

Human Animals

Portable Outrage in Contemporary American Interspecies Narratives

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Summary

In this thesis I employ animal studies theory and criticism to explore the boundaries of the human in contemporary American literature. I argue that there is a need for intersectional analysis within cultural studies, focusing on species as well more commonly acknowledged problematic discourse, such as that concerning race, class, and gender. I suggest that this is necessary and important because of the interconnectedness of oppressive and exploitative discourses, which often uses humanist or anthropocentric arguments to justify the exclusion of some (human or nonhuman) from ethical and political consideration. To expose this interconnectedness and the theme of species and speciesism in literature, I have devised a theory of portable outrage. It suggests that the outrage produced by the depiction of oppressive discourse that is often recognized and condemned can be transferred through a disrupting condition to focus on other types of advocacy and considerations as well, such as animal advocacy and a consideration of species and speciesism. I apply this theory here on three contemporary American interspecies narratives: *My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki, *Fast Food Nation: What the All-American Meal is Doing to The World* by Eric Schlosser, and *Dawn* by Octavia Butler, proving that problematic speciesist discourse and the possibility for animal advocacy can be found in these texts, despite the fact that they are traditionally read anthropocentrically.

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Introduction

This thesis sets its focus on animals, which, historically, have been considered in generally essentialist and reductive terms. Though occupying an increasing number of scholars today, the “question of the animal” is still often considered as concerning something essentially nonhuman, and the various answers provided to this question most often work to provide solutions of how *humans* ought to relate to *the animal*, as if the animal is, firstly, something that can be treated in the singular, and, secondly, something different and entirely separate from the human. Such discourse become problematic in criticism because it, as Matthew Calarco points out in his introduction to *Zoographies*, “creates divisions among progressive causes and leads to a kind of isolationist approach to animal rights politics” (7). This isolationist approach to animal rights politics is problematic because it perpetuates discourse that the question itself, arguably, seeks to dismiss, and should rather be integrated and treated holistically is a system that seeks to rid itself of the humanist and anthropocentric presumptions based in the idea that humans are superior to and, certainly, *not animals*.

Cultural studies have, based on the same presumption of animal studies being concerned with something essentially nonhuman and, thusly, concerned with issues of lesser importance than (or issues that should not be allowed to trump) those that concern the human, such as issues of race, gender, or class. However, some critics are now attempting to include attention to animal advocacy in cultural studies by emphasizing, for example, intersectional analysis that can explore the role of the animal in the construction of other cultural -isms. Michael Lundblad and Marianne DeKoven’s edited collection *Species Matters: Humane Advocacy ad Cultural Theory* is an example of such an approach, which focuses “not only on whether cultural studies should pay more attention to animal advocacy but also on whether animal studies should respond more broadly to the cultural politics of animality and ‘the animal’” (1). I suggest here that such intersectional analysis might be useful in better understanding how anthropocentric and speciesist discourse that presumes human superiority is mutually oppressive, because the labeling of “nonhuman” might be applied to the human animal as well as other animals using speciesist discourse. Put simply, I argue that those who care about cultural studies should also care about animal studies, because their discourse of oppression is closely connected through anthropocentrism. The critical target of this thesis will thus be anthropocentrism as such because, as Calarco has pointed out, “it [is] always one version or another of *the human* that falsely occupies the space of the universal and that functions to exclude what is considered non-human ... from ethical and political

consideration” (10, italics in original). I intend to approach this critique in literature by examining the fluid boundaries of what defines the human (the acrobatics of excluding some beings from ethical and political consideration) through a focus on species and speciesism in contemporary American interspecies narratives.

Contemporary American literature is increasingly treating the human construct as a fluid concept without clear limits, and an analysis of species and speciesism in these works may help us understand the implications of a speciesist discourse that is, largely, considered both right and natural in our society and is thus often not recognized and challenged satisfyingly in literature. Critics in posthumanism and animal studies have explored ways in which it could be possible to craft a mode of interpretation that rejects the divisions and hierarchies set in place and perceived as natural in much of humanist theory, and suggest how advocacy could be extended to include all species. These attempts, however, might be perceived as somewhat utopian, as discourses about humanism and animality are deeply integrated in the anthropocentric system of thought that dominates in the world today. It would be more productive to conduct an analysis that considers anthropocentrism as the status-quo, and rather approaches and accesses animal advocacy through categories of cultural criticism with which many are already concerned. This can be done by exposing the fluid and arbitrary boundaries of the subject of concern in these criticisms: the human. I want to argue that exploring the fluid boundaries of what it means to be human in terms of species and speciesism is important because it presents a more complete and useful way of understanding the oppressive and cruel tendencies created and justified by humanist discourse, and not because those who suffer under speciesist discourse are more important or significant than those who suffer under, say, racist or sexist discourse.

To expose and examine the underlying theme of species and speciesism in American interspecies narratives, I have devised a model of portable outrage which assumes that literary texts that produce outrage create a potential for redirecting that outrage towards other and perhaps surprising causes, that are not eminently visible in the texts and at which the authors themselves may not have intended. Thus, I argue that in works that produce outrage one can identify the *original outrage*, which is in cultural studies most commonly directed at anthropocentric discourses concerning race, gender, and class, a *disrupting condition*, which violently and/or (il)logically disrupts the scene of traditional cultural criticism, and a *relocated outrage*, which is a new scene to which the original outrage may be transferred by means of the disrupting condition, and with renewed attention may be made visible throughout the text. I suggest that this approach maintains the validity and importance of

other cultural criticisms, while still being effective in drawing attention to the texts' connections to and potential for animal advocacy and/or speciesist criticism.

1.1 Text Selection

In my thesis, I have chosen contemporary American literature from three genres: science/speculative fiction (SF), realistic fiction, and non-fiction, and intend to examine how these works deal with the topic of species and analyze them within the framework of speciesism. I have chosen these genres because I consider them representative of genres that deal with interspecies concern, and because there are many texts within these genres whose criticism, in my opinion, deals disproportionately with other -isms of cultural studies than speciesism, though interspecies relationships are often narrated in them. I use the term interspecies narratives here to describe narratives that, to varying degrees and with varying attention and intention, narrate relationships between species (human and nonhuman).

I chose realistic fiction as one of the genres I wanted to explore because this is, arguably, the genre in which cultural critics are most prone to ignore readings of species and speciesism, while it is a genre where the underlying discourse of the human/animal binary is actively at work. It may also be where speciesism can be most surprisingly exposed, as the author (generally) will have set out to tell a story about “people” and/or “society”, rather than focus on “real” animals or concrete agendas. I did not choose a crime/mystery story or historical fiction, though the animalization of criminals, criminals acts, members of historical social classes, and war enemies (etc.) would certainly have been interesting to examine in this thesis as well. To underline the normalization implied by the ignorance of speciesist discourse in society and literature, I wanted the story and characters to be approximated to a representative, contemporary reality. Though most narratives employ speciesist discourse on some level (most easily exemplified by the maintaining of carnism as the unquestioned norm), I wanted to use a story that, in my opinion, engaged more directly with animals and/or animal discourse, yet was still commonly read anthropocentrically. Books like *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon would have been interesting to examine. Ultimately, *My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki was selected because it engages with the cultural, commercial, and capitalist aspects of speciesism and animal discourse in an essentially anthropocentric manner, though the scene is one where animal advocacy might have been (and can be) more strongly emphasized.

My Year of Meats follows the protagonist Jane, an Asian-American documentarian, as she is hired by BEEF-EX to produce a Japanese TV show called *My American Wife!*. The program poses as a cooking show, but is intended to promote American beef to Japanese housewives. Her job leads her to research and discover unsettling truths about the meat industry, especially focusing on the use of DES in rearing animals and its effect on the human body. Parallel to Jane's story runs the story of Aikko Ueno, who is reluctantly married to John Ueno, Jane's boss. As she is suffering from chronic bulimia, John forces her to watch the show, cook the recipes, and rate the show, believing it will cause her to gain weight and be able to conceive. Her independence and sense of self grows from watching the show and cooking the recipes, and meanwhile her relationship with her husband becomes increasingly violent, leading her to contact Jane and flee to America.

The genre of non-fiction was selected because I wanted to show that speciesist discourse is part of current discourse, and not only exemplified in fictional story-worlds. Similar to realistic fiction, non-fiction also has the potential for surprising readings of species and speciesism, but this type of texts is different because the texts have often been written with a conscious agenda, and is made up from (personal) truths. Non-fiction might thus serve a purpose in underlining the seriousness and urgency of addressing speciesism, but it is not to be forgotten that these texts, as other texts, have been constructed and edited, and might not be as transparent and representative of Truth as they may appear. With an agenda for investigating human/animal relations and speciesism, I could very well have chosen a non-fiction text that explicitly address speciesism, such as *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer, *The Food Revolution* by John Robbins, or Shaun Monson's *Earthlings*. However, I wanted to illustrate how speciesism is present in texts that are generally not considered to advocate for the nonhuman animal because of its interconnectedness with other, cultural concerns that often are explicitly addressed in literature. My choices of non-fiction interspecies narratives were then (for the most part) limited to those about pets and the food industry. Since the attitudes towards pet-animals are, in terms of human/animal interactions, exceptions rather than rules (though speciesist discourse is disturbingly present in the way pets may be bred, acquired, owned, and disposed of), I chose to look at a narrative from the food industry. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* by Marion Nestle, Morgan Spurlock's *Don't Eat This Book* (*Supersize Me* dir. Spurlock), or *Forks Over Knives* directed by Lee Fulkerson would all be good alternatives to *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser, which was selected for this thesis. However, *Fast Food Nation*'s content and narrative technique demonstrates the injustices of the food industry without being

consciously biased in terms of interspecies politics, and thus lends itself effectively to this project.

Fast Food Nation follows the development of fast food in America, and investigates the local and global effects of the American fast food industry. The book is divided into two sections: “The American Way”, which investigates the history and beginning of fast food as a concept and product in America; and “Meat and Potatoes” examining current conditions and practices of the fast food industry. This includes the working conditions for fast food restaurant and slaughterhouse workers, slaughterhouse sanitation crews and ranchers, marketing efforts that prey on children, the use of artificial flavoring, and the spread and handling of foodborne pathogens. The book is investigatory, but is critical in its approach and encourages consumers to take action against the industry to change its policies and practices.

SF literature often imagines mixed or new species, and (in contrast to most realistic fiction and non-fiction) rarely employs storyworlds and plotlines where only one species is overtly represented. Also, it often imagines human interaction with alien or other species, potentially providing material for analysis and interpretation of interspecies politics and discourse. Fantasy would, of course, have been a good genre here too, as (earthly) nonhuman animals are often given a voice and/or a central role, and new species and species-relationships are often also imagined in these stories – George R. R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (beginning with *A Game of Thrones*), and *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern being good examples of possible titles to explore. However, when reviewing literature for this thesis I chose SF over fantasy because I found that SF more often than fantasy concerns itself with future destinies rather than past ones, and a future/speculative narrative better serves my problem statement (which seeks, in part, to better understand current and suggest a way of preventing future oppressive and exploitative practices). Also, SF more often than fantasy play with the idea of human interbreeding with other species, which provides especially interesting possibilities for animal studies. The interspecies politics in *Dawn* and Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* trilogy more generally speak powerfully to this possibility, and was chosen over even more recent works (such as *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood and *World War Z* by Max Brooks) due to a narrative technique that reflects candidly on the experience of interspecies (speciesist) domination. Moreover, though completed in 1989, themes in the *Xenogenesis* series (remaking of the human, creation of new communities, survival) are representative of Butler’s renowned SF writing, which continued into the 2000’s.

Dawn's protagonist, Lilith Iyapo, is rescued by the alien species the Oankali after a world war that has nearly wiped out the human race and left most of Earth in ruins. The Oankali keep the surviving humans in animated suspension, but wakes and trains Lilith so that she can parent the first group of awakened humans destined to return to Earth. The rescue, however, does not come without a price, as the Oankali will not help the humans without altering their species forever. Dependent on genetic trade and certain of the human tendency towards self-destruction, the Oankali will sterilize any human being who will not agree to settle and mate with them. Lilith and her group of humans find themselves in a difficult situation, wanting to survive but horrified by the idea of mixing with this grotesque alien species. Despite their differences, however, the Oankali are strangely alluring to the humans, and Lilith finds herself bonding closely with her ooloi (sexless Oankali) Nikanj. In combination with her leading role in the parenting of the first group this makes the other humans skeptical of her humanity and violently oppose her authority. Finally, when returned to Earth, some of the humans revolt and Lilith stays behind to save Nikanj's life. At the end of the novel she learns he has impregnated her against her will.

All the novels I have chosen demonstrates in some way or another how contemporary speciesist discourse can be seen as underlying and present, even when the authors have not themselves intended to explore the topic consciously. This is often the case with species and speciesism, I argue, because we are not yet at a point where the possible connections between speciesism and other forms of interhuman oppression and exploitation are clearly made and recognized – illustrating, in my opinion, an even greater need to address speciesist discourse and its implications both in literature and in society at large.

As I have already indicated, my thesis' place in the discourse of species, speciesism, and animality studies is as a response to critics who assume that advocacy can and should be extended to include animals of all species, lead by Peter Singer who popularized the term speciesism in his 1975 book *Animal Liberation*, and who take an isolationist approach. I assume here that such attempts are rather utopian and limited, and that "animal liberation" (or advocacy) should begin with the realization of the interconnectedness of speciesism as a system and other forms of oppression and exploitation with which critics of literature and members of society are already concerned and generally condemn, such as racism and sexism. This, as I will show, is more (but not entirely) in line with Cary Wolfe's approach to animal studies, who suggests that speciesism enables the foundation of cultural studies; and Donna Haraway, who advocates a more just and livable coexistence of organisms. I suggest that this interconnectedness can be pointed out and examined in literature through my theory

of portable outrage. To effectively conduct my analysis of the novels and make my arguments, I will first present a literature review of some theorists and theories that will be especially useful to this thesis.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Peter Singer

Peter Singer is important to introduce in this literary review partly because he popularized the term “speciesism” in his 1975 *Animal Liberation*. Singer defines speciesism (and this is also the definition I am working from in this thesis) as “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species” (6). Using Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian moral philosophy as a basis, Singer describes a principle of equality that assumes that all animals are equal, and should all merit consideration (of interests and suffering) for their own sake. Following his account of animal treatment in modern factory farming and scientific research, Singer concludes that anyone who agrees to this principle should become vegetarians because “it is not practically possible to rear animals for food on a large scale without inflicting considerable suffering” (160). Working from a utilitarian perspective, Singer is theoretically not opposed to the killing and consumption of animals as long as it does not inflict suffering, and devises a sort of “ranking system” of animals, moving down the evolutionary scale in the order of to which extent the animal has (or seems to have) interests. Thus, he maintains but redraws the ethical and political divide between beings, suggesting, for instance, that those who refrain from eating some animals (such as poultry) but not others (fish) have still taken a step away from speciesism. Singer continues to write philosophically and controversially about animal rights, but also the sanctity of life more generally (abortion, euthanasia), and other ethical concerns (environmental accountability).

1.2.2 Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida’s philosophy, and especially his later philosophy, was largely concerned with what he called the “question of the animal”, critiquing earlier tendencies to address the animal in the singular and as something separate from the human, defining the animal in an essentially negative way. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, edited by Marie-Louise Mallet, he questions the many and historical constructions of what is proper to Man and what distinguishes animals from Man in general, and suggests that grouping all that is “not human” into the category of “the animal” is a violent gesture that partakes in the “unprecedented

proportions of [the] subjection of the animal” (27). Furthermore, he stresses the human responsibility in acknowledging animal rights, underlining that the assumption that humans have the right to grant or deny the animal anything is essentially problematic because it assumes (anthropocentrically) that the human is the ultimate subject. Derrida does not devise a simplistic version of animal rights, but condemns and makes a strong case for the consideration and regard of, especially, industrialized animals exploited (alive or dead) by humans in today’s society.

