered” coverage began to lapse in one jurisdiction after another” (LePan).

Right before the invention of chattel farms, parental attitudes towards their incapacitated offspring adapt to the novel hegemonic biased view. Gradually, the number of unwanted mongrels arriving at public facilities such as schools or hospitals began to grow significantly. However, to host the children there for an indefinite period would be “an absurd drain on the public purse, on the pocketbooks of taxpayers who worked to earn their dollars and who would not stand to see them spent except in the most useful and productive ways” (LePan). Therefore, by providing a prolific lawful frame that enables the systematic murder of *otherized* beings, *Animals* portrays a legislative context reminiscent of Germany’s T4 program marked by a secretly drafted law that “envisioned killing people suffering from serious congenital mental or physical 'malformation,' because they required longterm [sic] care [...], and were situated on 'the lowest animal level'” (qtd. in Patterson ch.4).

Concerning the legislation and its openness to create a fertile ground for official exploitation, LePan’s novel continues with an ironical note on how the sale of meat products from children's flesh is possible. Again, it indirectly draws on racist references: “Crucially, the view that no legal prohibition existed against the production and sale of yurn depended on the law being interpreted in such a way as to define mongrels as animals, not as humans” (LePan). In “a six-three vote the Court decided that a mongrel was a non-human animal” in a first-ever case in the United States, it also “proved impossible to claim on any legal grounds that it should

be paid as a person” (LePan). Consequently, the word “chattel” is introduced to identify mongrels laboring for a few years in the factory farms before being slaughtered. The perceptual shift of disabled children paves the way to their total exploitation and is akin to the hegemonic itinerary of African-Americans in the antebellum US where they were pejoratively likened to nonhuman animals to be subjugated for slave owners’ financial interest. As Steven Best avows, “by denigrating people of color as ‘beasts of burden,’ an animal metaphor and exploitative tradition facilitated and legitimated the institution of slavery” (Best, *Rethinking* 12). In addition, the interlocking modes of oppression revolving around anthropocentric speciesism and racism are upheld with remarks that human prejudices, such as those directed at immigrants or Black people, are predicted by mental portrayals of those categories as animal-like or subhuman (Hodson and Costello 187).

Similar to the historical racism that stemmed from anthropocentric speciesism in the corporeal world, in *Animals* a radical version of ableism rises from a former speciesist and racist culture. In a reproachful manner, Broderick appeals to the memory of new chattel farm owners to “remember how economics and expediency shaped their own practices with regard to their fellow creatures. To remember how, over the course of a little more than half a century, they had quietly changed virtually every aspect of the lives of the creatures whose milk they drank and whose flesh they ate” (LePan). The hegemonic ableist ideology is further reinforced by the masses just like speciesism has been perpetuated over centuries. Hence, the old human/nonhuman binary opposition altered into another naturalized division such that “everyone had been habituated over many years to think in terms of the dichotomy, mongrels and chattels or humans, humans or mongrels and chattels” (LePan).

At the grassroots level, ableism takes on controversial implications from the meat paradox tackled in sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1. The story further rebukes ascribing both the role of food and source of company for a human to a single vulnerable group. As a pet, Sam would

sleep in “a little cot down in the basement. He would have a flannel sheet and heavy blankets, but not the good sheets. They started dressing him in the bright, coarse wool coveralls that you’d see mongrels wearing everywhere” and would “eat not at the dining table but in the kitchen, at a little low table in the corner” (LePan).

