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'TO SPEAK OF CATTLE IS TO SPEAK OF MAN': ANTHROPARCHAL INTERACTIONS IN JOHN CONNELL'S *THE FARMER'S SON*

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ABSTRACT. ***"To Speak of Cattle is to Speak of Man": Anthroparchal Interactions in John Connell's* The Farmer's Son.** The present paper intends to build a critique of contemporary farming practices, based on Erika Cudworth's theory of "anthroparchy." By exemplifying how anthroparchal interactions function in John Connell's memoir, I will outline the becoming of a posthuman farmer that awakens certain sensibilities towards nonhuman animals, in ways that compel a rethinking of gendered relations, patriarchy, violence, and capitalist interests. The analysis provides a needed insight into recent developments in Irish rural farming, detailing the position of the human subject in relation to nonhuman otherness and describing some of the changes that need to be made regarding the power relations that are at work within patriarchal systems. To this extent, Cudworth's theoretical framework and Connell's memoir are proven to be contributing to the necessary restructuring of farming practices and of human-nonhuman interactions.

Keywords: *anthroparchy, posthumanism, gender relations, zoomorphism, capitalism, farming*

REZUMAT. ***„A vorbi despre bovine înseamnă a vorbi despre om": Interacțiuni antroparhice în* The Farmer's Son *de John Connell.*** Prezenta lucrare intenționează să construiască o critică a practicilor agricole contemporane, bazată pe teoria "antroparhiei" formulată de către Erika Cudworth. Exemplificând modul în care interacțiunile antroparhiale funcționează în memoriile lui John Connell, voi contura procesul de devenire a unui fermier postuman care reușește să trezească anumite sensibilități față de animalele nonumane, în moduri care ne obligă să regândim relațiile de gen, patriarhatul, violența și interesele capitaliste. Analiza

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oferă o perspectivă necesară asupra dezvoltărilor recente din agricultura rurală irlandeză, detaliind poziția subiectului uman în raport cu alteritatea nonumană și descriind unele dintre schimbările care trebuie făcute în ceea ce privește relațiile de putere care se desfășoară în cadrul sistemelor patriarhale. În această măsură, cadrul teoretic al lui Cudworth și memoriile lui Connell pot contribui la restructurarea necesară a practicilor agricole și a interacțiunilor uman-nonuman.

Cuvinte-cheie: *antroparhie, postumanism, relații de gen, zoomorfism, capitalism, agricultură*

Throughout the past century, Irish writers and intellectuals have tried to define Irish national identity through an exploration of intercultural implications in numerous fields of knowledge. The eagerness to formulate a rightful portrayal of Irishness stems from the necessity of breaking away with the past injustices that the nation has been subjected to. From the oppression of women and the Irish, colonial and postcolonial ideologies have paved the way for a clear division by race, gender, class or nationality. In this sense, it could be argued that Irish identity took a similar route to the representation and study of animal identity, where both human and non-human subjects are found to be oppressed by ideologies that circumvent the particularities of otherness. The "urgent political and ideological relevance of the representation of the animal" (O'Connor 2021, 362) demonstrates the necessity of adopting an intersectional approach in our discussion about the treatment of the other. In this respect, various Irish writers such as Anne Haverty, Sara Baume, Enda Walsh or Dorothy Molloy chose to illustrate instances of human and animal becomings in order to enunciate a milieu of resemblance within the two groups, thus enabling a horizon of interactions between the human and nonhuman other in which their commonalities are to be appreciated.

Within the same timeline, a large corpus of literature that concerns the Irish rural life has surfaced, responding to Éamon De Valera's identification of "the humble, small-scale farmer in the fields around Bruree as the ideal embodiment of Irish society" (Whelan 2014, 73). In *Farming in Modern Irish Literature*, Nicholas Grene is paying close attention to the span of women writers that have resolved to relate their farming lives. He notices that the focal point of such literature in Ireland has been "the patriarchal bond between fathers and sons working the land together" and it is this "patrilinear bias" that does not give space to agricultural women writings (Grene 2021, 8). Moreover,

Grene argues that the position of the rural farmer in the early twentieth century has become "mythologised in the ideology of the nation" (9) through a continuous struggle for patriarchal power in which the farm became "the site where money, meaning, and emotional investment met in the knot of family relations" (33). Leaving animal studies out of the discussion about identity could risk adhering to the anthropocentric blindness present in the rest of the world, where "the animal exists…solely to confirm human meanings and identities" (Baker 2001, 180). Carol J. Adams argues that in the ecological universe that is based on multi-species inter- and intra-relationships, the subordination of the nonhuman other illustrates the same treatment that the Irish received as the racialised other or women as sexualised objects (2007, 26-30). O'Connor further identifies the position of Irish women's writing as "deploying the figure of the animal not only as a gesture of resistance to the masculinist regulation of female energies, but also as a self-consciously elaborated stage for the performance of Irish identity, so closely associated with the countryside" (2006, 27). Therefore, in order to pursue an affirmative approach to encounters with otherness and the discovery of identity, we can assume that, as Kathryn Kirkpatrick argues, "an Irish animal studies has not so much to invent a new tradition as reclaim an old one" (2015, 4).

With *The Farmer's Son*, John Connell puts forward a narrative that digs deep into some particular human-animal encounters, demanding all the while that the human subject respond to otherness and challenging notions of gendered relations, patriarchy, violence, and capitalist interests. In order to analyse the implications of Connell's predominantly subjective account, I will try and articulate an extensive deconstruction of farming practices by employing Erika Cudworth's theory of anthroparchy. To this end, the posthuman framework becomes a key to deciphering the post-anthropocentric turn and to building a case against speciesism. After investigating the ways in which posthumanism is implicated in the dissolution of capitalist ideals and power relations, I will scrutinise Connell's memoir in order to exemplify how and where anthroparchy is at work and what can be done to facilitate the narrator's becoming process.