1.2.3 Cary Wolfe

Cary Wolfe has written extensively on the topic of animal rights and posthumanism, taking a philosophical approach to the “question of the animal”. Wolfe’s argument of speciesism as the basis for cultural criticism is most central to this thesis. He argues that cultural studies is currently situated within a framework that represses the question of nonhuman subjectivity, saying that “the debates in the humanities and social sciences between well-intentioned critics of racism, (hetero)sexism, classism, and all other -isms that are the stock-in-trade of cultural studies almost always remains locked within an unexamined framework of *speciesism*” (*Animal Rites* 1, italics in original). The critique is directed at using the human as the standard subject, when such humanist and speciesist structures can be used to produce interhuman oppression as well. His suggestion that speciesism lays the foundation for cultural studies promotes intersectional analysis and advocacy. Taking a posthumanist stand, Wolfe is not suggesting that the effect of speciesism on humans is the reason why humans should care about speciesism, and critiques theorists who assume that our responsibility to the animal other is grounded in exhibitions of abilities that are realized to their fullest potential in human beings, or in other anthropocentric concerns. This critique strikes at philosophers such as Singer, who maintain the divide between human and animal by invoking a model of rights “for extension to those who are (symptomatically) ‘most like us’”, because it “only ends up reinforcing the very humanism that seems to be the problem in the first place” (*Animal Rites* 192). Wolfe remains widely concerned with animal studies, posthumanism, biophilosophy, and biopolitics, and is devoted to theoretical studies across disciplines.

1.2.4 Donna Haraway

Donna Haraway is focused mainly on (cyborg) feminism and interspecies relationships, and has in much of her recent writing discussed how earthly critters (and especially humans and companion animals) can live justifiably in togetherness. In both her theory of cyborgs and that of interspecies relationships, Haraway focuses largely on creating coalitions based on

affinity instead of identity. Haraway's focus on togetherness is furthermore not posthumanist, but still resists drawing boundaries between the human and other living organisms. She writes: "We who are archived in natural history and cultural museums and genomic databases as *Homo sapiens* have never been human, at least not in any luminous, singular, self-making sense" ("Species Matters, Humane Advocacy" 18). Rather, she writes: "We are a bundle of multispecies reciprocal inductions. We are in debt and at risk to and with each other" (18). Focused on the stakes in interspecies relationship, Haraway claims in her recent work, *When Species Meet*, that she does not deny the importance of nonhuman suffering, but resists the tendency to "condemn all relations of instrumentality between animals and people as necessarily involving objectification and oppression of a kind similar to the objectification and oppressions of sexism, colonialism, and racism" (74). Her argument is that much animal advocacy focuses on critique of interspecies relationships instead of finding ways to let these natural and mutual dependencies be continued justifiably.

1.2.5 Michael Lundblad

Michael Lundblad explores in his work discourse of the humane and the discourse of the jungle, focusing on Darwinian-Freudian constructions of human behavior. These Darwinian-Freudian constructions attempt to explain human violence and heterosexuality as natural due to human instincts towards survival and reproduction. In his work *The Birth of a Jungle* he discusses the importance of animality in relation to concerns within cultural studies, such as sexuality and race, and suggests that alternative constructions of animality (though not necessarily better ones) offer different possible explanations for violent and sexual atrocities than the Darwinist-Freudian jungle does. Most relevant to this thesis, he argues that discourse of the humane, thought currently primarily carrying positive connotations of something "right" or "just", can be seen as essentially problematic because of its underlying anthropocentrism. "Once evolutionary thinking challenges the boundaries between the human and the animal," he writes, "humane behavior apparently becomes a new way to define what it means to be human: to restrain one's animal instincts" (125). Lundblad consequently critiques how discourse of the humane could be used, not as a way of creating livable interspecies relationships, but as means of elevating some (those capable of restraining their animal instincts) over others (those who seemingly can not), and furthermore excuse cruel and oppressive behavior from the more "evolved" humans against animalized human and nonhuman others. His problematizing of the humane as something that can be used oppressively also in interhuman relationships implores a consideration of the possible

interconnectedness of cultural studies and animal studies, and in the introduction to *Species Matters*, which he edited with Marianne DeKoven, it is suggested that intersectional analysis of these fields would be more productive than keeping them separate. Lundblad continues to write intersectionally about race, disability, gender, and animality.

These are the main theorists to which I will be referring throughout this thesis as I make my arguments, though I will also include others. I have included this review here for two reasons. Firstly because it makes my arguments about the literary texts more easily accessible and better organized, as I will not have often to include long sections explaining the theory/theorist to which I am referring in my thesis. Also, although these are (to varying degrees) renowned theorists within the field, it seemed necessary to emphasize which parts of their writing is most relevant, as many have written extensively both about this and other topics and it would be impossible within the scope of this thesis to consider everything. Secondly, I have conducted the review to prove an understanding of the theorists' similarities and differences (such as Singer's scaling system and Haraway's network of beings). This is to show that though I sometimes will be drawing on several theorists in the same analysis, I recognize that their differences are present and significant. What I am doing is aligning myself with theorists I consider to be going in a direction (away from anthropocentrism) that I consider productive in animal studies, and drawing on them to make my own argument about species and speciesism and how they manifest in literature.

2 The Animals We are: Discourse of the Human(e) in *My Year of Meats*

As *My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki is a novel that approaches the subject of meat-production directly and rather aggressively, it may be assumed that it is an effective novel in terms of advocating for the animal. Many critics have indeed analyzed the text as one that makes the reader reconsider animal-rearing practices and policies, and the effects animal production has on our environment. However, these readings rarely assume anything but an humanist stand focusing, like the novel does, mainly on humans. They have moreover been inclined to focus anthropocentrically on the human/animal relationship that has developed and is still developing in American society today, and what the political implications of this relationship as it is presented in the novel – most often centering on global/transnational relations and politics affecting the environment and public health (especially women's). Many of these critics do not consider, in their own writing or in Ozeki's, is the essentially anthropocentric focus of *My Year of Meats*, as the novel is largely concerned with the effects the type of meat production that is depicted in the novel and also common practice in contemporary American society has on the human body and politics. I argue in this chapter that these readings of *My Year of Meats* reinforce anthropocentrism and speciesism in their writing, even when the critics themselves have attempted to focus on interspecies relationships as well. Such readings furthermore ignore the potential for true animal advocacy that can, arguably, be found in the text and made visible using my theory of portable outrage.

In this chapter I will thus argue that *My Year of Meats* is a novel that reads initially anthropocentric, but that has surprising potential for animal advocacy through the application of portable outrage. I argue that the original outrage that is produced (and also most commonly examined in critical literature connecting with the novel) is directed at the effects of DES use in animal production, and furthermore at the sexist and classist themes that arise in connection with animal discourse in the novel. However, there are disruptive conditions in the novel which I will argue can be effective in relocating this outrage so that one can effectively read the novel's potential for animal advocacy or criticism as well. I will show that the disruptive conditions of this novel are both (il)logical and violent disruptions, which in their connection to or allusions towards animal discourse are productive in directing the outrage at the speciesist assumption that the immoral manipulation and domination over human bodies is more significant and worth critiquing than that of animal bodies. Thusly, I

suggest that Ozeki's novel, though superficially perceived as and driven by the reinforcement of humanist discourse, can be seen as effective in exposing the contemporary literary concern of the fluid boundaries of what it means to be human, and the underlying themes of species and speciesism in interspecies narratives such as *My Year of Meats*.

2.1 Internalizing Speciesism

It is evident that the body plays a significant role in Ozeki's novel, and especially in terms of how consuming nonhuman flesh affects the human body. Therefore, the animal body (human, nonhuman and, as we shall see: hybrid) is an interesting manifestation of how speciesism is internalized, quite literally, through the process of rearing, slaughtering, and consuming animals. In her article "Boundaries and Border Wars: DES, Technology, and Environmental Justice" Julie Sze uses a literary analysis of *My Year of Meats* to trace DES as a critical question of race, class, and pollution – especially in America. Though placing her argument primarily in the discourse of environmental studies, Sze frequently engages with the categories human/animal and culture/nature that she finds to be falsely dichotomized. Her article, as this thesis, appropriates Haraway's cyborg, a "creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" ("A Cyborg Manifesto" 69), to mean not just a hybrid of organism and machine but "hybrids of bodies" (Sze 793). In this, Sze focuses on what she calls "technologically polluted bodies"(793) to exemplify how human and animal bodies interact with a variety of systems, both technological and environmental, enabling political questions about "the nature of nature, the relationship between the technological and the natural, and between the environmental and human harms that result from particular technologies" (793). In her conclusion Sze asks the reader to look closely at these interconnected relationships so that "we can better begin to consider where and how justice is at all possible in our complex age" (809), echoing with this statement Haraway in more recent writing where she discusses the "webbed existences" we are in the midst of and that link "natures and cultures without end" (*When Species Meet* 72).

Interestingly, Sze works hard to include the animal in her discussion of the polluted body, sometimes underlining the scope of her definition of "bodies" by parenthesizing that by this she includes animals as well as, for instance, women. However, though her conclusion carries the weight of human and nonhuman animals belonging to the same ecosystem, she often falls short of recognizing that humans are, in fact, animals themselves and thus, perhaps by fault of wording rather than logic, often excludes the animals from the otherwise solid

argument she is making against technically polluting bodies based on the “utopian belief” that technologies can improve nature itself (795).

As Sze sets out to examine how we can think about the relationship between women and animals (as if women are not animals) through DES, she argues that the technological pollution of bodies is done to a body considered an “object to be ‘done to’” without consent (796). This initiative shows how consent and equality, topics generally engaged with in feminist theory, can be used to access animal theory as well. Carol J. Adams is a prominent theorist who has made this connection. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, she writes: “Equality is not an idea; it is a practice. We practice it when we ask ‘what are you going through?’ and understand that we ask the question because it matters to all of us what some are experiencing” (1). In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams combines feminist and animal theory to explore the relationship between patriarchal values and meat eating in a way that speaks to the aim of this thesis by the demonstration of how these oppressive systems can be interpreted together. In Ozeki’s novel, the interconnectedness of what is done to animal others and what happens to ourselves (the human selves) is made clear in the problematization of DES use in meat production. What I want to argue here, in terms of my theory of portable outrage, is that the outrage originally produced by the discoveries made by Jane, the novel’s protagonist, which is primarily concerned with the human (and often female) body, can be relocated to advocate a concern for nonhuman animal bodies as well – the destabilizing condition being that the polluted and violated body to which the novel objects, the human, begins with the largely accepted pollution and violation of nonhuman animal bodies. These animal bodies are represented and drawn attention to in the text by the establishment of animals as an important (though often not fully recognized) part of our daily lives and by the violent scenes depicting the rearing and slaughtering of food production animals.

Considering Sze’s suggestion that human/animal discourse is used to justify medical experiments using DES on women also parallels to a point made by Cary Wolfe in *Animal Rites* (8). Wolfe’s suggests that discourse of species is problematic because the categories created can always be turned on and used against any perceived (or constructed) Other to establish dominance and, consequently, oppression. It is an appropriate connection to make to Ozeki’s text, and also rather reflects Adam’s sexual politics of meat. However, I suggest that Sze falls short of fulfilling her promise of examining the nonhuman animal side of this argument, and instead completes the analysis of DES and gender without further mention of the relationship between women (as *humans*) and nonhuman animals. The points she is

making about the cultural significance of DES for women, however, can easily be applied purposefully, leaning on theorists such as Adams and Wolfe and using my theory of portable outrage, to examine whether *My Year of Meats* could be effective in raising awareness of the injustice done to nonhuman animals and the physical and moral effects of this injustice on (all) the animals involved.

Sze's text begins to consider the nonhuman animal and its role in *My Year of Meats*, and I would now like to argue that what is lacking from her analysis is the consideration of nonhuman animals as something more than a just symbols through which human culture, politics, and existence can be interpreted meaningfully – rendering her reading of the novel more anthropocentric than she might have intended. Moving away from this essentially speciesist interpretation of the text that focus on human bodies, it might be useful to reconsider Sze's argument of technically polluted bodies as cyborgian bodies in light of more recent writing from Haraway, also keeping in mind both Wolfe and Adams' approach. In this way, the nonhuman animal (dead, alive, or manipulated) can be given as central of a role in the interpretation of *My Year of Meats* as it is in the novel itself.

It cannot be contested that nonhuman animals are the axis around which Ozeki's novel turn, as it revolves around the production of a TV series meant to promote and sell meat: *My American Wife!*. Meat is just another word for (nonhuman) animal flesh, which may seem like an unnecessary reminder, but since most western people habitually ignore this fact it may go unnoticed that nonhuman animals are essential to and a central part of the novel's plot from the beginning. In the words of Jane: "Meat is the Message" (24) and also, as Sze mentions, representative of the domination of humans over nature and nonhumans (803). With regard to Haraway's cyborg theory, Sze writes that Ozeki's novel "connects women and livestock in a complicated stance that simultaneously embraces hybridity and rejects pollution" (802). Jane narrates:

All over the world, native species are migrating, if not disappearing, and in the next millennium the idea of an indigenous person or plant or culture will just seem quaint. /Being half, I am evidence that race, too, will become a relic. Eventually we're all going to be brown, sort of. Some days, when I'm feeling grand, I feel brand-new – like a prototype. Back in the olden days, my dad's ancestors got stuck behind the Alps and my mom's on the east side of the Urals. Now, oddly, I straddle this blessed, ever-shrinking world. (35)

This passage clearly illustrates the embrace of racial hybridity, and many might suggest that Jane's reflections on race in the novel make for a positive race-critical reading. She, being a mix between her Caucasian father and Asian mother, views herself as "brand-new" a

“prototype”, words that doubtlessly invoke a sense of hope and improvement. Jane’s hybridity is a source of power in this passage, and she “straddles” the world, which is shrinking at her feet. But while this hybridity may be embraced by the humans in the novel in the way she considers herself a prototype of the future, it does little to benefit nonhuman production animals, both in the novel and in reality. Though this possibility is not the focus of this passage, it is definitely present if one lets the disruption that indicates a survival-of-the-fittest mindset, where the indigenous species (person, plant, or culture) have to make way (by migrating or disappearing) for this brand-new hybrid species, or person, redirect the attention to concerns of such speciesist discourse.

Also concerned with the question of the animal, Jacques Derrida has written in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*: “Everyone knows what terrifying and intolerable pictures a realist painting could give to the industrial, mechanical, chemical, hormonal, and genetic violence to which man has been submitting animal life for the past two centuries” (26). For the animals raised for food, the changing systems of production does not entail a grand “straddling” of the world as it does for Jane, but rather a systematic and technological violence that turns nonhuman animals into things (Sze 804-5). I argue that there are parts in *My Year of Meats*, such as that of the survival-of-the-fittest mindset demonstrated above, that suggest that our concern with this tendency should not just be with how this can be transferred as a system of oppression to, say, human females, as it seems to be for Sze, but rather that it should be a concern regarding what it means in terms of the world, or system of living, that is created as a result.