An example of intersectionality that includes at least the unmarked categories of ableness and affluence is drawn from the mentality of Naomi’s mother, a wealthy woman having some of the most favorable human traits in the sense defined by Matthew Calarco. Carrie epitomizes the hegemonic perception of mongrels and what in the diegetic past was that of nonhuman animals. She recalls the day when she could certify that “something was growing inside her” (LePan). Her line of reasoning is imbued with ableist and speciesist remarks that give way to the interconnectedness of discriminations: “An animal was growing inside her, a dirty and disgusting little vegetable-faced animal, an animal with something of the look of a human in its limbs and its torso but a thing debased, a creature of no mental powers, ruled by crude instincts and raw appetites” (LePan). Instilled by official establishments that seek to preserve the new mongrel-industrial complex, Carrie’s thoughts further reflect the ruling ideology: “She saw the continuum among all these creatures of minimal mental powers: fetuses, chattels, the cows and pigs that had been a part of her parents’ world” (LePan).

In D’Lacey’s sci-fi, the workers at the meat monopoly exhibit sexist and classist behavior. As examined in subchapter 2.4 and similar to what *Animals* conveys, the narrative undergirds the correlation between anthropocentric speciesism and other types of human institutionalized prejudices. The chain manager, Bob Torrance, and his subordinates from Magnus Meat Processing disrespect women in their leisure time at the club: “The older stockmen ignored the dairy boys and even Torrance paid them only a few passing words when he wasn’t busy laughing with his crew or slapping one of the women on the arse” (D’Lacey).

The MMP proprietor, Rory Magnus, acts subversively and exploitatively towards his maids since they “were used to his demands, however, ready to be of service day or night” (D’Lacey).

An individual act of sexism is radicalized in the story through the character of Magnus who orders his maids to confine Maya, the wife of the former stunner, to bed: “Go in there and tie her up. Gag her and blindfold her. Do what you want with her. Enjoy yourselves. When she looks like *she’s stopped having fun, you come and get me*. Then we’ll all take our time. I think I could go on until morning” (D’Lacey; emphasis added). The climax of the violence is when the maids “took Maya away when he’d worn himself out. They took away the sheets, soiled with smears of her blood and vomit, and replaced them so that he could sleep” (D’Lacey). In the light of CAS and the non-diegetic world, the tale attests to the fact that women and animals are devalued and, in combination with the valorization of dominance and governance in a patriarchal culture, they are at risk of harm (Fitzgerald and Pellow 35).

Moreover, as a multi-oppressor, Magnus crosses all borders of ethical behavior and attempts to practice pedophilia on Maya’s twin girls. His deep entrenched speciesist creeds nurture the belief that children, yet another category of powerless beings, can be subjected to abuse, just like nonhuman animals are: “Cajoling and chastising them, he had persuaded them to remove their dresses and under-things. It had taken only a few minutes. Now his captives trembled in misery like sallow, cornered prey” (D’Lacey). In the proceeding paragraph, the interlocking systems of oppression in *Meat* are further analyzed by adding a new parameter of institutionalized prejudice, namely, classism.

Rory Magnus, sometimes referred to as the “Meat Baron,” reveals through his attitude a high degree of dominance and a deep sense of property. Owing the monopoly over the cattle business impels him to declare in a classist and speciesist way that “[e]very single beast in this town belongs to me and anyone that treats my beasts with anything other than respect is going

to pay the price. What I can't comprehend is why my workers haven't got that into their tiny brains yet" (D'Lacey). The proclivity of individuals encompassing the most desirable human traits to adopt anthropocentric speciesist etiquette is informed by his intimidating appearance and habits.

In his office, he "sat back in his swivelling, reclining chair and lit a small black cheroot. The *links of gold* on his *broad wrist* reflected yellow firelight, as did the gold lighter when he *snapped it shut* and *dropped it onto his desk*. He was *freckled and massive*" (D'Lacey; emphasis added). Moreover, there "was a constant tension in his face and the tendons of his neck, a barely contained urge to leap forwards, to be first out of the blocks, to hammer someone with his fists, to place a kiss or clap a shoulder. No one could predict what the tension implied, only that it implied action" (D'Lacey). Reminiscent of a lion since his "mane was ginger, white at the temples and sideburns, his beard overgrown," the hypercarnivore proprietor is emblematic of an ableist, energetic, rough and competitive individual.