A Posthuman Framework

Posthumanism, which is predicated, as Braidotti has shown, on post-anthropocentrism and on discarding "human exceptionalism" (2019, 62), provides the framework that enables such a reclamation to begin and consequently to render results that would remodel our society in terms of inclusion, ethics and kinship. Therefore, as Braidotti advises, the posthuman project must become

"the focus of public discussions, collective decision-making processes and joint actions" (2019, 52), where the actors involved in it are aware of its non-linear progression and acknowledge the importance of relationality in their interactions with otherness. Being a "work in progress" (2019, 2), the posthuman subject enters a becoming process through which certain sensibilities are awoken, internalised and ultimately supplied to other subjects. In this regard, the posthumanist project allows for the meeting of nonhuman subjects outside an anthropocentric milieu, engendering thus a new space of interaction in which alterity is celebrated as *zoe* or "the vital force of life" (Braidotti 2013, 60). In order to thoroughly identify and exemplify the numerous interactions that can happen in such a space, I will utilise Erika Cudworth's theoretical position and ascertain how and why her point of view is not only resourceful in uncovering the various faulty ways of relating to the other that are employed in our society in the present day, but also essential in trying to provide a way out from the "mechanisms of bio- and necropolitical control of advanced capitalism" (Braidotti 2019, 68) that are exceedingly injurious to otherness.

In *Social Lives with Other Animals,* Cudworth's project becomes deliberately posthumanist. First, she is quick to address anthropocentrism as the most dangerous exploit of humanity, where posthumanism might be able to "take us beyond the human/animal dichotomy" (Cudworth 2011, 7). To this extent, she is following Cary Wolfe in the realisation that the human who is positioned at the centre of the world is in actuality "embodied and embedded in complex biotic lifeworlds" (Cudworth 2011, 11), where such dichotomies are being abolished in favour of zoe-centric ethics of becoming. Opening the world to the creation of ethical cartographies seems to be an ambitious task, but it is a task that Rosi Braidotti already formulated based on her definition of *zoe* as a "materialist, secular, grounded and unsentimental response to the opportunistic trans-species commodification of life that is the logic of advanced capitalism" (2013, 60).

Much of Cudworth's theory is based on a critique of capitalist ideals, and both she and Braidotti meet in the realisation that the posthuman subject must enter a transgressive stance that moves towards the "consideration of both the embodied condition of the human animal, and of life beyond the human" (2011, 12). At this point, it is important to mention that the present project is intensely focused on human-animal relationships, thus leaving aside numerous other posthumanist projects that can stem from such a theoretical framework. Most importantly, Cudworth's critique of Donna Haraway's or Bruno Latour's positions hinges on the fact that they do not sufficiently emphasise the impact of society in their theorisation of non-human presences in an exclusively human territory. Thus, while Haraway claims that "we are in a knot of species co-shaping

one another in layers of reciprocating complexity all the way down" (2008, 42) and that we need to "act in companion-species webs with complexity, care and curiosity" (106), it is only through the lens of Cudworth's complexity theory that we are to fully grasp the extent of the cruelty exercised on other animals without becoming "too blind to dominatory power" (Cudworth 2011, 183). As for Bruno Latour, Cudworth and Hobden dedicate an entire chapter of their 2018 book *The Emancipatory Project of Posthumanism* to his sociology of science. Seen through their lens, Latour seems to avoid discussing the implications of power relations within the actor-network theory, focusing on the "interactions rather than the impact that these may have on the actors who are involved in the interactions" (Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 70). Complexity theory resurges once again as a frame of mind that allows for the inclusion of otherness in the re-evaluation of our interactions – something that Latour's Parliament of Things tends to overlook when it comes to considering such inclusion (Latour 2004, 164-183). The ontological questions formulated by both Haraway and Latour are indeed commendable for their decentralisation of the human subject, but they are lacking an outlook on the influence of specific cultural and societal structures that construct power relations. To this extent, Jason Moore's theory of the Capitalocene is similar to Cudworth's project, where the Nature/Society divide is strongly tied to arguments on intersectionality, and maintains a clear view towards the ways in which nature is organised:

> First, we are led to ask questions not about humanity's separation from nature, but about how humans—and human organisations (e.g., empires, world markets)—fit within the web of life, and vice versa. […] We start to see human organisation as something more-than-human and less-than-social. We begin to see human organisation as utterly, completely, and variably porous within the web of life. (Moore 2016, 4-5)

Thus, Moore's project can be viewed as a complex system that responds to Cudworth's own theorisation in that it is attentive to the "naturalised inequalities, alienation and violence" (2015, 170) that underlie the current capitalist crisis. Nevertheless, Cudworth and Hobden point out Moore's restrictive approach on intersectionality, showing that the need to "map the ways gender domination or patriarchy co-constitutes the specific patterns of human domination of non-human life" seems to be lacking in his account of the Capitalocene (Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 143).

Addressing such lack, Cudworth proposes the term "anthroparchy," not as opposed to anthropocentrism or speciesism, but as a framework that encapsulates and iterates the defects of both terms. Anthroparchy is defined as

a "social system, a complex and relatively stable set of hierarchical relationships in which 'nature' is dominated through formations of social organisation which privilege the human" (Cudworth 2011, 67). Because "living animals are able to achieve greater levels of subjectivity or visibility in different circumstances, or rather have those levels of subjectivity or visibility applied to them by humans" (Stewart and Cole 2009, 461), one of the paramount concerns that must be addressed is the scheme of power relations that arises in this domain. The discussion is firstly directed towards speciesism and its numerous implications in human-animal relationships. Cudworth is adamant in building a case against the use of speciesism as the sole descriptor of humanity's relations with non-human animals. As such, since "animals are constitutive of human societies" (Cudworth 2011, 35), there is a need for reconceptualising these denominators so as to encapsulate the entire variety of power relations that are perpetuated throughout our current predicament, so that we "might find ways of forming alliances and promoting partial healing on a damaged planet" (Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 11):