Accepting that human and nonhuman animals today are cyborgian hybrids in terms of having technologically polluted bodies, as Sze argues, is thus not as much a cultural or political symbol as it is a reminder of the interconnected web in which animals (human and nonhuman) and all other organisms are situated. The treatment of production animals as objects for profit that climaxes in the “glorious consumption” (Ozeki 24) of their flesh is, as pointed out by Derrida, not desirable or beneficial to the animal itself, nor does it appeal to or satisfy most consumers when exposed to and confronted with its realist actuality. This exposure and its consequent disruption of dominant discourse is what Jane is confronted with in the course of Ozeki’s novel as she discovers the cruel, inhumane and sometimes also illegal ways of meat-production:

It was not a TV show: just the feedlot with its twenty thousand head of cattle, and Gale talking about food and drug technologies; the drugs in the feedmill, and Rosie and her bright-blue popsicle; the cowboys with their hypodermic needles and the aborted calf fetus; the slaughterhouse, and the vat of hormone-contaminated livers, oozing viscous

yellow; and Bunny, talking about Rosie, who was sleeping. I still couldn't imagine what I would do with the tape, once I'd finished editing it. I mean, who would want to see it? (463)

What lingers most powerfully here as Jane contemplates her documentary is her question of "who would want to see it?". To which we can agree, like Derrida does, that *we do not*. But in the repulsion and outrage that is produced from such a discovery, even when it is originally concerned with anthropocentric causes, I suggest that there is powerful potential in redirecting it at other types of criticism and activism, such as that concerning animals. Activism "is engaged theory," Adams writes, "theory that arises from anger at what is; theory that envisions what is possible" (2). Such an activism needs not be based in the way inaction reflects on the human (which would also be an essentially anthropocentric stance, as argued by Wolfe), but in the recognition that humans may not have the privilege to grant (or withhold) rights in the first place. Before a change can be made, however, the problem must be made visible and the dominant discourse disrupted, and this I argue is a central function of Jane's quest in *My Year of Meats*. The novel takes the thing that is hidden in plain sight, the evidence of human's violent abuse of nonhuman animals: meat, and makes it visible. First, by exemplifying the (violent) exploitation of other humans, such as women or consumers, and then, less explicitly (but no less important) by establishing it as a product of the violent exploitation of other sentient beings.

Haraway writes about the morality of human/nonhuman relationships suggesting that it is a misstep "to separate the world's beings into those who may be killed and those who may not" and to make "the mistake of forgetting the ecologies of all mortal beings" (*When Species Meet* 79). This mistake is, perhaps, most potently made visible in Ozeki's novel in the bodily manifestations and/or deformities resulting from the use of DES in human and nonhuman animals, as discussed earlier. That the consequences of the essential misstep outlined by Haraway must be made visible before acted upon is thoroughly reinforced in both Ozeki's novel and Sze's analysis of it. As Sze comments, the use of DES in chickens was, as an example, made unpalatable because it visibly "made men 'women' and children sexually mature" (797). These unnatural developments, she says, were "visible, embodied, and therefore grotesque" (797). The same account also appears in Ozeki's novel, where Jane finds that DES-use in chickens was banned after "someone discovered that dogs and males from low-income families in the South were developing signs of feminization after eating cheap chicken parts and wastes from processing plants" (176). The key here is that, as Jane notes, these side effects were not visible in consumers of meat from cattle, and consequently,

though the drug remained the same, it was approved and widely used as a method of fattening cattle faster and prescribed to pregnant women long after it was banned in the poultry industry.

A feminist reading of Ozeki's novel might suggest that there can be a form of sexism detected in the reception of the "feminization" of male consumers of DES-contaminated meat and the early onset of sexual maturity in children, as signs of feminization becomes the definite marker for when there is "too much" nature in culture. Culture, represented by what we eat, has been removed in the system of thought from nature, the "real" animals who die (/are killed) to become our food. Adams discusses something similar when she writes about the absent referent: "that which separates the meat eater from the animal and the animal from the end product" (13), arguing that there is a type of discrimination to take an animal's literal and lived experience and make it symbolic of what humans are experiencing. When these "unnatural" developments (what is really more natural than what we put into our bodies affecting them?) are made visible they become, as Sze points out, grotesque and also outrageous. But this outrage is ironically not, as the text shows, originally directed at the chemical manipulation of nonhuman animal's bodies, but rather at how it effects the human body. In Adams' words: "[T]he original meaning of animals' fates is absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy" (67). However, this seemingly anthropocentric approach in the novel might show potential for interspecies considerations in its critique of how the use of DES is continued in other meat-production for a long time. It bears witness to the humans' illogical refusal to acknowledge the connection between themselves and other organisms even when it manifests so clearly in their own bodies, and works as a disrupting condition that might redirect the original outrage at the humans' speciesist presumption to be above, or outside of, nature.

As Jane's (Ozeki's) research uncovers, it was not until another visible and embodied problem manifested in the human body, the link between DES and cancer in humans, that there was an outcry to ban DES in cattle as well (Ozeki 176-180). This outcry can be presumed to have been driven by a human fear of indirectly polluting their own bodies rather than a genuine concern for the bodily pollution of cattle. And still, since "cheap meat is an unalienable right in the U.S.A., and an integral part of the American dream ... three hundred eighteen cattlemen had decided that since they didn't agree with the ban they would simply ignore it" (Ozeki 179). What this ironic remark might show, in addition to the outrage provoked by the disregard of human health, is that animal politics often concerns itself with how the treatment of nonhuman animals affect people, whether it be in terms of affecting

their bodies or fattening their wallets, and not what rights that animal may or may not have (or be granted). The human disregard for the law, as demonstrated in Ozeki's novel, might at first glance seem as an interhuman concern, but disrupted by the human misstep, as Haraway calls it, of disregarding one's own belonging in the natural world and interconnectedness with the living beings in it, I suggest that it may also be offered as a possibility to critique the human treatment of nonhuman animals.

2.2 “Undesireable Things”

As I have touched upon previously, it is not only the disregard of human's interconnectedness with animals (though plenty of evidence of it is procured in the novel) that works as a disrupting condition in Ozeki's novel. That the novel also seems concerned with equality in terms of race, class, and gender, yet accept sexist, classist, and often also racist discourse as truth may also be identified as a disrupting condition. The novel is, superficially, concerned with disrupting the essentialist stereotypes of Americans and, especially, American families and wives (women), as demonstrated in Jane's quest for truth and a more diverse representation of these constructs. Jane quickly discovers that the American wholesomeness BEEF-EX is trying to use as a sales pitch for their product is not so wholesome after all. In a memo from the Tokyo Office a list of important things for the American wife is included, listing “UNDESIREABLE THINGS” such as physical imperfections, obesity, squalor, and “second class peoples” (30). A follow-up note asks that the reference to “second class peoples” is not to be considered a reference to race or class, but that the show simply is asking for a “middle-to-upper-middle class white American woman” (32) to star in the episodes. The irony is complete but Jane, in need of a job, accepts the offer and tries to combat the inauthenticity with a mode of satire, and later documentary.

The production of *My American Wife!* produces much outrage in the novel, and the injustice and discrimination that is part of the selection of a wife, the shooting of the program, and the processing of the material is much more in focus throughout the novel than the considerations concerning production of animals for food. As can be seen in the production memo, the wives and their families are seemingly reduced to commercial vessels through which the shameless promotion of American beef can be conducted. The wife should be “Meat Made Manifest” (24) and the “documentaries were to function as commercials” (67). Describing (or treating) women as a piece of meat is historically problematic in terms of a feminist discourse, and Caron J. Adams has discussed how such use of animals as absent

referents “uphold[s] the patriarchal structure ... appropriating the experience of an animal to interpret [women’s] violation” (72), and is thus problematic and, possibly, disrupting.

Many of the women on the show are used in ways that could not be considered right, compassionate, or benevolent. Most notably so the first wife, Suzy, who has the destruction of her marriage made in to a televised joke, but also the vegetarian couple, Lara and Dyann, who are made into “commercials” for beef without consent (consent also being a topic easily intersected in animal and feminist criticism, see chapter 3). This grotesque lack of consideration in the novel is outrageous, and I argue that the subconscious perpetuation of such problematic discourse by the use of the absent referent can be used to destabilize the initially gendered reading to include, or turn to, the grotesque treatment of animals in the meat industry, represented in the novel by BEEF-EX. First only making their presence known as the “message” of the Japanese reality show, the animals in the novel are later made visible and painstakingly alive, demonstrating and providing a gateway to discuss the real cost of the economic endeavor of producing meat on a global scale.

In combination with the disrupting perpetuation of discourse that is deemed problematic, the scenes in the novel that connect the living animal with the dead meat consumed by humans can be seen as an opportunity to redirect the original outrage towards, say sexist discourse, to that of animals. Cary Wolfe, discussing Derrida’s *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, suggests that his emphasis on the modern animal “holocaust” is on “the particularly perverse *techniques* of animal exploitation that we humans practice” (“Humane Advocacy” 31, italics in original). The word perverse here, it is worth noting, is also one generally connected with discourse of sex and sexuality. I will now focus on the question of the “perverse *techniques*” depicted in Ozeki’s novel, which I suggests carry over sexist discourse (of domination, consent, and the perverse) to the illustration of animal treatment and speciesist discourse. Techniques for slaughter as it is depicted in the novel will be examined at length later in this chapter, but first I would like to look closer at the techniques used in rearing the animals. For instance, with regard to the attitudes to using drugs on cattle bred for food, Gale, a cattle farmer in the novel, explains:

“We ain’t breedin’ here, but we use that same Lutalyse to abort out heifers when they get accidental bred ... Actually, we give ‘em all a shot when they come in for processin’ just in case. They abort so nice and smooth they don’t go of their feed for a second, don’t even miss a mouthful”. (Ozeki 364)

The interest here is purely economical, industrialized. The breeders do not even waste time to screen the cows to see which are pregnant and in “need” of the Lutalyse shot, but simply give

them all a shot as part of the perverse “processing”. Purely economic interest is also demonstrated by Gale, who could only imagine the cows taking a break from feeding (hence not gaining weight) as a problematic aspect of shooting up animals with pharmaceutical drugs. This nonchalance towards dominating and injecting living beings with drugs they may not even need is not restricted to the use of Lutalyse either, as is seen by the TV crew when they witness the processing themselves. When asked about the drugs injected to the cattle at this time (having settled it is not Lutalyse) one of the workers responds: “Listen. We just shoot ‘em up. Don’t ask no questions” (369). This industrialized processing of animals reduced to produce is what Peter Singer has named a predictable outcome “[o]nce we place nonhuman animals outside our sphere of moral consideration and treat them as things we use to satisfy our own desires” (97). The reduction of women to “things” used to satisfy (often male) desires is not foreign to feminist discourse and nor, as I have shown, in the novel, and is recognizable here in the treatment of animals as well. My theory of portable outrage help illustrate and critique such discourse which, when affecting animals of any kind, leaves us with an inhumane, unnatural system that insults the welfare of living beings.

In “Archeology of a Humane Society: *Animality, Savagery, Blackness*” Michael Lundblad traces the development of the “humane society” in U.S. culture, and it is important in understanding how Ozeki’s novel, despite its seemingly anthropocentric approach, might be effective in problematizing speciesist discourse. Tracing the birth of the humane society, Lundblad outlines ways in which discourse of the humane can be problematic, despite initially invoking positive connotations. “Once evolutionary thinking challenges the boundaries between the human and the animal,” he writes, “humane behavior apparently becomes a new way to define what it means to be human: to restrain one’s animal instincts” (125). This perpetuates the speciesist categorization which we have seen Cary Wolfe blame for interhuman oppression as well as human/animal oppression, and could also “lead to constructions of a new kind of hierarchy: some human beings have supposedly evolved enough to be “humane” not only towards other animals, but toward other human beings” (Lundblad 126). He goes on to show how “the discourse of humane reform could be used in a variety of ways” (128) to excuse crimes (selectively) or place “painful duty” on a humanely evolved “superior”. As part of the humane archeology, Lundblad outlines a William James’ logic of lynching where the violence executed is seen as not being about sadistic torture, but rather about animalized violence or necessary control, despite “the tremendous amount of evidence to the contrary” (135). Similarly to James, Ozeki’s novel concludes (and I suggest

ironically) that you can be “an awful sorry but essentially decent man who participate in inhumane and mechanical mass slaughter” (451).

I have now exemplified the disrupting conditions in *My Year of Meats* as the perpetuation of problematic discourse (such as sexism) and the illogical tendency of the humans in the novel to consider themselves, and continue to consider themselves as something outside of or above nature, a non-animal, despite the evidence surfacing in the course of the novel that they are not. Martha C. Nussbaum discusses anthropodenial, the blindness to the (nonhuman) animal-like characteristics in ourselves and the human-like characteristics in other animals, as a “cause of moral deformity” (140) in her essay “Compassion: *Human and Animal*”. This essay, though primarily concerned with interhuman relationships, may be of use in connection with *My Year of Meats* because it discusses the human tendency to dominate, violate, cause pain, and ignore suffering that can be, and often is, exercised by humans over members of other species as well. I want to address how the conditions for portable outrage makes this extension of violent and dominant tendencies in interspecies relationships applicable. However, I will not adopt a stand quite as pessimistic as Nussbaum, where the human plays the role of the malicious and contorted doll who in fear of her own animality classify an Other and subject that Other to horrors that “correspond to nothing in the animal world” (142). What is useful, however, is to see Nussbaum’s analysis of compassion in humans in light of Haraway’s theory, where denial of human animality is considered a mistake that might have dire consequences.

To briefly recap Nussbaum’s analysis, she outlines four judgments that are necessary parts of human compassion. These are the judgment of *seriousness*, where “the person who feels the emotion thinks that someone else is suffering in some way that is important and non-trivial” (146); the judgment of *non-fault*, stating that “we typically don’t feel compassion if we think the person’s predicament is chosen or self-inflicted” (146); the judgment of *similar possibilities*, that “[t]he person who has compassion often thinks the suffering person is similar to him- or herself and has possibilities in life that are similar”(146); and the *eudaimonistic judgment*, the “judgment or thought that places the suffering person or persons among the important parts of the life of the person who feels the emotion” (147). This is arguably important theory as this chapter considers *My Year of Meats* as a novel that provokes emotions that can be productively applied to address more than one problematic discourse. I argue that animal advocacy generally seeks first and foremost to evoke human compassion which will, when the conditions of suffering animals are revealed, produce outrage, and *My Year of Meats* could also be seen as effective in this regard. This outrage is

not, as Peter Singer has underlined, produced because all animal-rights activists are “animal lovers” (“Introduction”) but because the disruptive condition of illogical denial of our place in the world might help us realize that our moral responsibilities should not begin and end at the boundaries of our own species. With this in mind, I want to further my argument by suggesting that the portable outrage produced in *My Year of Meats* is, in part, a result of employing what I would like to call productive compassion. That is: compassion that leads to an engagement rather than just pity and/or outrage. Nussbaum’s analysis of compassion is thus useful, especially the judgment of similar possibilities and the eudaimonistic judgment, because they are tools by which we can begin to recognize the moral responsibility we have towards animals other than ourselves. It is not, however, sufficient to apply only Nussbaum in this respect as her judgments can, by humans engaging in speciesist ideology, be denied just as easily as they may be accepted. This is why Haraway’s statement that all “earthly heterogeneous beings are in this web together for all time” is essential, reminding us that “no one gets to be Man” (*When Species Meet* 82). In other words, moving towards a less cruel and more compassionate future entails recognizing that we are all animals, and that nonhuman animals have similar possibilities and interests that are central and (should be) important to humans, even when it does not affect us directly.