The meat plant's owner exerts an authoritative force over the life of his workmen. The sci-fi offers an account of a stockman sexually abusing one of the female cattle. Due to his misbehaving, Magnus orders his bodyguards to make "sure Snipe is processed immediately. I want nothing but sausage to remain by this evening" (D'Lacey). As an individual embodying all kinds of oppressions manifested at the institutional level, he is devoid of empathy towards both human and nonhuman animals. While the punished stockman was suffering massively from bodily procedures prior to slaughtering, Magnus "lit a cheroot from the previous one he'd been smoking" while he "could hear the faint sounds of struggling, the rush of bodily evacuations and inevitable dunking and wet thrashing. He'd heard it all a hundred, a thousand times, before and he never tired of it. This was how to rule the town" (D'Lacey).

An example of how systemic classism is preserved and reinforced inside the factory farm relates to Magnus' direct subordinates that present to the other workers the fatal retribution of Snipe, the stockman, as an exemplary deed. The chain speed supervisor indirectly menaces the young milkers to maintain discipline and unconditional conformity: "Snipe, your old boss, is in there somewhere and that's entirely fitting. He did something unforgivable by God and by Magnus. Now he's going to give of himself to feed the townsfolk, light their stoves and power our trucks. [...] One way or another we all make that contribution, boys. Best to make it the right way. Know what I mean?" (D'Lacey). *Meat* brings forth a generalization of the classist hierarchy inside the MMP and highlights how the young dairy farmers, the workers having the lowest jobs in the beef sector, must show behavioral acquiescence and accomplish the daily tasks flawlessly. Nonetheless, the supervisor "let them know how he felt about their shortcomings, sometimes threatening them with their jobs. They may have hated the Dairy but they'd never find as well paid a job anywhere else in the town and they all knew it" (D'Lacey).

Both sci-fi novels attest to the various forms of systemic abuses and their interrelated nature. While human disability permeated by racist connotations in *Animals* is altered to fit the new meat demands that are socially constructed by the industry owners in cooperation with various official establishments, in *Meat* the sexual exploitation of women and the mistreatment of livestock workers are exerted by a voracious authoritarian form of industry. These organized maltreatments are upheld by anthropocentric speciesist individuals solely focused on corporate gain.

4.5 Human Agency and the Fight against Meat Culture

In line with CAS theory-to-activism disciplinary nature, the novels not only bring to light the exploitation of human and nonhuman animals in speculative and realistic ways but stress the importance of human capability in recognizing the institutionalized harm and acting against it. Both sci-fi novels approach human agency in different ways yet the overall message

that transpires through the course of events is the same: anthropocentric speciesism can only be discredited if people recognize the socially constructed border between human and nonhuman animals and, consequently, engage in direct action.

4.5.1 Individual Disapproval of Chattel Farming

Animals exposes individual revolt against the meat culture and acknowledges of the plight disabled offspring must face with the emergence of the mongrel-industrial complex. If the majority of the population in the story exhibits the hegemonic desire not to attest to the horrendous practices in chattel farms, a few do counteract with plausible argumentation and compelling intuition as in the case of empathic children and a few of the livestock workers.

As a starting point, the narrative is highly critical of humans' lack of agency in stopping the ongoing farm practices in the non-diegetic world. The interplay between ironical and reproachful tones is typified by Broderick finding a newspaper piece that belonged to his great-grandfather. The article tells of people's hypocrisy towards the genuinely violent practices applied to farm animals: "*Fortunately* for us, we're so removed from where our food comes that *we can choose not to know. Ignorance is bliss, and I, for one, am a devoted carnivore. I have studiously tried* to avoid learning about the revolting details of factory farming, because if I knew, then I would have to stop eating meat and *start sending money to the animal-rights movement*" (LePan; emphasis added). As clarified in subchapter 2.3, this conscious numbness reminds us of humans' psychological dimension tending to give ethical acceptance to unethical situations as long as they are collectively sustained by society.