> The political difference of species has real effects on the lives and deaths of non-human animals, and we cannot lose hold of it. We need the highly problematic human-animal distinction as the theoretical basis of a politics that contests the social power of species and does not reduce non-human animals to sets of symbols. They are that, but they are also, more. (Cudworth 2011, 33)

In order to not lose hold of such distinction, Cudworth makes a case for the co-evolution of species throughout history, without resorting to writing a "history of animals" (22), but by taking into account the presence of animal lives alongside the human subject. Therefore, it becomes clearer how relationships with otherness have shifted in time, with animals becoming "increasingly sentimentalised as they decreased in utilitarian significance" (23). This sentimentalisation is foregrounded by the emergence of the animal as companion and Cudworth additionally identifies the fact that relationships with companion species lead to humans and animals being "co-defined and co-constituted" (28). In her later work with Hobden, Cudworth draws on Donaldson and Kymlica to explain how domestication has become a sphere of interaction that engenders co-constitutive relations in which humans learn from animals and through which they acknowledge the diversity of their being:

> While the original purpose of domestication was the use of non-human creatures to serve human ends […], not all relationships with domesticate animals necessarily mean the instrumentalisation of animals or undermining of their rights. […] [Domesticated animals] should be

> understood as members of the polis, and can be citizens on three grounds. First, such creatures have 'belonging' – they live with us and share our space and our lives. Second, their interests count in determining the 'public good', and third, they have agency and thus should be able to shape the rules under which they live. (Donaldson and Kymlica 2011, 101, discussed in Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 97-98)

As is the case with numerous works of fiction, anthropomorphism can be seen as one of the ways in which this co-dependency can be observed. As it stands, anthropomorphism presents us with one way of diminishing the advent of speciesism, seen as "discrimination based upon species membership" (Cudworth 2011, 37). Nevertheless, this does not suffice to abolish the negative representation of other animals in society. In order to make decisive changes "in our thinking about what exactly is the basic unit of common reference for our species, our polity and our relationship to the other inhabitants of this planet" (Braidotti 2013, 2), we find that speciesism does not encapsulate the full extent of human domination over animal otherness, which raises the need to re-evaluate it "as a discourse of power" (Cudworth 2011, 41). The case seems to be similar to other discourses of discrimination, such as racism or sexism. However crude it might sound, the discrimination of women in society has strong theoretical ties to the discrimination of animals. In both cases, patriarchal communities are at the centre of it all, as the oppressive systems of power that are fundamentally patriarchal are encountered in a regime based broadly on capitalist interests. The "gendered and natured normalisation" (44) of cultural prejudices comes mainly from patriarchal ideologies that are spread in pop culture. In this case, Cudworth recognises the similarity between the two types of discrimination and advocates for a sociology of human-animal relations that is able to acknowledge the correlation with what has already been identified as flawed in the discrimination of women.

Cudworth discusses anthroparchy in terms of human domination, being careful to explore the multiplicity of intra- and inter-relationships of humans and animals on various levels and scales. These relationships are initially correlated to the idea of animals being a resource for the human, standing thus below the anthropos in a social hierarchy based on human interests. Moreover, they create "anthroparchal networks of relations," which are seen at work in a trifold manner: oppression, exploitation and marginalisation. While for Latour the actor-network theory does not necessarily have to imply the involvement of non-human agents in the theorisation of a social science (2005, 72), thus advocating a very linear and restrictive observation of the ways in which networks are supposed to be at work in sociology, Cudworth makes use of complexity theory, through which she divides the anthroparchal system into five areas of interest that apply

both at once and separately within a society (production relations, domestication, politics, systemic violence and exclusive humanism). With a structured network in mind, Cudworth intends to analyse how anthroparchy regulates the interactions between humans and non-human animals in a myriad of contexts. In discussing anthroparchy, I must also mention that it does not constitute a totalising schema in which all humanity is included. The relations of power that evolve into human domination are not applied to all human subjects, but they are particular to social contexts in which the animal is merely becoming a product. Where human domination exists, there is also talk about agency. However, in our case, agency is also "socially structured," meaning that "options for actors are shaped by social relations" (Cudworth 2011, 178) that are influenced by location and social opportunities. At the same time, agency is also hierarchical in that it is thought that humans possess "a greater amount," while the agency of the non-human animal is, to some extent, at the hand of its human possessor because they have the power to choose their spaces of interaction and the chances that they receive. Nevertheless, Cudworth fortunately argues that "[o]ur social world has never been exclusively human" (78), intending to keep the species division to a minimum while at the same time celebrating the plurality of the non-human animal in its co-evolving history with the human.

The Farmer's Son – An Example of Anthroparchy Gone Wrong

One exceptional example is found in John Connell's 2019 memoir *The Farmer's Son.* It tells the story of a man – namely, the author – who retreats to his family's farm in Ireland after his "journey through depression and mania" (Connell 2019, 204). It so happens that he returns during the calving season, turning this experience into a contemplation over the practices and implications of cattle-raising. For this reason, the memoir is filled with vignettes that relay an entire history of the cow. Connell speaks of the great aurochs previously found on the continent over ten thousand years ago, frequently interrupting his narrative of daily routine on the farm in order to ponder upon the implications of cattle farming, the markets, the laws and regulations or the relationship with the natural world. In this sense, his conclusions tally with Richard Twine's definition of the animal-industrial complex:

> a partly opaque and multiple set of networks and relationships between the corporate (agricultural) sector, governments, and public and private science. With economic, cultural, social and affective dimensions it encompasses an extensive range of practices, technologies, images, identities and markets. (Twine 2012, 23)