My Year of Meats, as has been argued at an earlier point in this chapter, demonstrates the interconnected web all animals and organisms are part of most prominently through the connection between DES use on human and nonhuman animals. Thus it may be considered effective in producing portable outrage that can benefit nonhuman animals as well as human animals. I recognize, however, that this might be a controversial reading of *My Year of Meats*, as the novel remains largely focused on the effects on human bodies, and seem to presume that eating meat would be fine if the animals were treated humanely before slaughter. But, I argue that Adams’ reading of the problematic use of meat as absent referents, and Lundblad’s concerns connected with the humane in contemporary American society are visible in some of the passages in the novel as well, and that these can be utilized to effectively relocate the outrage directed at these human causes to include a concern for nonhuman animals as well. There are, in fact, passages in *My Year of Meats* that remain free of the speciesist bias that says we should only be concerned with the treatment of nonhuman animals insofar as that treatment affect the human body. The following passage is an example of such a place in the novel:

The cow balked, minced, then slammed her bulk against the sides of the pen. She had just watched the cow before her getting killed, and the cow before that, and she was

terrified. Her eyes rolled back into her head and a frothy white foam poured from her mouth as the steel door slammed down on her hindquarters, forcing her all the way in ... she hung upside down, slowly spinning, head straining, legs kicking wildly in their search for solid ground. The worker approached and took a knife from his belt ... He bent down and looked straight into her bugging eye and stroked her forelock, and it seemed to calm her. And when he straightened up again, he used the upward movement of his body to sink the knife deep into her throat, slicing crosswise, then plunging it straight into her heart. (393-395)

In this passage, Jane is in the slaughterhouse watching a cow get slaughtered for the first time, and there is no human interest that drives the point home here. The judgments of compassion as outlined by Nussbaum are clearly at work in this passage. First: seriousness. There can be no doubt as to the level of seriousness of this being's suffering or its being non-trivial, as the reader knows that this cow is headed for slaughter. In addition to the fact that also nonhuman animals can suffer when pain is inflicted on them, it is obvious that this cow is also suffering with the anticipation of what is about to happen, whether she fully understands what it is or not. "She was terrified", Jane observes. Second: *non-fault*. The cow tries to escape her situation by slamming her bulk against the sides of the pen, and is finally forced into it by the steel door slamming down on her hindquarters. Even as she is hoisted up into the air, unsuccessfully stunned, she continues resisting by straining her head and kicking her legs, and the predicament could thus by no means be considered to have chosen or self-inflicted.

Third, and this is where it gets tricky, we have *similar possibilities*. I argue that by first laying the foundation that reminds the reader of the interconnected web of living organisms to which they belong, according to Haraway, Ozeki has effectively built up to this point in the novel. The readers should already feel connected with the cow in the slaughterhouse simply because it is a living being that co-inhabits this world with them. This is indicated by the way their human bodies have been shown to be affected by what happens to the animal bodies. The similar possibilities does thus not necessarily have to imply that the cow can be liberated from the slaughterhouse and go on to do something distinctly human, like pursuing a medical degree, but that the cow is similar and has similar possibilities to the human in terms of living a healthy, natural life. In addition, the author is reinforcing the similarities the reader should feel with the cow by the use of language in the passage. For instance, Jane is referring to the cow using the feminine personal pronoun "she" rather than "it", which would have created a barrier between the human reader and the nonhuman cow. She is also directly attributing the cow with the feeling of terror: "she was terrified", rather

than saying that she *seemed* terrified, which would suggest that the cow was not actually feeling anything. Furthermore, Jane describes the reactions of the cow in a manner that (one can imagine) would be the same if the cow was a person. In fact, without the classification of species here, the passage could be read as the most intimate form of betrayal. The worker bends down to stroke the cow's forehead, which calms her, as a gesture of kindness would also comfort a terrified human, but ultimately uses this gesture as a pretense to get close enough to the cow to kill her.

Finally Nussbaum has formulated the *eudaimonistic judgment*. Of course, part of why this being is (or should be) important to us is closely connected with the recognition that we are living in Haraway's "earthly web". But also, the cow being slaughtered is an important and central part of our lives because what she goes through in this passage, and what many other nonhuman animals go through on a daily basis, is a direct result of our eating habits. I argue from this close reading that *My Year of Meats* can be seen as a novel that effectively constructs portable outrage and redirects that outrage at animal concerns by employing strategies that invoke productive compassion.

I have in this chapter relied on some of Adams' theory surrounding *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, mostly tying connecting to the way it reflects some of Haraway's theory of the interconnectedness of beings, and the use of meat as an absent referent. Nussbaum's analysis of compassion ties in here with the argument of portable outrage because it illustrates the problems and consequences of removing ourselves from other beings, and allows for a way in which the connection between condemnable discourses can be real and important rather than removed (absent) and symbolic. The passage of the slaughter scene in Ozeki's novel could also bring to mind a slaughter scene from Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, which Adams has also discussed in her *Sexual Politics of Meat* as another way that violently explicit scenes can be powerful in removing the reader from the habit of symbolizing the experience of animal others. This is an interpretative approach that I will save for the analysis of *Fast Food Nation* in the second chapter. However, the problem of using meat as a symbol remains essentially the same.

2.3 Categories of Oppression: Using Meat as a Symbol

When discussing how *My Year of Meats* works to expose the human/animal binary as part of speciesist discourse rather than natural facts, I am not attempting to argue that human and nonhuman animals are the same, or that, as Lundblad also emphasizes in his chapter, that the

concern for animals should become “more important than concern for various racial groups, for example” (138). I am concerned with what speciesist categorization and discourse allow for in terms of oppression, in line with theorists such as Peter Singer, Cary Wolfe, and Donna Haraway (despite their differences), as shown in the introduction of this thesis. For instance, Cary Wolfe writes that: “we need to understand that the ethical and philosophical urgency of confronting the institution of speciesism *has nothing to do with whether you like animals*” but that all humans and nonhumans have “a stake in the discourse and institution of speciesism” (*Animal Rites* 7, italics in original). In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate this common stake as illustrated in *My Year of Meats* through its impact on our bodies and beings. However, as indicated by Lundblad in his discussion of the humane, and also by Cary Wolfe in the introduction to *Zoontologies*, there is a problem with some readings of “the animal” is that they may continue to construct hierarchical distinctions of beings though attempting to critique them (Wolfe xii). This section will contest some readings of *My Year of Meats* that are essentially anthropocentric, and thus problematic, in the way reinforce the human/animal binary and speciesist discourse, primarily by treating the nonhuman animal as a symbol through which human existence can be understood and analyzed rather than real and important beings to whom their own experiences have a meaning of its own. However, I want to illustrate that though this superficial reading seemingly continues the humanist discourse, the potential for animal advocacy is still present in the text.

In his article “Politics of Food, the Culinary and Ethnicity in Ruth Ozeki’s *My Year Of Meats: An Ecocritical Reading*”, Saeed Kalejahdi sees the exposure of American meat production in *My Year of Meats* as an effective literary tool primarily because of the symbolic value of food that renders American culture and history inauthentic. The inauthenticity that follows the realities of meat production is an important point, both in Kalejahdi’s article and Ozeki’s novel. However, I would like to suggest that it is a problem in itself to reduce meat to a symbolic “source of America’s democratic vitality” (84), because it allows us to forget that the horrific industrialization of meat production is, indeed, ongoing and real (both in the novel and society today). Instead, it would be productive to see the connection between the outrage directed at the unwholesomeness of BEEF-EX’s agenda, the demands for *My American Wife!*, and the inauthenticity and deception of the meat industry more generally, rather than merely assigning these issues symbolic meaning through which human experience can be interpreted (in terms of gender, class, health etc.).

What could be seen from such a connection is a strong reinforcement in the novel of Cary Wolfe’s idea that “the discourse and practice of speciesism in the name of liberal

humanism have historically been turned on other *humans* as well” (*Rites* 37). The domination and abuse in inter-human relationships seen in the novel, can be connected to animal discourse by emphasizing to the reader how speciesist discourse and discourse of the humane can be applied to create categories of oppression covering a wide range of human and nonhuman others. Joichi “John” Ueno’s relationship with his wife, Akiko, and attitudes towards other women in the novel is a good example of this. As he gets more involved in the production of *My American Wife!* he also becomes increasingly violent towards his wife. Akiko is suffering from chronic bulimia as a result of her unhappy marriage, and the violence directed at her is in part based in Ueno’s disappointment in her reception of *My American Wife!* and its recipes, and in part in the fact that she cannot conceive due to her condition.

The day she visited the specialist in Ginza, she had come home expecting the worst. The doctor had threatened to call John at work with his diagnosis. John had been acting strange and the last thing he needed was the news that his wife was sabotaging her own fertility. Akiko attributed his edginess to stress at work and problems with the meat campaign. (142)

I argue that this passage is perhaps most prominently outraging from a feminist perspective (male ownership over his wife, pressure on women to have children), and also illustrating effectively how speciesist discourse is mirrored or reproduced in other types of oppressive discourse, such as sexist discourse. The passage echoes Haraway in her discussion of “degrees of freedom”, commenting on some factory animals’ “refusal to live” in their conditions (*When Species Meet* 73) with the idea that Akiko is “sabotaging her own fertility”. Her infertility is not, as it is suggested by the specialist, a stubborn act of sabotage but rather a result of the conditions under which she is forced to live. Instead of improving on the conditions, John responds by becoming more violent and forceful in the relationship. Akiko attributes his “edginess”, that is: the possibility of him abusing her, to his work with the meat campaign. This connection is also more implicitly made in the novel, as John becomes increasingly more violent with his wife, and also with other women such as Jane, as he becomes more involved with the production of *My American Wife!* and the practices of meat-production is exposed to the reader through Jane’s work.

However, it cannot be denied that the focus of Ozeki’s work, especially in relationship like these, is on dominance over and violence against the female body and not on the dominance and violence concerning nonhuman animals. The violence in the novel accumulates in John’s raping of Akiko, using animalized language as he rapes her. He calls her a “sterile, useless woman” forcing her penis into her anus without regard to the pain it is

causing her, and claims that he can smell that she has started bleeding again, and that he knows when she is in “heat” (333). The species-specific vocabulary used in this rape scene can be considered part of what Peter Singer has discussed as a “verbal disguise” meant to keep us ignorant of the violent origins of our foods, such as using terms like beef, not bull and pork, not pig (95-96), and it is here turned on Akiko to excuse (if not disguise) the violence she is subjected to. The problematic discourse here is, again, not only the sexist discourse of treating the female “like an animal”, but also that the experience of the animal is used symbolically to excuse the violence executed by naturalizing it. Though male violence towards women is generally condemned in the novel, little is done to challenge this sexist discourse. The male figures in *My Year of Meats* are, as a rule rather than as an exception, depicted as sexist and violent. Sloan, Jane’s lover (and later boyfriend), for instance being described by Jane in terms of a predator who relieves her of sexual agency (131); the crew members Oh and Suzuki who use posters of blonde women “for target practice, shooting out their tits and crotches with air guns” (56); and the farmer, Gale, who fondles his little sister’s premature breasts, threatens Jane, and calls his large-breasted stepmother a “whore” (387-8). These “minor offenses” are not dealt with disapprovingly in the novel, exemplified especially by Jane’s adoring relationship with Sloan, suggesting that such behavior is acceptable (or even in Sloan’s case – desirable) as long as it is restrained. The violent rape scene, however, is one that might be seen as serving a disruptive purpose in the novel drawing attention also to these minor manifestations and perpetuations of sexist discourse. Furthermore, with its attention to species specific vocabulary, I argue that it can be used to relocate the outrage (rightfully) produced by the assumed natural male dominance over women to include concerns for the way humans assume natural dominance over nonhuman animals.

Similarly, Monica Chiu analyzes *My Year of Meats* with attention to tendencies of violence in American culture in “Postnational Globalization and (En)Gendered Meat Production in Ruth L. Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats*”, arguing that the novel “inheres in issues of ethnicity, feminism, and ethics” (104). The way she gets involved with meat in her analysis is problematized by the way she discusses beef as a “cultural capital” whose circulation becomes “a euphemism for prostitution ... promoting masculine American beef to female Japanese consumers” (105-106). In this respect, she discusses Jane’s being cast as the suitable American-Japanese “hybrid” pimp and the American wives, like Suzy, being prostituted and “conveniently tossed aside” after having been used for the program (106). Chui acknowledges Jane’s efforts to widen the audience’s understanding of what it means to be American, but argues that Ueno’s “ridiculous allusions to a so-called American dream”

and Jane's "multicultural nonhegemonic re-visions, invested with an American-style romance with difference" are both ultimately flattening and homogenizing approaches (108).

The problem lies with the inauthenticity of both approaches, represented in both Jane and Ueno's versions of the show by its overall message: meat. Grasping onto Jane's words that truth can only be measured in "ever-diminishing approximations" (244), Chui argues that the novel is inefficient in producing a more productive alternative to the commercialized fiction because it only offers "an inherent contradiction that erases one view in order to offer a more acceptable, yet wholly fictional, substitute" (109). Furthermore, she suggests that: "The drive for profit detrimentally affects the production of minorities as well as the reproductive use of women's bodies" (111). This is where it becomes obvious that Chui's analysis is essentially anthropocentric, though initially promisingly concerned with the morality of meat production in the U.S.. As she focuses her argument on women and minorities, meat (nonhuman animals) becomes a symbol for the patriarch rather than a representation of another oppressed and exploited being. This is one of the fallacies of considering humane or animal advocacy in literature such as *My Year of Meats*, as it can end up reinforcing speciesist discourse where, as Paola Cavalieri has suggested, "animal welfare aims at improving the treatment of animals, but without changing their status as inferior beings" (49). However, though some of the critics might end up reading Ozeki's novel in this way, I argue that the novel's disrupting, animalized scenes of violence, such as the rape of Aikiko and the slaughter of the sow, provides possibilities for surprising readings of the text that are not anthropocentric but have potential for animal advocacy.

Following my discussion of the humane and the reduction of nonhuman animals to mere symbols or gateways through which we can interpret our own, human lives, it becomes necessary to comment more explicitly on the tendency to misplace good intentions to reinforce a speciesist ideology that affects both human and nonhuman animals. Wolfe, in his discussion of humane advocacy, questions whether "humane advocacy [is] 'humane' when it reproduces 'a certain interpretation of the human subject' that has itself been the 'lever' of the worst violence and exploitation towards our fellow creatures for centuries and in the most 'developed' nations on earth?" ("Humane Advocacy and the Humanities" 46), echoing with this also Lundblad's concern that animal advocacy may continue to construct (racial) differences among human beings (138). These concerns are valid, as "humane" is now a word that often holds connotations of good will or mercy rather than obligation. This allows for absurd ideas such as the idea that humane treatment of nonhuman animals (or animalized human Others) can be a choice from which the "overbearing" or "merciful" Man

can claim status or, even more outrageously, the idea that the humane can be a shield with which Man can “make killable” (Haraway, *When Species Meet* 80) and be excused. We must instead, as Derrida has reminded us, question whether we even have the right to refuse the nonhuman animal (or attribute to it) anything at all (*The Animal That Therefore I Am* 135).