Few workers in chattel farms become aware of the plight the industry brings to domesticated animals. In debunking the hegemonic mindset forged by the meat industry, the first step is to acknowledge the horrors behind its functionality. One of the members of the medical staff, responsible for the health of mongrels, recognizes that in case of "foot rot" due

to bacteria or fungi, the diseased mongrel is “sent to the plant early, to the Special Processing Unit” where the affected limb is removed and “then the rest—well, you don’t have to have all the details, I know you don’t” since “[i]t’s not nice [...] [n]one of it is nice, not any of it” (LePan). Rose, a guardian watching over the farm’s entrance informs her husband about her future readiness to remove meat from her diet: “You know, Jesse, sometimes I wonder about some of the stuff we do out there, sometimes I think it wouldn’t hurt us to not eat any of that stuff ourselves, I don’t mean just cut down on the fatty bits, I mean any of it” (LePan). Out of ethical concerns for nonhuman animals, Rose articulates the premises for becoming an authentic vegan since her worries do not stem from human health protection: “I know that sounds crazy and sure we get the staff rates, it’s not that pricey for us but still, sometimes I wonder if it’s not good, what we’re doing to the animals and all, sometimes I think it’s just wrong, maybe it wouldn’t hurt us to cut back on it at least” (LePan).

A child’s psyche is not yet imbued with hegemonic notions surrounding the normality of meat consumption. *Animals* reveals the torments of Naomi, the daughter of the family that adopted Sam as a pet mongrel. Despite the indications received from her parents who “told her she couldn’t have a mongrel, mongrels were too much trouble, she’d lose interest in it in the end half of them had to be sent to the Repositories anyway, in the end people who kept mongrels got tired of them, that was just a fact,” Naomi “knew it wouldn’t be like that with her” (LePan). Sam is abandoned by his indigent mother on the veranda of Naomi’s family home. Naomi’s father, Zayne, tries to convince his daughter not to care about the mongrel while he “kept himself from glancing any more at the shivering thing on the corner of the veranda” (LePan). The girl strongly counteracts by shouting at her father who “noticed that Naomi called it a ‘he’”: “But we can’t just leave him here Daddy!” (LePan). The child’s behavior is informed by a strong position against the customary demeanor manifested by adults in conflict about whether or not to take responsibility for a mongrel who is actually a disabled young human.

Naomi takes one more step on the scale of the counterhegemonic battle and challenges her parents when it comes to nourishing habits. Hence, she “burst out one day at the dinner table [...] just after she turned ten” and brings forth cogent justifications in favor of ceasing to consume yurn (LePan). The girl bluntly says: “I don’t think we should serve chattel meat [...] I don’t think we should eat any meat at all. Even birds, birds have brains too, they have feelings” (LePan). Pointing to the sentience and intellect of nonhuman animals triggers a defensive reaction in her mother who replies in assonance to what Melanie Joy states about the three types of justification surrounding the meat-eating practices mentioned in subchapter 2.3: “‘But it’s natural, little Gnome. You’re a lovely child and that’s a lovely thought, but you can’t ask people to do what doesn’t come naturally to them’” (LePan).

Another significant counterhegemonic line of reasoning can be seen in Naomi’s train of thought. Following CAS’s goal to remove the socially constructed anthropocentric speciesist gap between human and nonhuman animals, the girl “had grown so used to thinking of mongrels as fellow creatures, no matter what was wrong with them, no matter if they could talk or not, no matter how long they might live [...] creatures that it was important to care for and to keep from harm” (LePan). In addition, a new admonishment towards the collectively forged adult attitude against nonhuman beings is expressed through Naomi’s simplistic but sound conclusion: “That was how you should treat all creatures, it wasn’t so complicated, really” (LePan).