Connell's book is introduced by two epigraphs pertaining to Patrick Kavanagh and Henry David Thoreau. The reproduced stanza from Kavanagh's poem *A Christmas Childhood* is intended to iterate the past Irish standpoint in the interactions with natured life. The naturalness of Ireland encountered in the poet's childhood was perceived as sacred and destined to be protected from any touch. Connell will be keen on displaying how such portrayals of nature would soon be altered by the advent of humanist interests. At the same time, in making use of Thoreau's naturalist stance, he is trying to include the bigger spectrum of naturalness and educate the reader towards the realisation that they are to enter in spheres of interaction with the non-human subjects and "resign [themselves] to the influence of each" (Thoreau 2009, 268). Such is the beginning of Connell's journey towards a sensibility that will allow him not only to enter these spaces of interaction, but also to be attentive to the abuses encountered in farming practices and, at the same time, to celebrate the vital force of life met in the non-human animals that he cares for. Moreover, this sensibility, in Braidotti's terms, "aims at overcoming anthropocentrism" (2013, 55), which is the overarching ambition in this project. Connell's becoming process begins at once with the birth of an animal that he helps deliver. He is already realising the implications of such an event, as "there's a lot tied up in this birth for [him], much more than the cow knows" (Connell 2019, 12). In finding "new strength" (14) that allows him to deliver the calf, the narrator's ontology seems to be maturing in ways that are contrasted by the co-evolution of both species. The intention is to be part of a history of farming that has been progressively advancing in his family and he notes that "times have changed, but not the animals, and not our actions" (14). As "our ways of being human have been shaped by co-evolved histories" (Cudworth 2011, 14), the changes that the narrator experiences after delivering the calf are also shaped by the coming into being of a new life at his hands. It is here where Connell's becoming is initiated: he notices the co-evolution of species and by inscribing himself in the same history, he becomes part of a system of relations in which his later actions and thoughts will prove to be consequential for the advent of a posthumanist frame of mind in farming practices. He intends to follow the suit of his recent ancestors, who by "working in unison like men on the line, like soldiers on a march" (Connell 2019, 17) have become "poets of the field, bards of the land" (17). There is an important aspect that arises from such a comparison, as such arduous labour is "not simply a human property" (Cudworth 2011, 71). Cudworth discusses the husbandry model of meat production as opposed to the industrialised production processes that have risen to the forefront of species relations. Animals used as labour force are subjected to exploitation and could also be

compared to human subjects found "on the line": "the condition of animals is one of slavery - they can exercise no choice in their lives and can never leave the place of production" (2011, 49). This intersectionality appears to instantiate a sphere of interaction that is based not on human domination, but on exploitation of both human and non-human lives. In this respect, we are to be especially attentive to the "interlinked forms of domination, inequality and hierarchy" and also "the interlinking of a range of struggles for liberation" (Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 91). As is the case with our current example, both forms of oppression are seen to operate on the same humanist ideal influenced by the European Enlightenment, where dictatorial structures of political power act upon the precariousness of the racialised or animal other. The initial definition of farming that Connell gives iterates the same dangers that are to be found on the battlefield, but at this time it is the animal life that seems to be more prone to such risks, since "[f]arming is a walk with survival, with death over our shoulder, sickness to our left, the spirit to our right and the joy of new life in front. It is a cross of creation, like the sign of God we were taught in school" (2019, 19).

Another most important facet of this comparison comes in the form of gendered relations. War, and by correlation farming, is a male-dominated field. Labourers in meat-producing factories are almost exclusively male, while the farmed animals are usually gendered as females: first through selective breeding processes and secondly through being "feminised metaphorically by workers within the industry" (Cudworth 2011, 129). Both speciesism and sexism are seen to be at work in farming practices that ultimately lead to meat-production. Here we encounter the first instance of anthroparchy in Connell's memoir as we find that there are numerous dichotomies that stem from the gendered polarisation of agricultural roles. Firstly, we are told that the lack of language that animals experience is rectified by the only feminine figure in the household as "[m]other is their voice" (Connell 2019, 20). Opposed to this comes the flawed communication between the father and son, which confirms the disparity between gender roles in relation to the animal world:

> We do not talk much, Da and I, except about the sheep. [...] Only in the sheep can we truly communicate, and so the arcane language of breeds and lambs and ewes could be taken to mean: How are you, Son? How are you, Father? I love you, Son. I love you, Father. We have a world of mutual understanding, and so long as we do not fight, we can both live in that world. (Connell 2019, 30)

In this case, the members of patriarchy have come to be enclosed in a sphere of interaction that is shared with the non-human world. Having access

to a space in which the animal is also included represents a step towards a sort of atonement from the part of the human subject. However, it is important to keep in mind that in this situation the animals are still being "used" as a means of communication, not as interlocutors. Therefore, the culture of human exclusivity needs to be subjugated so that animals can be "utterly implicated in our social institutions, practices and processes, both materially and discursively" (Cudworth 2011, 45). Nevertheless, the example proves that our narrator is very attentive to the newly constructed world, in which he will be seen to experience other shared vulnerabilities.

Another instance of gendered representations of farming practices is seen in the narrator's refusal to wear gloves, as such practice "might be seen as weakness" (Connell 2019, 20). These signs of weakness are only perceived by male participants in the farming process and this agreement is determined on a scale made entirely by and for men. Coincidentally, the decision of not wearing gloves while handling the animals can also be perceived as the farmer's attempt at corporeal closeness, but the initial declaration proves that such an ideal is not present yet in the narrator's mind. Drawing on Connie Salmone, Erika Cudworth also argues that "women's social practices of care mean they are more likely than men to oppose practices of harm against non-human animals" (2011, 43). The position of the narrator's mother is brought forward once again in this discussion, as the correlation with the mythological figure of Medb showcases the authoritative influence that she carries, while at the same time providing a means of access into the consideration of women as power-holders:

> From the early 1970s ecofeminists suggested that patriarchal discourses carry gender dichotomous normalisations that feminise the environment and animalise women, constructing a dichotomy between women and 'nature', including the multifarious species of non-human animal, and male dominated human culture. […] Thus some feminists have considered that gendered and natured normalisation captures animals and women, in some instances, within the same discursive regime, and may place women in a position of possible contestation. (Cudworth 2011, 43-44)