Cary Wolfe has also commented on the problem of advocating for nonhuman animals with attention to what doing so might do for humans, writing: “Just because we direct our attention to the study of nonhuman animals, and even if we do so with the aim of exposing how they have been misunderstood and exploited, that does not mean that we are not continuing to be humanist – and therefore, by definition, anthropocentric” (*Posthumanism* 99). This is an especially interesting topic to pursue in connection with Ozeki’s novel, because the focus is so much on the effects of DES in production animals have on “our” bodies, the human body. It might easily have been an essentially anthropocentric novel, because it may lead some readers (and critics) to believe that Jane’s concern and sympathy is not with the animals at all, but solely with the people affected by consuming the animals. However, in the words of the BEEF-EX producer: “It is the meat (not the Mrs.) who’s the star of our show!” (24), and this, I argue, may also true for novel as a whole. “Meat” being read here, unsymbolically and undisguised, as real, nonhuman animals. If Jane’s (and Ozeki’s) mission was only concerned with the effects that using pharmaceutical drugs on nonhuman animals have on humans, there would be no need to emphasize our community with nonhuman animals, invoke our compassion for them, nor depict graphically any part of their rearing or killing that does not affect their consumers.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has worked to show how Ozeki’s novel, though often analyzed in terms of what its focus on animals in the food-industry does for people, might draw attention to and challenge speciesist discourse that is an integral part of American culture and history by the production of portable outrage. I have argued that this novel effectively exposes and tackles discourse about the human(e) and species that largely dominate in our society today, however often also reinforcing some of these. Though not explicitly, Ozeki’s novel explores the boundaries of what it means to be human and act humanely by illustrating powerfully how interconnected all living beings are, demonstrating that what we do to “them” also affects “us”. Furthermore, I have argued how this connection can risk being seen as advocating only animal *welfare* on behalf of humans, but also, using portable outrage and

productive compassion, how it can be used to advocate animal rights for the sake of the animal (humans and nonhumans equally). The chapter recognizes readings of the novel that suggest anthropocentric motives, and argues that these are surprisingly useful in considering animal concerns as well as human ones because they produce (portable) outrage. In addition, though concerns of gender are central in the story as a whole, exposing the general treatment, or “processing”, of animals in meat production are equally important for Jane in the making of her documentary as the DES story is. This might not advocate animal rights, but at the very least implores a consideration of the treatment of nonhuman production animals today, both in her world and ours. Moreover, I have shown that disrupting conditions, such as graphically depicted violence and logical faults, are put to use in the novel to suggest a move away from humanist, and thus essentially speciesist, interpretation. The moral impediment to (re)consider the speciesist ideology that allows for such large scale meat-production as represented in the novel (and practiced on a large scale in America today) is reinforced by producing a sense affiliation between nonhuman and human. This is further used to yield productive compassion and a reconsideration of the humane in its readers. Furthermore, the impediment recognizes animal theorists that argue for moral absolutes concerning the consumption of animals and animal products, and those who suggest that moral lines cannot be so clearly drawn, but probably need to be reconsidered regarding meat production as it is. Building on theoretical discussions of the humane, I have towards the end of this chapter begun discussing the implications of speciesist ideology as it may be categorically (mis)used to justify oppressive, cruel, and essentially inhumane behavior in a wide array fields that include, but are not limited to, that of the human/animal. In the following chapter, this idea will be further explored as I venture into analyzing species and speciesism in non-fiction.

3 The Real Prize: *Fast Food Nation*

As the previous chapter of this thesis has revealed, literature that might generally be considered anthropocentric texts that reinforce the human/animal binary can also, when approached differently, be seen as works that may be used effectively to critique speciesism and anthropocentrism. Focusing mostly or entirely on the human animal, as *My Year of Meat* does, does not automatically imply that these are the only animals with which we are, or should be, concerned. This chapter will explore further how focused discussion of speciesisms' effects on humans does not necessarily have to be seeking to reinforce anthropocentric or speciesist discourse, but rather something that comments on and could be used to critique such discourse.

The focus here will be on how an awareness of species and speciesism can be applied in Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation: What the All-American Meal is Doing to the World* to analyze and expose the human/animal construct rather than reinforcing the binary through an application of my portable outrage theory. This will be done by looking at the way workers and consumers are shown to be systematically exploited, oppressed, and otherwise treated "like animals" in *Fast Food Nation*, and how this anthropocentric focus can provide surprising opportunities for animal and/or anti-speciesist advocacy. The move to show how human animals also suffer in industries modeled on speciesist ideology, such as the fast food industry, can be seen clearly in Schlosser's book and is not only reminiscent of *My Year of Meats*, treated in the previous chapter, but also of other muckracking novels such as Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. I want to argue here that the outrage produced in *Fast Food Nation* by the depiction of such practices can be relocated to demonstrate a concern for nonhuman animals as well, although the author's concern seems primarily anthropocentric. This analysis of Schlosser's text works to support the larger claim of this thesis, which argues that anti-speciesist reform and animal advocacy begins with the realization of the interconnectedness of oppressive discourses, and can furthermore be seen as a move to better understand and seek to eliminate systems that allow for oppressive and exploitative practices both of non-human and human animals.

The animalization of an Other is currently often used to justify such practices both in literature and in society at large, but thought the analysis of speciesism and other problematic discourse might be intended as a response to it, it is also important to be aware of the present risk of reinforcing such discourse, especially in terms of animalizing or otherwise dehumanizing the oppressors. Eric Schlosser's widely popular investigatory non-fiction work

explores, as its title also suggests, fast food as a phenomenon in the United States and what this phenomenon is doing to the world. By “world” one can, after reading Schlosser’s text, assume he means “people of the world” as his focus is not on elements of the industry that do not directly affect humans, such as issues of the animals or the environment. His use of “world” in the title might be applied mostly to suggest how all encompassing the effects of the fast food industry are, though it also works to underline the problematic speciesist discourse in Schlosser’s anthropocentric approach. Though these “people of the world” as affected by the fast food industry are dealt with in a variety of manners in the different chapters of Schlosser’s novel, I divide his areas of concern into three main groups for the purpose of this analysis: workers, consumers, and politics. I will look at speciesist discourse and the potential for portable outrage in each of these to illustrate the interconnectedness of the oppressive discourses Schlosser consciously explore, such as classism, and oppressive discourse concerning “real” animals.

3.1 “Animal” Treatment: Workers

As is the case in *My Year of Meats*, where *My American Wife!* is produced and broadcast with the primary intent to promote and sell American meat, *Fast Food Nation* presents the fast food phenomenon as primarily a business endeavor that seeks profit. This is seen as a major part of the problem in *Fast Food Nation*, as the push for profit often leads to neglect of humane considerations in the industry. The direct and detailed account Schlosser provides of this lack in the fast food industry is effective in producing an outrage directed at the inhumane treatment of the many humans affected by the fast food marketplace. In his book *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-Era U.S. Literature & Culture*, Michael Lundblad has written at length about the discourse of the jungle in the United States, which “revolves around questions related to the figure of ‘the animal’: constructing the nature of ‘the beast’ in terms of both ‘real’ animals and the human being as a Darwinist-Freudian animal” (2). In his section “Survival of the fittest market”, for instance, Lundblad explores how the discourse of the jungle applies to American corporations arguing that the relationship between animality and constructions of the corporation “is more complicated than often assumed at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States” (77). Lundblad’s arguments may be useful here in relocating the original, humanist outrage of *Fast Food Nation* to include also cultural criticism concerning the animal because Schlosser, like some of the authors Lundblad explores, also depicts inhuman(e) treatments in the marketplace jungle.

Though Lundblad is writing about discourse of the jungle in early twentieth century American literature and culture, using primarily Frank Norris's *The Octopus: A Story of California* and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* in his analysis, many of his observations are still applicable in American society today and also in the reading of Schlosser's more recent *Fast Food Nation*. This I argue is because discourse of the survival-of-the-fittest that is reflected in the narrative is still very much present in American economy and society. This can be seen as evident by attitudes such as, for instance, the public opinion of recipients of welfare in the United States, where judgments of deservingness are critical and often connected to the individual's efforts to alleviate their own need¹. The title of Lundblad's section suggests that he is interested in the animalization of the corporations themselves, where they act as "monstrous market forces" (79, italics in original) raising questions of how to interpret the resulting violence towards animals and workers and whether the corporations can be held accountable for it (80). But it becomes clear that he is also interested in the way workers are animalized (in "The Working-Class Beast") and furthermore in how animalization alone is sometimes not sufficient as an explanation of violence. The view presented in Schlosser's text as the fast food industry being precisely that: an industry, is therefore important because it places the novel within a framework that can be examined in terms of discourse of the jungle as presented by Lundblad, and thus also in terms of speciesist discourse. The violence that Schlosser exposes in his book, which is often but not always manifested as physical violence, can be seen as a result of the animalization of the workers, consumers and political agents of the fast food industry, and the outrage produced by reading of such accounts need not only be directed at addressing anthropocentric concerns. That the corporations and the workers, as well as the consumers and politics, are shown in the book to be treated "like animals" by the fast food industry, might be seen as something that works to respond to (and sometimes also reproduce) speciesist discourse, in addition to critiquing the conditions of the humans.

The workers Schlosser interview in this text claim the connection between the treatment they receive and that which is commonly an accepted treatment of animals. "We are human beings, more than one person told me, but they treat us like animals" Schlosser writes, underlining the desire of these workers to let people "know about what is happening right now" (186). Seemingly, Schlosser's concern in this text is the conditions under which this system subjects people, but that is not to say that one can or should ignore the importance

¹ See, for instance, Michael B. Petersen et al.

of the nonhuman animal in the construction of the discourse that allows corporations to subject their workers to animal(istic) treatment. The idea of being treated “like animals” is representative of Wolfe’s idea that the discourse of speciesism can be reapplied to any other group or constructed Other to justify oppressive, cruel, and ultimately inhumane treatment of said group or Other. As a speciesist will dismiss the interests and sufferings of an animal, she might likewise dismiss the interests and suffering of any other group that she deems “worthy” of animal treatment, or otherwise similar to nonhuman animals. Of course, the outrage directed at the animal(istic) treatment of human workers in *Fast Food Nation* might be read as essentially anthropocentric, and thus continuing the speciesist discourse that dictates that humans are entitled to other considerations than what animals are. However, I argue that portable outrage can be applied here to extend the critical lens from this original outrage to a relocated outrage directed at the violent, detached, and largely invisible subjection of nonhuman production animals as well.

Schlosser deals with workers on many levels of the fast food industry, each being “unique, individual, impossible to define or replace – the opposite of how this system has treated them” (186). At the lowest level, *Fast Food Nation* depicts their work as “so hard and so horrendous that words seem inadequate to describe it” (176-177), and this is also where the workers are most accurately described as being treated “like animals”. Lundblad discusses primarily the animalization of the workers and organizations in the novels he analyses quite literally in terms of how they are depicted or symbolized as “real” (nonhuman) animals. This he does by examining, for instance, how the railroad in Norris’s novel is symbolized by an octopus or the characterization of “human beasts” who lash out in *The Jungle*. Here, however, the discourse of the marketplace jungle is more appropriately applied symbolically – not using the “real” animal as a symbol through which one can meaningfully understand human experience and culture, as critiqued earlier in this thesis – but by recognizing the systematic oppression and exploitation of the animals for food, clothing, entertainment, and companionship. I argue that this interspecies oppression is reflected in Schlosser’s telling of the systematic oppression and exploitation of human animals by the industry making them disposable or, as Donna Haraway would say, *killable*. Carol J. Adams has also made this connection discussing literature writing that “the choice of the trope of the slaughterhouse for the dehumanization of the worker by capitalism rings with historical verity” (79). This, I argue, is the way the worker (and also to a degree the consumer) is animalized in *Fast Food Nation*, retold by Schlosser in the raw and ruthless kill-or-be-killed sense that is so characteristic of the laws of the jungle.

I suggest that the disrupting condition that allows the original outrage directed by Schlosser at the treatment of workers in the fast food industry to relocate as outrage against the human treatment of animals in the same industry, are the graphic and often violent depictions of industry practices. For instance, of slaughterhouse sanitation workers Schlosser writes:

Although official statistics are not kept, the death rate among slaughterhouse sanitation crews is extraordinarily high. They are the ultimate in disposable workers: illegal, illiterate, impoverished, untrained. The nation's worst job can end in just about the worst way. Sometimes these workers are literally ground up and reduced to nothing. (178)

The discourse of the “ultimate disposable” worker is reminiscent of the disposability with which nonhuman production animals are also treated. Dr. Melanie Joy, author of *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*, argues that invisibility is the primary defense of the carnistic (meat-eating) system (21). The way in which she defines carnism is fairly similar to the way Peter Singer has defined speciesism, but it differs because it is exclusive to the practice of consuming animal meat, while speciesism, as this thesis argues, is discourse that can be transferred and applied in areas that are not culinary as well. Joy defines carnism as a violent ideology, which she in turn argues depend on physical, social, and psychological invisibility, and she writes: “though we breed, raise, and kill ten billion animals per year, most of us never see even a single part of the process of meat production” (35). Joy’s argument of invisibility as a primary defense of violent ideologies is relevant here because speciesism, too, often manifests violently, as can be recognized in Schlosser’s passage above even as it deals with human animals. The workers he discusses here are disposable in part because of their invisibility. They are illegal, illiterate, impoverished and untrained, which means that their channels for demanding or even seeking security from or compensation for damages are limited and easily manipulated. “The workers’ comp claim forms look intimidating,” Schlosser writes, “especially to people who don’t speak any English and can’t read any language” (185). Moreover, “[f]iling a claim, challenging a powerful meatpacking company, and placing faith in the American legal system requires a good deal of courage, especially for a recent immigrant” (185-186). Because they are often not recognized or seen by society, both in terms of its people and its policies, these workers can both literally and figuratively be “ground up and reduced to nothing” without much protest. I suggest that it is the final image here, where Schlosser narrates that the human workers sometimes also go into the processing machinery that is intended for the “real” animals, that is the most disruptive.

Capitalizing on this disruptive image of the invisible and disposable being “reduced to nothing”, the outrage might then be relocated to also consider those beings that go into the same machinery every day, though Schlosser might have intended the reader to stay focused on only the humans that risk doing so. Adams, discussing Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, comments on the way making the absent referent (the living animal removed in thought from the meat consumed) present, “disables the power of the metaphor” (79), and thus Schlosser’s novel may be seen as also compelling us to consider the place of “real” animals in this scene. The suffering of and hazards to the workers as illustrated by Schlosser here are made possible only because such machinery is in place to slaughter and dispose of nonhuman animals with extreme efficiency.

Schlosser shows that the feelings of entitlement to exploit and oppress do not only exist at the (human) bottom level of the fast food industry, where illegal or otherwise “invisible” workers are situated. Rather, *Fast Food Nation* demonstrates that the oppressive and exploitative behaviors consistent with speciesist discourse is reproduced and can be recognized on almost all levels of the fast food industry. “Roughly 90 percent of the nation’s fast food workers are paid an hourly wage, provided no benefits, and scheduled to work only as needed” Schlosser writes (74), illustrating the attitudes of fast food employers towards their employees. This too is a source for outrage in the novel. Schlosser continues to provide evidence of instances where the young and the poor are routinely exploited for their labor and where employees are bullied out of forming labor unions. The text proves that this behavior, as that of the animal production industry, is however not a system that is enforced exclusively from the top down. Rather, *Fast Food Nation* illustrates that the system may become integrated and seemingly accepted by society at large, leading “[m]any of the customers [to] look down on fast food workers and feel entitled to treat them with disrespect” (81). As another disruptive condition in the text, it is suggested here that the reader, who up until this point have been encouraged by Schlosser to feel outrage against these conditions, may herself be actively taking part in the degradation, exploitation, and symbolic animalization of these workers. The feeling of entitlement recorded by Schlosser, where humans allow themselves to feel entitled to (or demand) better treatment than what is granted others, is central in speciesist discourse and might thus be used to redirect the outrage to other hierarchical organizations of beings as well, such as that between species.

Schlosser further shows in his text that the symbolic animalization of workers on all levels in the fast food industry leads to violence, as the animalization of the workers in Lundblad’s *The Birth of a Jungle* does, though it manifests somewhat differently. This

violence might also be seen as a disruptive condition in the text. “Roughly four or five fast food workers are now murdered on the job every month,” Schlosser informs, also stating that the murders usually takes place during the course of a robbery (83). That the murder of fast food workers for economic profit is so common in the United States today might be seen as an extension of the discourse that is bred within its industry. The robberies are often, as Schlosser mentions, “inside jobs” (83), which is telling of the fact that the murderers may be indoctrinated in the ideology that the fast food workers’ lives are not more valuable than money. Or revealing in terms of how a human being can be “driven” to take someone’s life under extremely oppressive and exploitative circumstances, either by economic need or emotional trauma. With this, I argue that Schlosser echoes speciesist and/or animal discourse that presume(s) that humans can be “reduced” to animals and, when they are, might as a consequence “lash out” violently. Furthermore, it seems that Schlosser problematically suggests that these reactions to animalization may be considered natural though generally condemned.