On a more general note, the writer J. M. Coetzee properly contends that “children provide the brightest hope. Children have tender hearts, that is to say, children have hearts that have not yet been hardened by years of cruel and unnatural battering” (Animals). The novel attests to Coetzee’s position: “The subject of mongrels and chattels came up in conversation in any household at least once or twice a year. ‘What do you think about eating meat?’ ‘What do

you think about the chattel industry?’ And so on. As in a lot of families, the one who voiced the doubts most forcefully was the youngest member of the family” (LePan).

The conflictual mother-daughter relationship intensifies since Carrie notices that Naomi “was putting her whole life into this creature it had never been right and now it was worse, she had become delusional, truly delusional” (LePan). The clash between a mother hegemonically shaped and her subversive offspring impels the former “to be firm too, to set limits, to shape a child, to do the right thing, and to show a child what the right thing was” (LePan). When Carrie secretly decides to send Sam away, her daughter actively searches for him. Since “her father told Naomi what had happened she knew they would have to be moving, moving ever so fast to find him” (LePan). In other words, she acts in a counterhegemonic way by following her own anti-speciesist ethical constellation and thus promotes direct action in the manner argued by CAS.

4.5.2 Human Awareness and Direct Action Towards Nonhuman Suffering

Meat provides an incremental human acknowledgment of cattle predicaments, and in addition, it radicalizes the CAS principle of explicit commitment concerning animal liberation. The story underlines the capacity of a group of humans to cease their hypercarnivore diet and revolt against powerful actors such as the MMP and the Church that are representative of the non-diegetic animal-industrial complex. At the same time, the narrative proposes veganism as another essential measure of activism in the fight for nonhuman animal welfare.

The workers placed on the front line of the factory farms have unmediated contact with domesticated animals, with their violent deaths. The stunner of MMP, Richard Shanti, feels remorse at his systematic killings. However, he “never spoke of his culpability to anyone. He did not share his horror at the part he played each day. Instead, he made himself suffer in every way he knew. In this manner he planned to punish himself for his wrongs while he was alive”

(D'Lacey). His train of thoughts converted to rhetoric questions continues with the same hint of repentance: "How could you watch the light go out of thousands of pairs of eyes and not be affected by it? How could you not wonder where that light went? How could you not wonder if there was something wrong in what you were doing?" (D'Lacey). The narrative draws on an apocalyptic representation of the crippled corpses of the Chosen, seen through the eyes of the terrified stunner and germane to Sue Coe's artwork: "He saw mutilation. Skin punctured. Skulls breached. Blood wasted on floors and steel tabletops. [...] The deft trimming of fat with long, fine blades. Chops and fillets tossed onto moving belts - separated from carcasses so swiftly the meat was still warm and steaming. [...] He was paralyzed" (D'Lacey).

Step by step, the stunner, once called "the Ice Pick or Ice Pick Rick because of the total cool with which he manned the stun gun," becomes involved with the plight of cattle at the meat plant. His strong empathy and switch from emotional numbness translate, in the beginning, into self-bodily punishment. On "the Sunday run, his corporal mortification was so severe and sustained he could almost believe he might one day be free of his deeds" (D'Lacey). The worker attempts to communicate with some of the bovines after his contemplation: "Did BLUE-792 understand him? The Chosen listened daily to the chatter and banter and shouts of the stockmen [...]. He wanted to let the bull know that he thought about him. That he watched him. That he cared" (D'Lacey). His anti-speciesist attitude paves the way for how people could take heed of the lives of domesticated animals.