Additionally, the figure of the female is observed to be the missing link between the interaction of men and animals, as the narrator's mother "has lived this rural life all these years and understands the ways of cows and men better than anyone" (Connell 2019, 50). Observing how "[i]n a man's world, she has proved herself; in a man's world, she has staked her claim" (86), the mother opposes the instalment of gender roles and manages to overthrow the male-dominated environment through the intersection with the animal world. Later

in his memoir, Connell manages to identify how such gendered hierarchies work:

> Cows are herd animals, and in those herds there are hierarchies. The world of cattle is a female-driven one, for, as with elephants, there are dominant matriarchs who lead the pack. The bull is but an ornament, given to the females for copulation and protection from other bulls. They are said to be his herd, but I have seen cows more fearsome than bulls. (2019, 117)

By discovering a gateway towards matriarchy, the narrator unveils another connective element in the relations of species. Drawing away from the discourse of male-dominated power relations, the figure of the human and non-human female is capable of opposing the patriarchal consternation that develops into human domination. Women are portrayed in Connell's memoir as being strong opponents of patriarchy. They are never witnessed to succumb to the relations of power that arise from the male-dominated industry. The female figures manage to build cartographies in which the distribution of power is appropriated fairly amongst species and gender differences, even if the protagonists and active promoters of the actual farming industry are, quantitatively speaking, mostly males. Nevertheless, Connell is still keen on building a case against the discrepancies found in these gendered relations by raising awareness on the specificity of actions against non-human animals:

> They say farming has changed, that it has become industrial and mechanised, but still, if the farmer has not the nature to care for his beasts when they fall sick, they will die. I have known the hardest of men to be soft and gentle with their animals in a way they never are with their own families. (2019, 90)

Not only is the narrator positioning himself or the above-mentioned men outside hegemonic patriarchal influences, but he also manages to relay a sense of distaste for the mechanisation of farming practices. He keeps into account the nature of the farmer and the "humane" sensibilities that can arise in situations where suffering is present and, in doing so, observes the morphing of the self into something else in the face of death. He becomes "the beast's illness and how it must be treated" (2019, 107).

Continuing with the narrator's development into a posthumanist farmer, we encounter in the first part of the memoir some mentions of zoomorphism which are bound to lead our character to further realisations about the proximity with otherness. In this respect, the human's ontology appears to be philosophically

altered and one of the reasons given by the narrator is the amount of time spent in the same spheres of interaction ("To spend too much time on a farm surrounded only by animals makes an oddity of a man" (Connell 2019, 134). He goes on to proclaim that "[m]an is an animal" (35), whose intention is to achieve a sort of species closeness by zooming in on the development of the human body. Additionally, he notes how the animal's perception of him is actively shifting, as his appearance begins to change after spending time on the farm: "The weanlings do not know what to make of me, for I look like a man but smell like a sheep" (36). He also identifies himself through zoomorphism in admitting that he used to be a "country mouse playing the city boy" (38) or, within the farming practices, he becomes "both shepherd and dog" (73). Such instances of speculative zoomorphism are to be noted as attempts to re-define the human's ontology in terms of species proximity and thus prove to be another step in the becoming process of the narrator. Paramount for the character's development is the fact that he possesses the ability to acknowledge the changes that are happening to him. In being part of simultaneous spheres of interaction with non-human animals, the narrator is capable of analysing his status within the entire conundrum: "I feel it best as I run through the forest, cycle down country roads or bring a calf or lamb into this world. It is at these times that I feel I am experiencing the sublime, the sacred, the marrow" (67). As it stands, not only corporeal closeness is a denominator for such realisations, but the entire natural world that begins to naturalise the human. Connell's sentience is trying to make up for the external factors that arise outside his intimate relationship with the natural world. In this respect, his strong connection to nature is spiritualised in places where "the soul of wildness has been not killed" (83) and where the ecological presence becomes sacred: "I have come to love this lake, and she has only begun to reveal her secrets to me. By its waters, the swans and seagulls and egrets fish and work. It has islands of oak and ash, including Inch Island, which is a sacred place" (83). The narrator begins to notice the shared vulnerability of creatures outside the scope of his daily farm tasks and his becoming process continues to awaken these necessary sensibilities. It is becoming clear how such vulnerability is at work within the human subject:

> The awareness we each have of being a living body, 'alive to the world,' carries with it exposure to the bodily sense of vulnerability to death, sheer animal vulnerability, the vulnerability we share with them. This vulnerability is capable of panicking us. To be able to acknowledge it at all, let alone as shared, is wounding; but acknowledging it as shared with other animals, in the presence of what we do to them, is capable not only of panicking one but also of isolating one. (Diamond 2003, 22)

The creature, which for Anat Pick "transcend[s] the human/animal binary" (Cudworth and Hobden 2018, 133), becomes thus the central subject of inquiry because it manages to place the emphasis on a sort of intimacy between species that celebrates "creaturely agency" (133). Zoomorphism is not the only way in which the agents of these interactions are having their ontologies altered. One of the most topical delimitations encountered in practices of discrimination is the objectification of the animal, alongside the gentrification of the land. Connell identifies numerous instances in which the animals at his farm are not given the chance to exert their uniqueness and are turned into mere numbers or tags. First, he mentions the practice of dehorning the cows, a practice which is made mandatory by the Department of Agriculture. This is a first instance of de-animalising the non-human animal in order to prepare it for its becoming-meat. The narrator intends to subjugate such practice to a level of normalisation that utterly changes not only the animal's appearance, but also its well-being. Therefore, in his words, the calves are "to be treated" (Connell 2019, 56), an operation that is reminiscent of experiments done on lab animals. Moreover, he goes on to explain how "[e]ach animal born has a card, which is their passport. It records their life from birth to sale to slaughter—from farm to fork, as the slogan goes" (57). The humanisation of animal life, instead of creating pathways towards species similarities, engenders additional boundaries that thrive on the non-human animal's lack of agency. However, the fault here may fall onto the same institutions that succumb to anthroparchal politics. Disguised under welfarist arguments, many such decisions are taken by organisations that are driven by capitalist interests, continuing to act through practices of control and oppression. The initiative of having such an identity card is furthermore reduced by the decision to not give them a name: "It is dangerous to name animals, for in a name we build a bond" (91). The narrator's claim that animals should be denied names surfaces as a striking compromise, as it should be beneficial in our case to actually insist on the creation of such a bond. What is more, during a process of artificial cattle insemination, the bull is not named. Instead, it is included in a process of systematisation that eliminates its individuality, thus only being referred to as "CF52" (102). Cudworth believes such instances of distancing pertain to a "discourse of natured objectification" (Cudworth 2011, 123). The process actually entails the animal's "becoming-meat," which is seen to operate at all three levels of anthroparchal relations: marginalisation, exploitation and oppression. Therefore, she announces this becoming in terms of a decentralisation of the animal's natural agency:

> As agricultural products and as always 'becoming-meat', the limited lives and cold deaths of meat animals are inconsequential. The designation of these animals as 'meat' and the possibility of their objectification are premised on human centrism and domination. (2011, 128)

In allowing this becoming to come into form, the human subject is the judge, jury and executioner of the animal's fate. Upon birth, they are already objectified and, therefore, doomed to being tagged and numbered, instead of "baptised" or assigned a name. Additionally, apart from the numbering of calves and sheep, we can observe a common practice of discussing the animal's value in terms of capital. In an episode when one of Connell's animals is sick, his view on its worth is deemed to be strongly tied to the expenses made for its well-being. He announces that "it would cost fifty euro to take him to the vet, more than the lamb is worth" (Connell 2019, 90) and in doing so, he places a price on its life. The transformation of the lamb's vital force of life into capital stands to represent, once again, the condemned position of both the human – as he is succumbing to capitalist greed – and the animal, which can lose the fight with death due to a refusal to spend more money for its prosperity. What is at stake here is not only an alteration of the human's ontology, since "[t]he commodification process itself reduces humans to the status of manufactured and hence profit driven technologically mediated objects" (Braidotti 2013, 106), but also the possibility that non-human animals can be subjected to the machinations of capitalism, a process that "reduces bodies to carriers of vital information, which get invested with financial value and capitalised" (117). However, we observe an evolution in the narrator's sensibility throughout his stay at the farm. On a later event, when another calf is in danger of dying, the human subject seems to have lost his greed, as he maintains that "It will be sixty euro or more. The calf is a good calf, so it will be worth the effort" (Connell 2019, 108). In both instances we can recognise the presence of "worth," used in both its meanings: once as the lamb's equivalent in monetary terms and once to underline the importance of keeping the calf alive. In this linguistic transition we observe the progress that the narrator has made in awakening a posthuman sensibility that can see beyond the value of capital and, instead, look after the well-being of the animal primarily. Connell also observes one other example of anthroparchal relations, this time tied with the sub-system of governance:

> A new system has been introduced by the Department of Agriculture which rates all cattle from one to five stars in an effort to raise the bloodlines of the national herd. Farmers must now aim to have a majority five-star herd. So far there has been a lot of resistance to this new system, for farmers have

> spent generations breeding up their herds to a point where they are happy. The star system does not favour self-breeding. Rory, our neighbour, calls it a monopoly by the genetics companies to impose their sperm banks on farmers. Perhaps there is truth in that. (2019, 123)

In making use of a rating system in order to further categorise individual animals, human dominance imposes additional discriminatory arrangements within the non-human domain. It appears that it is not enough to deliver, in quantitative terms, a multiplicity of animals to the slaughterhouse, but it is also necessary to further intend to qualitatively systematise such delivery for the betterment of the human. Apart from the obvious dominance imposed by the governing forces, we see how the farmer is now strong-armed into creating hierarchies within the animal world, and more specifically, among the members of the same animal species. In addition, such a system proves to be another instance of objectification through the measurement of quality and the provision of ratings. Nevertheless, both cases reify the animal into monetary terms, where the ordinary farmer's interest is "framed in a narrative of animals as a source of food and animal farming as necessarily concerned with making an animal 'pay for itself'" (Cudworth 2011, 125). This takes us to the next most important aspect observable in the book: capitalist interests and production.

Right from the start, we can already place capitalism as the preeminent promoter of human domination over the natural world. Cudworth intends to draw away from having capitalism as an unmatchable denominator for these wrong-doings and thus puts pressure on the social relations and the practices entertained by the human subjects in farming. Complementary to Cudworth's point of view, Dinesh Wadiwel states that "systems of production and exchange, such as capitalism, parasitically feed upon the productive capacities and creativity of the bodies that labour within these systems" (2015, 13-14). However, we could argue that such flawed practices are stemming from the greed that comes along with capital interests. Not only do financial assets captivate the individual into a cartography of improper evolutionary ways of achieving them, but also promote a sort of carelessness that is to be derived from the need for accelerated success. The "technolog[ies] of violence" (domestication, regulation, control and killing) (17, 94) seem to outnumber the technologies of care and thus "appear to reflect a deep 'care' for the body of both the individual animal and the aggregated flock" (116). Moreover, capitalism breeds creativity, which is admittedly violent. The ease with which violence propagates within these institutions is always seen to come as a first response, where "extreme forms of domination that appear to lack resistance are in fact the product of active forms

of creative resistance by those who are subordinated" (2015, 14). In expediting the processes of production, maltreatment seems to materialise as the handiest project of farming. The number of businesses that have at their core violent acts against the nonhuman other are engendered as superficial places of interaction in which the human subject "cooperates" with the animal in order to produce flashes of apparent kinship, "simultaneously creating the illusion that animals are helping themselves to die" (2015, 15). At this point, returning to Braidotti's "post-anthropocentric eco-sophical entity" (2013, 139), we can see how *zoe* iterates nuances of interdependence that promote species equality stemming from the rejection of violence. Nevertheless, they all have as a common goal the generation of capital from the use of the animal, be it in the view of the public eye, or behind the scenes where animal cruelty is even more emergent. To this extent, we can admit that "[a]nimals are largely understood as labourers – producing commodities such as milk and eggs and becoming commodities such as meat and leather. Animal labour within capitalism is slave labour" (Cudworth 2011, 48). And yet, not only factory farming is making use of animal labour. All the other businesses that Cudworth mentions (and many others) are taking advantage of the animal in ways that are not destined to be put under the aegis of "becoming-meat." Drawing on Bob Torres' argument from *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* (2007), Cudworth further analyses the body of the animal:

> Their bodies not only are exploited by working for us in order to produce animal food products, their bodies are themselves commodities, as he puts it: 'They are superexploited living commodities' (Torres 2007, 58 qtd. in Cudworth 2011, 49). Animal lives and bodies are a means to profit creation within capitalism. In addition, animals are property, and this relationship of ownership over animal bodies is essential for the extraction of profit. (Cudworth 2011, 49)

Going even further, the body of the animal itself has been modified in order to generate the maximum amount of profit. In his memoir, Connell also notices such a conundrum and asserts that "[i]t is easy to view our cattle as wild animals domesticated, but in reality they have been carefully bred and nurtured to shape our needs" (Connell 2019, 186-187). This maximisation bears additional implications when we notice how after the becoming-meat of the animal, it also enters into other becomings that utilise almost its entire "material" in the creation of additional by-products. Through an "incredible disassembly process" (Cudworth 2011, 114), every part of the animal is made to bring supplementary profit that is most likely not even prescribed, but it goes on to feed the capitalist greed of the human. The narrator of the memoir is also able to discern such appalling exaggerations:

> The industrialisation of the cow is not just about meat anymore, but also about the valuable byproducts of its entire body. Indeed, the real value of a cow is in what's known as fifth quarter […]. Fifth quarter is where the processors make their real money. These parts are harvested and used to make over two hundred products, from insulin to face creams; in modern agribusiness no piece of the animal is wasted. The meat factories do not pay farmers for fifth quarter, and in so doing deprive them of most of the real value of the animal. (Connell 2019, 208)

He observes how "the value of a cow" is not even celebrated entirely within the anthropocentric milieu. Since production relations are at stake in the anthroparchal system, we can see how there also exist hierarchies between the domineering species, as farmers also succumb to the greater greed that has possessed those in positions of relatively more power. According to Bob Torres, "[s]laughterhouse work is routinely ranked among the most dangerous occupations, and illegal immigrants are over-represented among slaughterhouse workers" (2007, 45). The correlation with racialised forms of domination comes as no surprise, as the "[w]hite economies thrived and depended upon the subjugated labour of those who were excluded" (Wadiwel 2015, 91) while social inequality at the class level is easily detectable. Wadiwel goes even further in his investigations, correlating slave work with animal labour:

> Like under slavery, the property right in the production animal's life, labour and body has been fully alienated, and is held in the hands of humans. […] This leads to a multifaceted form of alienation that differs substantially in character from the alienation of humans – slaves or workers – in the production process. While the property value of the slave rests in the slave's productive potential as a living entity, the property value in the animal's productive potential must be appraised differently, because of the different sites for 'labour' and the differential value placed within production processes upon death itself. (Wadiwel 2015, 162)

Along similar lines, Haraway's uses the term 'Plantationocene' as a descriptor for "the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labour and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labour" (2015, 162). The existence of such spaces of interaction goes to prove that an intersectional approach towards the pressures of human dominance can benefit both human and non-human agents. What is also to be noted is that the "real value of the animal" stands in its ability to offer as much product as possible, while there is no mention of any other valid benefit

that can stem from its otherness. Additionally, the by-products that are created from these animals are never to be given back to the animals, meaning that all the production is entirely made available for human needs and desires, without any means of sharing the benefits. To this extent, Connell also identifies what is the state of the animal in employing such practices, as he notices that "[f]actory farming, or confined animal feeding operations, works on the basic principle that maximum output should be achieved with the lowest possible cost input" (2019, 206).

By only taking and not giving back, the balance of the natural world seems to be tilting in a direction that is feared to bring about an almost complete disregard for the animal's well-being. With this in mind, we can direct our attention once again towards the employed power formations that ensue from the decision to shrink the carceral spaces in which animals are confined. The "living" spaces of farmed animals tend to be more dimensionally restricted, while the treatment of the nonhuman other grows continuously towards oppression. In this respect, Cudworth notices how there are ways in which such treatment can be avoided or deemed illegal. But there is a twist:

> States and state-like formations can act as direct or indirect agents of anthroparchy; for example, by subsidising intensive animal farming, or by making certain practices unlawful […]. Often these practices do not contest relations of power but reinscribe them. For example, increasingly 'humane' methods of animal food production may be just that – kinder to humans in absolving negative feelings and thoughts about the exploitation of animals, whilst continuing to legitimate the processes of commodification and exploitation in which billions of agricultural animals are caught. (Cudworth 2011, 74)

These horizons of expectation do not succeed in equalising the balance of well-being. In attempting to impress "humane" ways of living for the animal, we are just making it easier for the oppressor to perform his repressive treatments. The animal's prosperity should not be thought of on an anthropocentric scale, but it should reiterate the necessity to escape such blindness in order to manage to grow attentiveness. Most importantly as well is the need to observe that there is a tendency to blend all farmed animals under an all-inclusive description. If we are to think in terms of input and output, it is clear that the individuality of the animal is never taken into account. Therefore, by refusing to allow distinctions between each individual life form, it is expected that the output of the farmed animal will soon also become a non-distinctive product:

> In years to come, it seems, quality won't be a concern anymore, because we will all produce the same type of animal. Consumers demand cheap meat, and it is our job to make it, to feed the supermarket-driven race to the bottom. Machines will weigh and dispense feed; low-paid workers will carry out whatever manual work must be done. The people closest to the animals will not be farmers but line workers. (Connell 2019, 207)

In deploring the imminent machinic becoming of the traditional farmer, Connell wants to idyllically retain his current position, even more so thanks to his newly awakened sensibilities. In this sense, his memoir is intended to remain as an elegiac illustration of a possible alternative to the technologised future. The transition from farmer to slaughterhouse worker is quintessential also for understanding the need of preserving rural farming practices that are still aware of the necessity of better care. In this respect, Connell's dream of becoming an organic farmer after taking over the family's estate is important to note. He intends to create "[his] version of the future" (163) but fails to provide a description of how that would come to fruition and how it might affect the well-being of the animal. Taking a look at Gail Eisnitz's investigation done in some American slaughterhouses and discussed in *Slaughterhouse: The Shocking Tales of Greed, Neglect and Inhumane Treatment Inside the U.S. Meat Industry* (1997), Cudworth notes that "slaughterhouses were not just places of fear, neglect and extreme cruelty endured by 'meat' animals, but places in which human beings are also brutalised" (2011, 115). This can be considered another sphere of interaction between human and nonhuman animals, albeit it is sadly based on the suffering endured by both species. In this respect, I want to take a closer look at Connell's point of view as an emergent posthuman farmer, one who intends to reclaim an old tradition instead of capitulating in the face of capitalism:

> But they are the payment to the bank for the land. They are money embodied, nothing more. That is what Da says. On this we do not agree. […] But even knowing this, and even for the businessman-farmer, I do not believe it is solely about the money, nor that he sees the animals only as future beef. […] There must be nature in the man for the beast, nurturing in the human for the nonhuman. (2019, 94)

Firstly, the narrator is in the position of the son, thus being directly under the influence of the patriarch that is still present on the farm and has the power to dictate the fate of everything that lives in that place. Here, a dispute ensues between the central male figures of the narrative. At the same time, the mother is caught in the middle of their argument. Her standpoint, although

impartial in the fight between father and son, is fundamental for the consequent resolution: she takes over the duties of the son and demonstrates once again how she positions outside the gendered dichotomy, being always ready to successfully carry out the role of the matriarch. In her dialogue with Connell the mother exercises her power as the property's owner in an attempt to provoke her son to take action. Her influence in the males' dispute proves, reiteratively, that the distribution of power in their family is gender-balanced, if not female-favoured. To be even more precise, the presence of the mother implies that the proposed gateway to matriarchy is indeed open. The human female radicalises the association between species and gender oppression by subverting the logic of domination imposed by patriarchy. As Carol J. Adams argues, "[f]ocusing attention on how oppressions interconnect creates the space for raising the issue of animals" (2018, 59). In doing so, the female subject in Connell's memoir manages to "pause" the carnist argument by "apprehend[ing] the shared ideological beliefs that exist as the foundation of a white supremacist and speciesist patriarchy" (Adams 2018, 60). Furthermore, Connell posits himself in direct confrontation with his father, resisting the correlation of animals and capital. He notices the agency that the animal possesses and intends to make of it an argument for its preservation, instead of allowing himself to be seized by anthropocentric blindness. Understanding that the end-result of his practice will still lead to the slaughtering of animals, Connell takes a leap of faith and awakens a sensibility that transgresses the direct proportionality of cattle becoming-meat. In doing so, not only does he take a position outside a farming practice that is near-sighted but arrives at the realisation that the patriarchal figure that stands above him in the hierarchy of social relations is also responding to some of the same sensibilities. Not payment, not money, not steak-holders (Connell 2019, 94), the animals are seen in the memoir in the fullness of their alterity. Through this lens, Connell contemplates how nature begins to be nurtured within a human subject who is willing to employ practices of care. However, he is still aware of their becoming part of a system that has so far stood outside their individual practices in which "the farmers, the custodians of the land, are now manufacturers, or growers. [They] have become a cog in the wheel of industry" (149).

Probably one of the most important takeaways from his attempt to decentralise anthroparchal power formations comes in the form of his understanding that the death of the animal is still going to be the end result of their interaction. Nonetheless, it is the attempt at providing a better life and better, more protective ways of arriving to the event of death that stands above any consideration that farming practices cannot be to some degree exemplary.

Additionally, returning to Carol J. Adams's ethos, a key element in the perception of the farmed animal should be the refusal to objectify the nonhuman animal. Connell does not manage to successfully "be excluded from the culturally constructed 'we'" (2018, 9), through whose lenses the animal is seen as becoming-meat and which continues to propagate the idea of animal otherness, instead of animal inclusion. Nevertheless, through his awareness, Connell inscribes himself into the posthuman framework and manages to create an individual scope of attentiveness that should be propagated throughout the entirety of the industrialised farming tradition. In doing so, he adheres to a requisite formulated by Ted Benton and discussed by Cudworth, who indicates that "whilst the abolition of factory farming is a moral imperative, this will only be achieved through significant changes in the economic relations of capitalist agriculture and the social organisation of farming" (Cudworth 2011, 36). To this end, Connell manages to delineate the emergent posthuman farmer as a figure who can make contact with the alterity of the animal without succumbing to practices of meat production and who, by means of accepting the plurality of the other, manages to enter relations of kinship that stand as an example for the rest of the world. In the formulation of his dream of becoming-organic, Connell intends to promote a world in which the human-animal relationship can be constituted through "a structure of mutual flows and data transfer that is best configured as complex and intensive inter-connectedness" (Braidotti 2013, 139). Ultimately, through the careful analysis of production relations, violence, exclusive humanism, domestication and governance found within the system of human domination, we are able to develop an antidote to the anthropocentric blindness that may happen upon us. By awakening posthuman sensibilities, the construction of a world in which human-animal relationality is celebrated seems to become more and more a reality and we must strive to make it happen in a context where the entire cartography of the world is included.

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