When Peter Singer writes in *Animal Liberation*, he often stresses that the examples he pulls forth in demonstrating the oppression and abuse of animals for food production or scientific purposes are meant to illustrate “not sadism on the part of individual experimenters but the institutionalized mentality of speciesism that makes it possible for these experimenters to do these things without serious consideration of the interests of the animals they are using” (42). This might be useful to keep in mind also as I turn to the workers that more directly engage with speciesist ideology at its root: those in the fast food industry that are employed in factory farms and slaughterhouses as well as those who breed, raise, or kill the animals themselves. Schlosser visits a slaughterhouse to see for himself “the world that’s been deliberately hidden” (170), and describes his experience:

I see: a man reach inside cattle and pull out their kidneys with his bare hands, then drop the kidneys down a metal chute, over and over again, as each animal passes by him; a stainless steel rack of tongues; Whizzards² peeling meat of decapitated heads, picking them almost as clean as the white skulls painted by Georgia O’Keeffe. (170-71)

Such characterization of the meat-workers might border on the mechanical rather than the animalistic, with the animal, the man, the metal chute, steel rack, and meat trimmer all seeming as equal parts in a machinery – mechanical and senseless. It might serve as an example similar to that provided by Lundblad in his analysis of *The Octopus*, where he

² See Whizard’s Meat Processing and Trimming Equipment at <http://www.bettcher.com/meat-trimmer-line-up>

differentiates machine from beast stating that “the driving force behind a machine would be indifferent but knowable, for example, rather than malicious or unknowable, as in the case of the monster” (79-80). But the workers as Schlosser portrays them are not knowingly indifferent machines without conscience or moral. They are rather also animalized and working under the kill-or-be-killed laws of the jungle.

“[T]he most important tool in a modern slaughterhouse is a sharp knife,” reports Schlosser, further stating that “[l]acerations are the most common injuries suffered by meatpackers, who often stab themselves or stab someone working nearby” (173). Furthermore, “one of the leading determinants of the injury rate at a slaughterhouse today is the speed of the disassembly line. The faster it runs, the more likely that workers will get hurt” (173). In some plants 400 cattle are slaughtered every hour, with “about half a dozen animals every minute ... carved by workers desperate not to fall behind” (173). The imagery used by Schlosser here is arguably significant because though it attempts to advocate for the worker, I suggest that its graphic nature also clearly paints a picture of and draws attention to what such processing means for the nonhuman animals involved. In Carol J. Adams’ discussion of feminist-vegetarian critical theory, she writes: “Whereas women may feel like pieces of meat, and be treated like pieces of meat – emotionally butchered and physically battered – animals are actually made into pieces of meat” (72), questioning whether metaphoric use where the literal fate of the animal is elided and used to describe human experience might, in itself, be oppressive. Though Adams is discussing feminism, I suggest that this question remains significant when thinking about the way Schlosser depicts slaughterhouse workers and practices. Similarly, Adams has argued that in Upton Sinclair’s novel “[b]utchering failed as a metaphor for the fate of the worker in *The Jungle* because the novel carried too much information on how the animal was violently killed” (78-79). I do not wish to argue that Schlosser has failed to address the fate of the worker in *Fast Food Nation*, but his emphasis on the number of *animals* (not “carcasses”, “products”, or other desensitizing vocabulary) and gripping description of slaughter scenes render it difficult to not consider them as well as the humans who suffer under the workload.

The strain put upon the worker’s body is motivated by the desire for an ever-increasing profit, and is a manifestation of how capitalism dehumanizes the worker. Schlosser includes some slaughterhouse work descriptions from his visit: “[A] worker called a ‘sticker’ does nothing but stand in a river of blood, being drenched in blood, slitting the neck of a steer every ten seconds or so severing its carotid artery” (171). The description makes it easy to imagine how this type of work can be both physically and mentally draining,

yet still not require much skill of training of the employee. A “knocker” Schlosser meets turns and smiles at him with his face “splattered with gray matter and blood” (171). His job is “welcoming” cattle to the building by “shoot[ing] them in the head with a captive bolt stunner – a compressed-air gun attached to the ceiling by a long hose – which fires a steel bolt that knocks the cattle unconscious”, standing for eight and a half hours per day “just shooting” (171). These violent descriptions Schlosser provides are, as Adams have suggested, arguably too disrupting to only work to describe the work of a human employee, and might be used to relocate outrage from the mentally and physically demanding, violent and dangerous job subjected to vulnerable (human) members of society to the desensitized and industrialized killing of several hundred animals per day.

Though Schlosser describes the brutality as inherent to their work, the workers themselves are arguably depicted as brutal by need rather than by nature, rendering the violence exercised by them produced rather than natural. That Schlosser writes this violence as produced contests Lundblad’s concern with the naturalization of animal instincts, which he suggests “embeds the perfect excuse for ignoring the hog-squeal of either hogs or workers, since pain and suffering, if not death, are nothing if not ‘natural’ in ‘the jungle’” (118). The produced violence in the workers is presented in *Fast Food Nation* as often being a result of their individual and arguably natural instincts towards survival, either in the economic sense of earning a living or in the literal sense of beating the speed of the line. Meanwhile, their suffering as workers at any level in the fast food industry is, in Schlosser’s account, put forth as entirely unnecessary as looking after employees’ interests and wellbeing would but make a small dent in this multi billion-dollar industry.

The employers in the fast food industry that Schlosser examines should, inarguably, be considered workers, though I am sure they could also be considered drivers of it. It is often easy to see large corporations such as those dominating the fast food industry depicted in the narrative as monsters or forces of nature, as Lundblad argues the railroad “octopus” can be seen in Norris’s novel, rather than as comprised of and driven by individuals. Lundblad examines *The Octopus* in terms of “social Darwinist conceptions of human nature, derived supposedly from ‘real’ animals and applicable supposedly to the behavior of corporations granted the status of ‘persons (who would then be responsible for acting ‘humanely’)’” (81), which is important in terms of deciding what animalization does to the moral obligations of corporations in industries such as the fast food industry depicted by Schlosser. Of course, in Norris’s novel the animalization of the corporation is a construction set in place by the author himself, and this is not the case in *Fast Food Nation*. However, I argue that since

Schlosser's representation of the fast food industry as one that can be characterized of the laws of the jungle, the animalization of the corporations might well have been an option as a way of directing the produced outrage at "taking revenge" or "villainizing" those deemed responsible.

The question Lundblad asks, then, could be appropriated to Schlosser's work to consider who is to be held responsible for causing "suicide rate[s] among ranchers and farmers in the United States [that are] about three times higher than the national average" caused perhaps in part by "the consolidating and homogenizing influence of the fast food chains, by monopoly power in the meatpacking industry ... by the economic forces bankrupting independent rancher, [and] by the tax laws that favor wealthy ranchers" (Schlosser 146) if the corporation itself is animalized as an uncontrollable beast. However, the tossing up of corporate behavior to the corporation being a malicious and unknowable monster or beast does not hold water in Schlosser's book. This is one of the ways in the text in which Schlosser successfully avoids reproducing speciesist discourse, though he also participates in it by focusing his work on humans. The denial to perpetuate speciesist discourse and "blame" violent and bad behavior on "natural", "animal", or "monstrous" sources (which of course would have nothing to do with humans) insists that there is no anthropocentric excusing of the problems he outlines in *Fast Food Nation*.

Schlosser, like Singer has little interest in delegating blame, but rather seems dedicated to stressing the individuals' importance and responsibility in reinforcing or changing the system. At a Denver event titled "Success", Schlosser makes the following observation about the main speaker's message:

The meek shall no longer inherit the earth; the go-getter will get it and everything that goes with it. The Christ who went among the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, among lepers and prostitutes, clearly had no marketing savvy. He has been transfigured into a latter-day entrepreneur, the greatest superstar salesperson of all time, who built a multinational outfit from scratch. (106)

This ironic interpretation of the speaker's desire to pray after having sought to convert his audience to the system of repression and exploitation necessary to achieve "success" is pointed and strikes at a weak spot in many Americans' core belief system. Their plans in the text to "market and subdivide and franchise their way up, whatever the cost" (107) are ultimately represented as incompatible with their moral conscience. Though inclusivity and kindness is represented by Christ in this particular passage, I think Schlosser seeks to point out that what is allowed in the name of profit as a result of the survival-of-the-fittest which

rules the marketplace jungle, are things that, if they were not kept invisible to defend the underlying discourse, would not and should not be accepted by the individual American citizen, regardless of their religious background. I argue that the way Schlosser presents this tendency of prioritizing profit over human(e) considerations throughout seeks to expose and condemn the extended and re-applied system of speciesism in the fast food industry by demonstrating the way in which workers on all levels of the industry are treated “like animals”. That essentially means being treated categorically in a systematically cruel manner that is often inhumane and unnecessary, and being exploited and oppressed without regard to individual interest or need for the sake of profit, the discourse of the marketplace jungle being used in part to justify this. The outrage that could have been read only anthropocentrically because of its focus on the human workers has, the way I see it, potential for portability due to the graphic and often violent disrupting descriptions of these conditions and their close proximity to nonhuman animals.

3.2 Deception and Invisibility: Consumers

[T]he effectiveness of the discourse of species, when applied to social others of *whatever* sort, relies on first taking for granted the institution of speciesism – that is, on the ethical acceptability of the systematic, institutionalized killing of nonhuman others. (Wolfe, *Rites* 43, italics in original)

This quote by Cary Wolfe, exemplifies the potential speciesism has to replicate and be applied to social others of “whatever sort”, as long as the systematic and institutionalized killing of nonhuman others is ethically accepted in society. I have shown in the previous section of this chapter how this is true for the workers of the fast food industry, and will in this section turn to the effect on consumers as presented in *Fast Food Nation*. Though Wolfe is emphasizing the institutionalized and systematic killing of nonhuman Others in this quote, I would like to underline that the transfer of an acceptable consideration of someone (human or nonhuman) as disposable or “killable” as they are in Schlosser’s work, though they may not be actually disposed of or killed, is still seen as problematic. I will argue in this section that *Fast Food Nation* exemplifies that it is not only in its recruitment and employment of workers that the fast food industry preys on the weak and innocent, and actively works to produce portable outrage in response to its depictions of such practices. This can be seen as Schlosser discusses the phenomenon of “kid customers”, foodborne disease, and the integration of fast food and in the nation’s schools, all which I suggest can be examined in

terms of species and speciesism through portable outrage. Furthermore, I will also examine the role Schlosser attributes deception in maintaining the extension of such practices in favor of profit.

Schlosser's treatment of the fast food industry's advertisement to children may at first not seem like it can be connected to speciesist ideology or practices, but as I will show here, it is the last and essential step of cultivating the economical profit gained from ruthlessly exploiting animals and workers in the industry. When Schlosser discusses the consumers, he maintains his anthropocentric focus. However, the way in which he focuses his arguments mainly on children can be seen as an important move to focus on the weak, innocent, and largely voiceless members of society, and I suggest that such a group might also include nonhuman animals. "The growth in children's advertising has been driven by efforts to increase not just current, but also future, consumption" Schlosser explains (43), showing us how the advertising to children does not only seek to benefit economically from the meat that is already produced, but creating a demand which will justify and ensure the perpetuation of the system. *Fast Food Nation* further describes companies' "'cradle-to-grave' advertising strategies" (43) that are now carefully planned from the initial promotion of the product to careful engineering of the foods' taste, "training" consumers from a very young age to eat, like, and repurchase their products. Schlosser elaborates on how "[t]he flavor of childhood foods seem to leave an indelible mark, and adults often return to them, without always knowing why", stating further that: "[T]hese 'comfort foods' become a source of pleasure and reassurance, a fact that fast food chains work hard to promote" (123). The system's necessity of capitalizing (literally) on "training" and exploiting vulnerable consumers is further exemplified in *Fast Food Nation* by the fact that "[e]ight-year-olds are considered ideal customers" in the fast food industry, still forming habits and having many years of purchasing in front of them (54). The original outrage produced here is directed at the exploitation of children, but the animalized undertones of Schlosser's description of the process that trains (or "grooms") children into forming desirable habits should not pass unnoticed, and can be a gateway through which one might consider the animals consumed as well as the consumers.

I suggest that the disrupting condition that might lead to such transportation of outrage can be found in Schlosser's account of how these marketing efforts are conducted. He writes that the advertising aimed at these vulnerable members of our society is not only promoted through channels by which one generally expects being exposed to advertising. Schlosser notes that "[a]lthough the fast food chains annually spend about \$3 billion on

television advertising, their marketing efforts directed at children extend far beyond such conventional ads” (47), including, but not limited to “playgrounds, toys, cartoons, movies, videos, charities ... television, radio, magazines, and the Internet” (51). The advertising, promotion, and normalization of the product, fast food, then becomes difficult, in Schlosser’s account, to avoid and leaves the average American child quasi-indoctrinated in a system of which very little is visible. “In general,” Peter Singer writes, “we are ignorant of the abuse of living creatures that lie behind the food we eat. Buying food in a store or restaurant is the culmination of a long process, of which all but the end product is delicately screened from our eyes” (95). This ignorance is a fact in most American adults, and it would be absurd to expect an eight-year-old child to question a system in which they are now commercially as well as habitually indoctrinated. In summary, the disrupting condition is that the practices Schlosser has worked to produce outrage over in the sections dealing with the workers of the fast food industry are, Schlosser demonstrates, kept invisible to the general public. This is not a violent or graphic disruption as those identified in the workers section, but rather a logical disruption that rocks by the presumption that the American consumers know (and have the right to know) what is being sold to them and when, and furthermore that they would be able to (and have the freedom to) protect their children from such advertising efforts if they choose to.

However, even if one were to take measures to shield a child from such marketing efforts, Schlosser demonstrates that there are unavoidable channels through which the fast food industry is now being allowed to send their message. “[F]ast food chains are now gaining access to the last advertising-free outpost in American life” Schlosser reports (51), and “schoolchildren are becoming a *captive* audience for marketers, *compelled* by law to attend school and then *forced* to look at ads as a means of paying for their own education” (52, my emphasis). I have emphasized the animalizing language in this passage to suggest how the logical disruption discussed above might lead one to consider the animal victims of the fast food industry as well as the consumers. It is a case of taking *captive*, metaphorically, the children, but the “real” animals are literally kept captive (in horrible conditions) to provide the product marketed. Such shameless promotion, Schlosser illustrates, expose highly receptive children of school-age to advertisements for food and beverages that can be bad for their health, both long term (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity) and short term (nutritional value, foodborne pathologies), and that are produced in a highly unethical and disturbing fashion. But it also indirectly seeks to increase the number of nonhuman animals bred, reared, and slaughtered under the horrible conditions that are revealed by Schlosser.

Furthermore, Schlosser problematizes the fact that fast food is now also routinely being offered in school cafeterias as a result of what could only be considered corrupt policies and poor decision making processes. “For years,” Schlosser states, “some of the most questionable ground beef in the United States was purchased by the USDA – and then distributed to school cafeterias throughout the country” (218). Schlosser goes on to list many recent outbreaks of foodborne pathogens due to contaminated meat served in schools all over the United States, exemplifying yet again how cost values more than the safety and health of those who participate, knowingly or unknowingly, in the system. This plays in with the disrupting condition of invisibility and deception, which exemplifies that consumers generally do not know (or are not allowed to know) what they are actually consuming and what risks they may be taking by doing so. “The cheapest ground beef was not only the most likely to be contaminated with pathogens, but also the most likely to contain pieces of spinal cord, bone, and gristle left behind by Automated Meat Recovery Systems³” Schlosser informs (218), writing that as recent as in the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year, the meatpacking industry opposed new rules requesting that ground beef distributed to schools would be tested for pathogens, and which would reject meat that failed the test (220-221). Here, the logical disruption is supplemented by a graphic disruption that makes it hard to ignore the “real” animals that are made into meat, and which further may compel readers and critics to consider the animals’ experience as well as the consumers. The account reveals that the system that makes “killable” animals and workers, have no problem doing the same to children as long as it brings home the bacon.