Shanti's incremental behavioral adjustments speak of the individuals' power to disrupt the hegemonic order. Through interstitial activities, the stun gunner opts for values and beliefs unapproved collectively. Slowly, he unlearns the process of deindividuation applied to nonhuman animals for "[w]hat he saw each day was not a parade of mindless cattle, nor was it a queue of expressionless, animal faces. It was not lives he saw passing him by and winking out" (D'Lacey). Richard "saw in the lines of Chosen that passed each day was a montage of

eyes” that were “luminous woodland green. The eyes were polished antique brown. The eyes were wise grey. The eyes were the blue of free skies and shattered sapphires. The eyes were ringed with the whites of pleading, whites of staring” (D’Lacey). Since his “life was empty of hope,” the MMP stockman decides to join the meetings organized by the prophet John Collins, the leader of the countermovement, and “so, before the sun rose each morning, he did as the quiet man had shown him. Day by day, he changed” (D’Lacey). Slowly, the worker attempts to adapt his family to his new credence, but his wife’s entrenched vision compatible with the meat culture remains unshakeable: ““I can’t believe it has to come to this before you start to care for your own children. They’re too thin, Richard. [...] Why must you treat us this way?”” (D’Lacey). To this question, Shanti replies with full anti-speciesist awareness: “Because I care about you. I care about your spirits” (D’Lacey).

The other members of his family, namely his twin girls, succeed in recognizing the ontological resemblances between human and nonhuman animals since, as in *Animals*, children exhibit a penchant for seeing the facts unblemished by hegemonic mediacy. When “for the first time, they saw bulls and cows in the flesh, up close. There too, they saw calves pressed close to their mothers. Some of the calves were the same size as the twins. Their eyes met. The twins saw the calves for what they truly were. Children” (D’Lacey).

The organizer of the countermovement employs anti-speciesist rhetoric in front of the MMP owner. John Collins justifies his lifestyle and nutritional habits corresponding to a vegan diet in the empirical world. He confesses to Magnus that the “first thing I realized was that to make meat, you actually have to kill something. I can’t imagine why it took me so long to work out that one simple thing” (D’Lacey). Prior to slaughter, “[y]ou have to raise the living thing, feed it, breed it, fatten it” (D’Lacey). A radicalized form of veganism comes into play. Collins mentions that the “first thing I did was stop eating meat. It wasn’t easy. There’s so little else to eat in the town” (D’Lacey). At first, the prophet replaces meat with small quantities of

vegetables since “[m]ost of the grain we produce goes to feed the Chosen” and “[g]etting enough vegetables to make a meal was a struggle, especially with Parsons of the Welfare watching all the time. It took months to collect enough seeds and sets to start my own garden. But there are sources, places you can go” (D’Lacey). At this point, the narrative showcases the non-diegetic lack of variety of vegan products in supermarkets but at the same time, it underlines the importance of continuing to breach the status quo.

The story upholds the view of CAS regarding veganism and the crucial significance to be adopted as a lifestyle since it represents “both a symbolic gesture of boycott against the institutionalized oppression of nonhuman animals and a concrete effort to incorporate in everyday life the ethical and political awareness” that nonhuman animal use is unfair and harmful not only for them but for humans as well (Matsuoka and Sorenson 3). Gradually, the novel poses an extreme version of veganism as seen by a dietary novum specified in subchapter 3.2, which consists of solely nurturing from sun rays.

Meat presents one of the most far-reaching measures that stands as a token for direct action and engagement with farm animal welfare. The countermovement organizes a blast at the gas facility and electricity supplier responsible for the functioning of streamlined operations: “At three in the morning by the town bell they moved, silent as shadows, yet full of light. He took them all with him, wanting their numbers to be worth more than their might. He knew the best place to enter the facility’s grounds, far from the main gates where the truckloads of stinking intestines arrived for processing” (D’Lacey). In an anarchic fashion, the group “took what tools they could find—wrenches, axes, cutters, screwdrivers and hammers and wreaked as much chaos as they could. Metal on metal made more noise than flesh on flesh” (D’Lacey).

The sci-fi ultimately renders animal justice in a dystopic manner. It articulates how the city of Abyrne cannot escape its dreadful faith so that both nonhuman and human freedom becomes tangible. The overturn of the hegemonic hierarchy and speciesist dominant ideology

comes from total erasure and hope for a new beginning. Both the Church and MMP lose their grip on the citizens and meat market. The former ideologic control is soon permeated with doubts since “[r]umour spread from house to house about the struggle for supremacy between their Meat Baron and the Welfare. Other stories made the rounds. Prophet John had a band of warriors and planned to starve the town into converting to his insane ways. The supplies of the Chosen were dwindling. [...] Other tales told of a mass slaughter that had begun” (D’Lacey).

As a new vegan member of the countermovement, Richard Shanti continues his powerful activism at the factory. He heads towards one of the railings of the pens and taps “there with his thimble fingers. The rhythm tinkled brightly and penetrated the air. Shanti breathed his hisses and sighs. The Chosen fell silent and listened. [...] Shanti was talking to them and they were taking it all in” (D’Lacey). Human agency is epitomized by the ex-stunner guidance of the cattle along with the other associates: “By evening, all the Chosen had stepped from the road into the wasteland. Behind them came the last of the followers. [...] The town of Abyrne lay distantly in the west now while the Chosen walked eastward. Not one of them looked back” (D’Lacey).

An impassioned plea for nonhuman animal justice is found in both novels. *Animals* is informed by intense condemnation towards the lack of adult human agency in overturning the systemic exploitation of disabled children. At the same time, it pinpoints the moral constellation of children untouched by hegemonic consent and the degree they intuitively grasp and struggle to act against the horrors within factory farms. *Meat* illustrates an incremental human awareness over the same systemic abuse, introduces a radicalized form of veganism, and, later on, an extreme resolution or direct action against nonhuman exploitation that translates into an expanding countermovement seeking to erase the existing socio-economic structures.

5. Conclusion

The topic of farm animal exploitation, as one of the most salient concerns of CAS, is addressed in contemporary Anglophone sci-fi novels such as in LePan's *Animals* and D'Lacey's *Meat*. Besides the subject of domesticated animal abuse, other CAS predominant themes like nonhuman animal sentience and agency, speciesist discourses, portrayals of racism, ableism, sexism, and classism, and direct action in fighting against the animal-industrial complex are attended to in these fictional works.

Sci-fi is a powerful tool in throwing a critical lens on real-world problems in that, with the aid of cognitive estrangement and nova, it indirectly captures the socially constructed pulse of the society, whether by showing an apocalyptic tomorrow with no resolution on the horizon, or by providing an idealized setting as a possible fix to the corporeal world state of the art or course of events situated between a dystopic and utopic premise. Literature per se appeals to its audience in a non-academic and habitually emotional way.

Entangled with CAS key topics at the form and content level, both dystopias tend to unearth the fictitious gap between human and nonhuman animals, to pinpoint the systematic violence the main actors and networks engaged in upholding the meat industry apply to domesticated animals for financial benefits, the hegemonic consent at the grassroots level, the interlocking nature of various systemic discriminations and their reverberations on individual cases. The empirical world is reimaged in the novels in distinct manners. The large-scale problem of animal exploitation in factory farms is touched through a radicalization of the source of prime material for the industry in *Animals* and of the socio-political system and its overthrow in *Meat*.

D'Lacey's novel poses an indirect menace to the non-diegetic animal-industrial complex while foreshadowing one possibility from the infinite possibilities of our future by

answering the question: “What if we could erase the extant socio-economic structures?” This speculative scenario placed at the very end of the narrative tells that the only hope for a brighter future is to start afresh in another locality. If *Meat* draws on revolutionary changes and departures as a trampoline to new beginnings, *Animals* advances the shocking novum of owning disabled children instead of farm animals but leaves the prospective development of the mongrel-industrial complex a full mystery.

Both sci-fi novels show a close-up of *otherized* groups typified by human offspring with impairment or cattle to, ultimately, articulate the obvious reply to the question nonhuman animals might pose to us: Am I Sentient?