Melanie Joy writes that the carnistic system is built on deception and I argue that this is also applicable to the speciesist system as it is employed in the food industry Schlosser depicts. “The carnistic system,” Joy writes, “is fortified by a complex network of defenses that make it possible for us to believe without questioning, to know without thinking, and to act without feeling” and that this is necessary because “we care about animals, and we care about the truth” (133). Though Joy is concerned with how deception is part of the carnistic system, I argue that the role of deception is considerable in the application of speciesist discourse, also in areas that do not directly concern nonhuman animals as can be seen in *Fast Food Nation*. I have already argued that deception and invisibility may be seen as disrupting conditions earlier in this chapter, and artificial flavoring is another way consumers may be

³ Contraptions that squeeze the last shreds of meat off bones

deceived. In a discussion of the practice of artificial flavoring in American food, and their attitudes towards public disclosure, Schlosser writes:

This lack of public disclosure [of the ingredients of additives] enables the companies to maintain the secrecy of their formulas. It also hides the fact that flavor compounds sometimes contain more ingredients than the foods being given their taste. The ubiquitous phrase “artificial strawberry flavor” gives little hint of the chemical wizardry and manufacturing skill that can make a highly processed food taste like a strawberry. (125)

What is seen here is that the deception applied in the speciesist system of producing animals for food is reproduced and extended in food processing more generally, manipulating and “tricking” consumers. Though the “chemical wizardry” to which Schlosser refers in his description of the flavor industry bears a note of reverence, it is the deception of the consumer to which Schlosser also alludes that is interesting to examine. The lack of public disclosure as to what exactly the label “artificial flavoring” entails is presented in the book as problematic not only in terms of hiding the ingredients of the artificial flavor but also in terms of what this artificial flavor potentially conceals in the original food. Schlosser witnesses the conjuring of aromas from advanced chemical processes, describing it as something “uncanny, almost miraculous” (129). Though bordering on the miraculous, the awe in which he might hold those who engineer aromas so convincingly is restrained by the uncanny realization that through their work *the consumers are being deceived*. “It smelled like someone in the room was flipping burgers on a hot grill. But when I opened my eyes,” Schlosser writes, “there was just a narrow strip of white paper and a smiling flavorist⁴” (129). If a strip of paper can create the illusion that we are smelling or eating newly flipped burgers, Schlosser seems to ask, what other substances could we be made to consume believing it is something it is not? Schlosser’s concern with such deception as a tradition in the fast food industry is, as I have mentioned, primarily with regard to the consumer. This is problematic in this thesis because it is an essentially anthropocentric (and speciesist) concern. However, I would like to suggest that the way Schlosser depicts what is really in the meat can also be considered a disrupting condition through which the focus can be shifted to include a consideration of other species as well.

In his introduction to the topic of artificial flavoring Schlosser writes that “fast food chains, understandably, would like the public to believe that the flavors of their food somehow originates in their restaurant kitchens, not in distant factories run by other firms”

⁴ “The small and elite group of scientists who create most of the flavor in most of the food now consumed in the United States are called ‘flavorists’” (Schlosser 127).

(121) but as has been seen above, this is not the case. Schlosser later moves to reveal his horrifying truth about the meat Americans consume on a daily basis: “There is shit in the meat” (197). The reveal is untheatrical and matter-of-factly, yet (presumably) has a powerful effect on the reader. Its gross reality works as a disruptive force, yet again attesting to the deception and invisibility of the system. The remark is made by Schlosser in connection with the rise in foodborne illnesses. “Although the rise in foodborne illnesses has been caused by many complex factors,” Schlosser writes, “much of the increase can be attributed to recent changes in *how American food is produced*” (195, my emphasis). I argue with my emphasis that it is possible to read this part of Schlosser’s writing not only as a criticism to the process of marketing and selling the product, but also the way it is produced. As has been discussed in both the chapter on Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats* and earlier in this chapter, modern factory farming has little regard for the conditions of health, sanitation, safety, or ethics concerning their workers or the nonhuman animals they process. Because Schlosser has focused on the human partakers in this process throughout the narrative, it is easy to assume a perpetuation of this speciesist trend. However, I argue that there is interpretative potential in his description of how the shit ends up in the meat that could advocate also for the consideration of nonhuman animals. The disregard of human and nonhuman health and safety can, as I have shown, be seen as a direct consequence of speciesist discourse that disregards the suffering and interests of the nonhuman and dehumanized others in the name of economical profit or self-interest. By bringing attention to the excrement of the animal that may make its way into the meat during processing, Schlosser also arguably can be read as drawing attention to the living and breathing (and defecating) being that is source of our food while critiquing the way they are treated (or “processed”). His language, which is effective in producing original outrage directed at the fact that consumers are sold meat that may contain feces, may thus be used to relocate outrage (through the disruption of learning about the deception and invisibility of the system) to be directed at the speciesist discourse which allows live animals to be ruthlessly and carelessly slaughtered and processed to please the human palate.

Schlosser further graphically depicts the way the shit gets in the meat, by writing that the conditions in the modern feedlot can be compared to “those in a crowded European city during the Middle Ages, when people dumped their chamber pots out the window, raw sewage ran in the streets, and epidemics raged” (201). Again, the text can be seen as emphasizing and playing on the role invisibility and deception plays in maintaining the system. The lack of sanitation and (food) safety in factory farms, feedlots and

slaughterhouses, Schlosser reveals, result in a variety of deceases – *Fast Food Nation* focusing mainly on the “bug that kills children”, *E. coli* 0157:H7. His nicknaming of the pathogen exemplifies the way the system preys on the weak; the very young and the very old, but Schlosser also notes that: “adults in perfect health can be stricken by the pathogen, too” (200). Schlosser’s emphasis on the effects on children may be used to play up the original outrage, as readers (presumably) are more inclined to feel the need to protect and take action on behalf of the innocent, such as children. Furthermore, the way Schlosser describes the fast food industry’s reactions with respect to the increase in foodborne pathogens such as *E. coli* 0157:H7 bears a resemblance with the way in which speciesist discourse justifies the slaughter of animals for food, marking them out to be stupid and naïve and thus “natural” victims. This, being part of the problematic, survival-of-the-fittest discourse of the jungle, might transfer the outrage from being directed at the exploitation of innocent children, to the exploitation of innocent, nonhuman animals.

Though it is evident to Schlosser that the “recent changes in how cattle are raised, slaughtered and processed have created an ideal means for the [*E. coli* 0157:H7] to spread” (201), the meatpacking industry’s reactions to outbreaks of foodborne pathogens are, according to *Fast Food Nation*, generally focused on shifting the blame elsewhere. Such a focus may be evident in the text in the way industries are telling consumers that the problem lies with the way that their meat has been cooked, rather than the way it has been reared and slaughtered. Schlosser, as an example, points out the recirculation of manure that is commonplace in American feedlots as one of the major problems in the replication of the *E. coli* 0157:H7 pathogen. For instance, he writes that: “[C]urrent FDA regulations allow dead pigs and dead horses to be rendered into cattle feed, along with dead poultry. The regulations not only allow cattle to be fed dead poultry, they allow poultry to be fed dead cattle” (202), and that “[t]he waste products from poultry plants, including the sawdust and old newspapers used as litter, are also being fed to cattle” (202). This practice shows, as Schlosser intends, an outraging and complete lack of consideration as to what food consumers *think* they are buying versus what they are actually paying for, but also, I argue, a problematic disregard of the natural feeding habits and digestion of the production animals that also merits outrage, concern, and consideration.

To further exemplify and also unite the previous section treating the workers in the fast food industry with this concerning the consumers, one could pull forth a passage where Schlosser recalls a conversation with a slaughterhouse worker:

A former IBP⁵ “gutter” told me that it took him six months to learn how to pull out the stomach and tie off the intestines without spillage. At best, he could gut two hundred consecutive cattle without spilling anything. Inexperienced gutters spill manure far more often. At the IBP slaughterhouse in Lexington, Nebraska, the hourly spillage rate at the gut table runs as high as 20 percent, with stomach contents splattering one out of five carcasses. (203)

The description that Schlosser provides of the carcasses (and worker) splattered with stomach contents is undoubtedly not something that often or easily reaches the consumer. This description is disrupting both in its graphic nature and its exemplifying of the industry as one promoting (un-American) deception and invisibility. This passage (and knowledge) might indeed lead the reader to stop considering the product consumable, as Schlosser also notes that the workers “sometimes forget that this meat will eventually be eaten”, and that the “overworked, often illiterate workers in the nation’s slaughterhouses do not always understand the importance of good hygiene” (203). Schlosser may be playing on the readers reactions to this information to make them carefully (re)consider the origins of their food. However, the original outrage directed at the distasteful sale of contaminated meat might be transferred, by use of the graphic and logical disruption, to concern the shocking treatment of animals (and the animalized worker) as well. Lundblad notes in his analysis of Sinclair’s *The Jungle* that the motives for writing the novel may not necessarily be those set in focus by its reading, as is the case when Sinclair’s intent for improving conditions of the working class immigrants is turned instead into advocacy for the animals that serve as metaphors for the exploited workers (Lundblad, 109). It might in the same light be shown that Schlosser is with the writing of *Fast Food Nation* is perhaps aiming more for a response similar to that which was elicited from Sinclair’s novel. That is, a (political) reform with regard to the way fast food, and especially meat for the fast food industry, is being produced. However, the authorial intent of *Fast Food Nation* does not draw from its possibility of being interpreted as a critique of speciesist discourse, as such discourse governs the processes and manifests as the ethical problems that Schlosser discusses concerning health, sanitation and safety, as well as in U.S. politics on the topic.

3.3 Trusted Authorities: Politics

Schlosser’s text, as it reveals the “truth”; the real costs of the American love-affair with fast food; is obviously intended to change the way the way the reader eat. His work, I

⁵ Iowa Beef Processors, acquired by Tyson Inc. in 2001

argue, underlines the connection Peter Singer is trying to make in *Animal Liberation* between the process of making the food and consuming it, but it can also be seen as an attempt to extend the readers' knowledge and understanding beyond what happens to the nonhuman animal. Schlosser does this effectively by including information on how this system translates to and also affects *everything else*, but arguably makes an essentially speciesist decision by letting the species of his subjects define what should be considered seriously. It is, like many other reads concerning modern food production in the United States, a wake-up call, seeking to draw attention to the things that have been "deliberately hidden" (Schlosser 170). The realization that this deception is deliberate may, as Melanie Joy suggests, cause a person to feel "anger at the injustice and deception of the system; despair at the enormity of the problem; [and] fear that trusted authorities are, in fact, untrustworthy" (142). It is the role of the authorities in perpetuating and protecting the speciesist system which will be the final focus of this chapter. The outrage produced to be directed at the policies or politicians in *Fast Food Nation* does arguably not have to be limited to outrage that only seeks to improve the human situation, but can also be read as a possibility to also advocate for "real" animals.

Schlosser writes in his conclusion of *Fast Food Nation*:

Congress should ban advertising that preys upon children, it should stop subsidizing dead-end jobs, it should pass tougher food safety laws, it should protect American workers from serious harm, it should fight against dangerous concentrations of economic power. Congress should do all those things, but it isn't likely to do any of them soon. The political influence of the fast food industry and its agribusiness suppliers makes a discussion of what Congress should do largely academic. (267)

This passage suggests that the problem with speciesist discourse, or any other violent ideology, is that it is often reinforced by those in power – exemplifying the "most extreme racist theories, the principle that might is right" (Isaak Bashevis Singer qtd in *Earthlings*). By listing things that Congress should be (but is not) doing, Schlosser makes his readers aware of the failure of government instances to assume the responsibility that has been entrusted to them. The immense political influence of the fast food industry and its agribusiness suppliers is astonishing and illustrated throughout *Fast Food Nation* as Schlosser deals with the variety of topics ranging from worker to food safety and commercial regulations. So much so that the democratic interest is, arguably, not maintained but rather shown as being dealt with by undemocratic tendencies towards invisibility and deception. The politics, as well as everything else I have examined thus far in this chapter, are presented by Schlosser as evidently set in place to serve profit rather than people (or animals), and this is also a source for outrage in the text.

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which advocated rights and protection for the working class immigrants in the United States in the early twentieth century, explained that "there seemed to be something about the work of slaughtering that tended to ruthlessness and ferocity – it was literally the fact that in the methods of the packers a hundred human lives did not balance a penny of profit" (299), and sadly Schlosser works to prove that little has changed in the twenty-first century. Schlosser states that the Congress should "protect American workers from serious harm", but shows in the course of *Fast Food Nation* that it does not. His presentation of the political failures in intervening or controlling fast food industries and policies generates outrage, as Joy has predicted, and the fear that trusted authorities cannot be trusted after all, but that they will rather resort to deception and occultation, can work as a disruption condition. This disruption might be used transfer the outrage Schlosser's anthropocentric focus produces with regard to the treatment of workers and consumers (and electors) to nonhuman animal causes as well.

According to Schlosser's research, the meatpacking and slaughterhouses take great liberties in their use of workers, both those who are legal and those who are not, paying extremely low wages, providing little to no benefits, keeping workers from forming unions and making demands on their own behalf, and routinely ignoring working conditions that are potentially harmful and deadly. Line speeds are increased and skilled workers are replaced by illegal immigrants, and meanwhile Schlosser notes that "the federal government greatly reduce[...] the enforcement of health and safety laws" (179), which seems a rather illogical turn of events. Furthermore, Schlosser writes that the "free market", so highly regarded by the American public as a vital part of its democratic power, is incessantly suffering under the current political practices influenced by speciesist discourse. Here, the original anthropocentric outrage is directed at the treatment, exploitation, and disregard of (often lower-class) workers. Now, according to a source of Schlosser's, nothing close to free market conditions exist in the cattle market (138). Cattlemen become "captives" or "slaves" of the system, indebted by farming regulations enforced by the fast food industry, compromised in their values, experiencing the corruption of their independent and self-sufficient enterprises, and coerced by fixed market prices of their products without receiving any protection from their government. The disruptive condition I argue is present by Schlosser's reveal of the American government's conscious failure to protect and uphold American values, and the way in which Schlosser reports on these failures with a vocabulary reminiscent of production animals held in hopeless captivity, might draw a connection between such practices and the treatment of "real" animals in the industry. Furthermore, the allusions to slavery in this

particular part of the text might also speak to the interconnectedness of interhuman and interspecies discrimination and oppression. In the following chapter, slavery and race-theory and its connections to readings of species and speciesism will be more closely examined.

Schlosser also states that Congress should pass laws to protect children from advertising that preys on them, instead I have shown in the section above how lack of proper funding now is leading schools to making commercial deals with fast food giants as means of making ends meet. Furthermore, it is shown in Schlosser's work that government branches also contribute to the economical exploitation of the nations' youth by knowingly buying meat from the industry to feed to children in school cafeterias. Cost is valued over consumer safety also in this regard, writes Schlosser, leading for instance the USDA to buy the cheapest, and also more likely contaminated, meat to distribute to schools nationwide (218). Here, the original outrage is directed specifically at the selling and serving of potentially lethal produce to the nations' schoolchildren, and the disrupting condition is the governments' knowing participation in such business. It is tempting to assume that these trusted authorities do not know the risk at which they are putting consumers when such practices are applied, but Schlosser works to demonstrate that this is nothing but wishful thinking. For instance, he writes that though the business had more than 171 critical food safety violations in its facilities in the previous eighteen months, "the USDA continued to do business with the ConAgra subsidiary, buying about 10 million pounds of its meat for use in American schools" (219). In another instance reported by Schlosser the USDA, despite alarming test results revealing that as much as 47 percent of the company's ground beef contained *Salmonella*, "continued to purchase thousands of tons of meat from Supreme Beef for distribution in schools"(219), the processor being one of the nation's largest supplier to the school meat program, providing 45 percent of its ground beef (219-220). The outrage might, through Schlosser's graphic description of just how and why the produce bears such contamination (treated above), but also through the possible similarities one might find between the impulse to protect innocent children and innocent animals from harm, be relocated to consider the nonhuman animal victims of such trade.