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Abstract

Critical Animal Studies (CAS), as an interdisciplinary academic field, is concerned with bridging the socially constructed chasm between human and nonhuman animals by deconstructing anthropocentric speciesism, a system of belief wherein the latter are deemed inferior and employed solely as means for human ends. Fictional works attending to nonhuman animal welfare and liberation appeal to their readers in a non-academic and often emotional vein. Therefore, literature can be seen as a form of activism as long as it reflects anthropocentric speciesism in the light of CAS.

This thesis seeks to investigate to what degree the subject of farm animal exploitation, as one of the major interests of CAS, is addressed in the 21st-century Anglophone sci-fi novel. I focus on Joseph D'Lacey's *Meat* (2008) and Don LePan's *Animals* (2010), which portray the evils behind systemic nonhuman and human-animal abuse using different narratological approaches. *Meat* renders a world in which cattle are mistreated for financial gains but ultimately revolt with the aid of a group of people solely feeding from sun rays. *Animals* illustrates a society where nonhuman animals went extinct and uncovers how morally unjustifiable business in capitalism, such as the development of intensive farm factories based on disabled human children, is gradually accepted.

This paper's outcome does not only reveal how the farm animal systemic mistreatment is represented in the stories but also the other CAS key topics such as nonhuman animal sentience and agency, speciesist discourses, and human agency in debunking and fighting against the meat culture are minutely tackled.

Zusammenfassung

Kritische Tierstudien (CAS) als interdisziplinäres akademisches Feld befasst sich mit der Überbrückung der sozial konstruierten Kluft zwischen menschlichen und nichtmenschlichen Tieren über die Dekonstruktion des anthropozentrischen Speziesismus, einem Glaubenssystems in welchem zuletzt genannte als minderwertig angesehen werden und, wie im bestehenden System der Kommodifizierung, ausschließlich als Mittel für menschliche Zwecke dienen, das im Kapitalismus sowohl zu menschlicher als auch zu nichtmenschlicher Ausbeutung führt. Fiktionale Werke, die sich mit dem Wohlergehen und der Befreiung nichtmenschlicher Tiere befassen, sprechen ihre Leser auf eine nicht-akademische und oft emotionale Weise an. Literatur kann daher als eine Form des Aktivismus angesehen werden, solange sie den anthropozentrischen Speziesismus im Lichte von CAS widerspiegelt.

In dieser Arbeit wird untersucht, wie das Thema der Ausbeutung von Nutztieren, als eines der Hauptinteressen von CAS, im anglophonen Science-Fiction-Roman des 21. Jahrhunderts behandelt wird. Ich konzentriere mich auf Joseph D'Laceys *Meat* (2008) und Don LePans *Animals* (2010), die die Übel hinter systemischem, nichtmenschlichem und Mensch-Tier-Missbrauch mit unterschiedlichen narratologischen Ansätzen darstellen. Beide Science-Fiction-Romane propagieren eine kognitive Entfremdung. In *Meat* entwirft D'Lacey eine Welt, in der Rinder für finanziellen Profit misshandelt werden, jedoch schließlich, mit Hilfe einer Gruppe von Menschen die sich ausschließlich von Sonnenstrahlen ernähren, revoltieren. *Animals* zeigt, wie unmoralisch eine Entwicklung intensiver landwirtschaftlicher Fabriken ist, indem behinderte Kinder als Ware an die Stelle von nichtmenschlichen Tieren gesetzt werden, da diese ausgestorben sind.

Diese Arbeit zeigt nicht nur, wie die systemische Misshandlung von Nutztieren in den Romanen dargestellt wird, sondern es werden auch andere Schlüsselthemen des CAS, wie die Empfindungsfähigkeit und Handlungsfähigkeit nichtmenschlicher Tiere, spezieistische Diskurse und die menschliche Handlungsfähigkeit bei der Entlarvung und Bekämpfung der Fleischkultur, behandelt.