The practice described in the text of routinely serving children potentially lethal meat in schools, as well as allowing fast food giants to advertise or even provide meals that are similarly dangerous, exposes yet again the criminal disregard for individual suffering and interest that the speciesist system of producing animals for food entails in society today. Schlosser shows that the children, as the workers and the animals of the system, are, disturbingly, not protected by the political institutions that is trusted by the general public to

make reasonable and democratic decisions to do so. Instead, it is shown as being governed by an amoral chase of savings and profit, and riddled with undemocratic tendencies like deception, power-concentration, and corruption. The text may thus be seen as a critique of the system as a whole rather than limited to the parts of it that affect the human animal.

Because the fast food industry “spends millions of dollars every year on lobbying and billions on mass marketing” (Schlosser 267), the rules and regulations that consumers may naturally assume regulate the industry and keep them and those involved in the production of the product safe, may, as Schlosser demonstrates, often be corrupted or entirely non-existing. “Violent ideologies,” Joy writes, “rely on deception, secrecy, concentrated power, and coercion – all practices that are incompatible with a free society” (88), and while the larger system “may appear democratic” (88), the practice of speciesism is arguably not. Because this violent, and inherently undemocratic practice which Schlosser reviews is imbedded within a democratic society, as the American inarguably is, it seems that the public is easily distracted or deceived to keep the workings of the system invisible. In politics, Schlosser proves that this deception is made possible either by imposing inefficient policies with clear “loopholes”, that is: outwardly pretending that something is being done when it in reality is not, or by not imposing any legislation whatsoever, largely ignoring the problem and shifting blame and staging cover-ups when manifestations of it surfaces. The reveal of such practices provided in *Fast Food Nation* works, as I have discussed as logical disrupting conditions, as they are made to drastically contrast the discourse the consumer (or reader) assumes they are taking part in to that which is actually lived.

As an example that works both as a “cover-up” and a faulty legislation, Schlosser pulls forth the Clinton administration’s HACCP⁶ plan. Schlosser discusses it in his book as a reaction to an *E. coli* 0157:H7 outbreak, promising government approved systems for ensuring food safety in slaughterhouses and production plants in the United States, also requiring the submission of meat for USDA microbial testing. The promise understandably pleased the public, Schlosser notes, but the plan “had been significantly watered down during negotiations with the meatpacking industry and Republican members of Congress” (215), and was passed without a requirement to test for the *E. coli* 0157:H7 pathogen. Schlosser uses this example as a way to illustrate his point that the fact that the meatpacking industry is at all involved in the negotiation of food safety laws bears testimony to their influence in politics.

⁶ Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

Especially when they are actively working for the continued practice of secrecy and deception, and to remain enabled to freely distribute potentially lethal produce.

Furthermore, Schlosser stresses that the inefficiency of such policies is not only evident in the way in which they are negotiated and passed, but also in the way they are executed as a result. Though the modified HACCP plan was approved, the efficiency of it in practice is even less impressive than its refusal to test for the pathogen that inspired its passing. That Schlosser has already treated how the meat comes to be contaminated, arguably lends to this discussion a potential for animal advocacy as well as worker/consumer/human advocacy. The federal inspectors Schlosser interviewed “felt under enormous pressure from their USDA superiors not to slow down the line speeds at slaughterhouses” (215), even though their job entails making scientific hazard analysis at critical control points in the production process. Outragingly, he demonstrates that instead of slowing down the line speed, which would also reduce spillage of the animal’s intestines and the accidental inclusion of spinal fluid and other contaminating substances, another worker is shown as being brought into the slaughterhouse to work under these straining conditions. This should not only attest to the disrupting inauthenticity of the concern for contamination, nor only produce the anthropocentric outrage Schlosser seems to aim for. Rather, bringing the discussion back to the slaughterhouse seems to indicate that the concern should be more holistic, also extending to include the animals and how they, as living beings, are processed and reduced to products. Schlosser reports that the checklists of quality controllers are routinely falsified, primarily because there is “no way that one person could get all the tasks on the list properly done” (216), and such deception exemplifies the disrupting condition. Government and industry officials are bound to know that the current employment of quality controllers is not sufficient, but it seems that the formality of having a quality controller, even when she cannot possibly get her job done, is all that matters. Though initially intended to make actual improvements to food safety, it is evident in Schlosser’s writing that the passing and execution of the HACCP plan is reminiscent of his reports of incidents under the Reagan administration, where “the meatpacking industry was given the authority to inspect its own meat” (206), despite the fact that they had a year earlier been caught falsifying safety records. Essentially, Schlosser seems to indicate, nothing has changed.

When Schlosser reports and provide examples that meatpackers and slaughterhouses are not required to test for dangerous pathogens such as the *E. Coli* 0157:H7 before distributing the meat, nor made to enforce practices that would greatly reduce the risk of such foodborne pathogens to thrive in the food, he is arguably working to produce outrage directed

at how such practices affect people. In addition to this outrageous lack of political intervention in the production and distribution of such produce, the political body is furthermore shown in *Fast Food Nation* as having little power even when contamination is discovered. “Under current law, the USDA cannot demand a recall [of contaminated meat]” Schlosser informs (211), adding that the only agency the USDA has in these matters is contacting the producer and suggesting that the meat is recalled. This, I suggest, is another manifestation of the disrupting condition concerning the public’s expectations to the government’s role in ensuring public health and societal justice. Though attempts to pass legislations that provide the USDA with such authority are routinely attempted, Schlosser shows in *Fast Food Nation* that Congress fails to enact them (214), suggesting again that corruption and undemocratic behaviors are allowed within this system. The potential for animal advocacy or consideration, I argue, is presented in the solutions Schlosser reports that such government instances come up with.

Fast Food Nation acknowledges that the USDA is attempting to take action, as consumer knowledge and awareness of dangerous contamination in meat is increasing (though consumers are not necessarily aware of the easily preventable causes of mass-contamination). However, Schlosser points out that instead of focusing on the primary causes of meat contamination (the mechanical and industrialized processing of live animals for food) “the meatpacking industry and the USDA are now advocating an exotic technological solution to the problem of foodborne pathogens. They want to irradiate the nation’s meat” (217). Meaning that radioactive gamma rays or x-rays disrupt the DNA of dangerous microorganisms in the meat so that they cannot reproduce. Here, Schlosser focuses on the neglect of other, more reasonable solutions as evidence of the industry’s disregard of the safety and interests of other humans. However, I argue that his suggestion that more complex processing methods are not the answer might carry more potential for animal advocacy than it first appears.

The practice of irradiating the meat, Schlosser emphasizes, does not change the fact that there is shit in the meat. Furthermore, consumers are reluctant to eat things that have been exposed to radiation. Naturally, then, Schlosser reports that: “The Beef Industry Food Safety Council – whose members include the meatpacking and fast food giants – has asked the USDA to change its rules and make the labeling of irradiated meat completely voluntary” (217-18). This reaction to consumer reluctance exemplifies yet again the complete disregard of consumer interest, and the wish to stagger consumers’ agency in making informed purchasing decisions, and works as another manifestation of the disruptive condition.

Additionally, Schlosser cites the worries of a slaughterhouse engineer concerning the use of this technology, who is concerned “about the introduction of highly complex electromagnetic and nuclear technology into slaughterhouses with a largely illiterate, non-English-speaking workforce” (218), and who furthermore considers the opportunity to disarm harmful bacteria a possible excuse “to speed up the kill floor and spray shit everywhere” (218). The engineer cited here is, like Schlosser, seemingly mostly concerned about the safety of the workers (and, presumably, the surroundings – if something was to go wrong). However, his reference to the kill floor and the animal excrement, which could only be “sprayed everywhere” if the animals were treated even more carelessly than they already are, makes it difficult to not consider the nonhuman animals that are part of this (grotesque) picture.

The industry, Schlosser may thus be seen to suggest, should not be given the tools to further deny their responsibility to make fundamental and necessary changes in their unsanitary and unethical methods and practices. Nor be given the opportunity to further endanger and increase suffering in staff and production animals by an increase to the already unreasonably speedy production line. The system, and consequentially: the oppression, exploitation, and suffering, is interconnected and may only be dealt with holistically.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the three categories in Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* in terms of how they are affected or governed by speciesist discourse, and how portable outrage might help readers and critics consider this initially anthropocentric text with regard to other species as well. I have attempted to show that though Schlosser is primarily concerned with the human animal in his investigation of the “real prize” of the American obsession with fast food, it is possible to read the ethical problems he highlights as manifestations or perpetuations of a problematic and underlying speciesist discourse. By doing this, I have been working out from Cary Wolfe’s theory that the speciesist ideology can be applied to any animal(ized) Other. I have also worked to demonstrate that using the theory of portable outrage might help reveal a focus on species and speciesism in the three main categories of concern found in Schlosser’s book: workers, consumers, and politics. Schlosser’s language in the text is, though perhaps not intently, effective in producing portable outrage that can be redirected at the status quo of (production) animals in today’s society, and that calls for animal advocacy or anti-speciesist reform.

I argue that analyzing the text with portable outrage is useful because it illustrates the difficulty of drawing a clear line dividing the human animal from other animals, even though Schlosser has presumed to do so throughout *Fast Food Nation*. Exposing the interconnectedness of interhuman and interspecies oppression and exploitation complicates the consideration of what is or should be considered ethical, interspecies behavior, also in contemporary food production. Cary Wolfe writes: [I]n the historically and socially contingent discourse called ‘ethics’, we are obliged ... to apply consistently the rules and norms we devise for determining ethically relevant traits and behaviors, without prejudice towards species or anything else (*Animal Rites* 42). As we have seen in this chapter as well as earlier in this thesis, interspecies narratives can be read in light of the human/animal binary in a way that compels us to consider our obligation to apply ethical frameworks consistently, whether it be with regard to the human animal or any other animal, and to question the relative absolute of what is human(e). I have argued that the consideration of species and speciesism through portable outrage in *Fast Food Nation* helps illustrate the connection between speciesist practices and exploitative and oppressive practices towards Othered, animalized, or dehumanized groups or persons, without suggesting that animal advocacy relies on this connection.

4 Speciesist Constructs: Human/Animal Boundaries in *Dawn*

Reading Octavia Butler's *Dawn* from an animal studies perspective might at first seem like a pleasing prospect, as interspecies relationships are presented in the novel as the next step in evolution, and thus something inherently progressive. The alien Oankali interbreeding with the humans to produce construct (mixed) children that will be more finely tuned to survival, and who will be able to regenerate lost limbs seems hopeful indeed, but a closer analysis of species and speciesism might complicate the picture. The critics who are tempted to praise *Dawn* for its anti-speciesist storyworld might be failing to recognize the troubling perpetuation of speciesist discourse, both in the novels' treatment of race, gender, and species. The allusions to slavery and sexual domination in the novel reach beyond the scope of an isolated cultural criticism, and an interpretation of the novel that limits itself to an exploration of the female gender and/or the black race ignores the very prominent elements of species and trade set in place by the author in this text. Ignoring the role animal and speciesist discourse play in the story risks the (perhaps) unintentional perpetuation of such discourse as natural and right, and might thus also risk reinstating or reinforcing cruel hierarchies of inequality and injustice that in most ways mirror those they are attempting to deconstruct. An analysis that would more effectively shed light upon and seek to prevent the perpetuation of such speciesist and oppressive discourse using my theory of portable outrage, would read the novel intersectionally – seeing what the discourse of species might contribute to, rather than take away from, the existing and more easily accessible cultural criticisms.

A consideration of species and speciesism in *Dawn* will be made more accessible in this chapter through the application of portable outrage, which suggests that the outrage directed at the Oankali treatment of humans could be redirected towards the humans' treatment of nonhuman animals. This chapter will strive to interpret the novel by looking at places in the text where the human/animal binary and speciesist discourse is maintained even though the storyworld seeks to dismiss such a definite separation of species. Furthermore, it will examine how these, in combination with the novel's genre, make the reader think about the fluidity of human boundaries and how arbitrary distinction might privilege the human species disproportionately. This analysis will arguably provide a more inclusive reading of the cultural criticisms traditionally connected with this novel, serving my overarching

argument that these can be read more holistically when also paying attention to species and speciesism.

4.1 The Cyborg Potential: Critiquing Human Tendencies in SF Literature

When looking at genres of literature that lend themselves to critiquing societal structures and tendencies, it is clear that Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction (SF) have great potential in terms of cultural criticism because it has the power to reimagine entire worlds that, further removed from our own reality, can better illuminate problematic areas of discourse we might otherwise be too engrained in to question. Though perhaps often focused on problematizing cultural tendencies through analogy and extrapolation, the SF genre does not do so in a deterministic manner. In “The Ridicule of Time: Science Fiction, Bioethics, and the posthuman” Jay Clayton writes: “Science Fiction is overwhelmingly positive about the possibility of transforming the human” (319), and may thus be considered a genre intended to inspire positive change, or at the very least open up productive debates concerning certain topics. However, the presentation of problematic discourse in the storyworld might not always be seen to address only the most visible issues. Rather, the presentation of these issues can harbor disrupting conditions that might shift the attention from the original, most discernible problem(s) to other, more surprising ones that could be as, if not more, interesting to explore.

Famously, Donna Haraway has discussed the potential presented in SF with the birth of the cyborg, especially in connection with the marginalized’s representation in literature, stating that: “the cyborg stimulates politics” (79). SF gives us the power to reimagine the self and the other in a way that strips the text of any privileged reading, and might thus reveal the “power of the margins” (81). In other words, SF can be used to create a space in which the marginalized are not marginalized, or given greater opportunity to break free from the margins and explore the opportunities that follow such a break. For instance, Michele Osherow argues in “The Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women’s Science Fiction” that one place for women to find freedom to move, act, choose, and determine is in the pages of science fiction (71), and further that “[t]he revisionist writings of female SF authors highlight women’s potential to thwart the historical limitation imposed upon female characters, and upon women themselves” (81). It is easy to see how the

marginalized group of her argument (women) could be replaced in SF literature by any marginalized group by making adjustments to the storyworld and its characters.

Though primarily focused on cyborg feminism, Haraway also touches on the aspect of species in her “A Cyborg Manifesto”. When discussing animal rights, Haraway writes that: “movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are a clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture” (72). She suggests that movements for animal rights do not seek to reduce the human species to animals. Rather that the idea that granting animal rights would require a reduction is in itself based on a speciesist discourse, as outlined by Peter Singer in *Animal Liberation*, that assumes a false dichotomy between nature and culture. Also, Haraway’s more recent work is heavily characterized by a consideration of species, such as her 2003 *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, who’s link to her “Cyborg Manifesto” might seem obvious, and 2008 *When Species Meet*, which further explores the topic and also reprints large sections of *The Companion Species Manifesto*. In these later works, Haraway questions the centrality of the human, what she called “the culturally normal fantasy of human exceptionalism” which “is the premise that humanity alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies” (*When Species Meet* 11), arguing that we should strive towards a shared existence with all critters.

Of the interconnectedness of cyborgs and species, and her two manifestos, Haraway writes:

These figures are hardly polar opposites. Cyborgs and companion species each bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways. Besides, neither a cyborg nor a companion animal pleases the pure of heart who long for better protected species boundaries and sterilization of category deviants. (*Companion Species* 4)

This is useful here, because the relationships we form with earthly species other than our own might, as Haraway suggests here, mirror or otherwise bear similarities to the relationships we imagine forming with other, extraterrestrial species. Furthermore, the “pure of heart” to whom Haraway refers, though here with respect to species, is undeniably reminiscent of representatives of problematic interhuman discourse such as those of race purity, and gender conformity, indicating the connection I wish to make in this thesis between speciesism and other oppressive -isms, and the following potential for interchangeable activism.

This thesis assumes that viewing humans as binary opposition to animals is problematic. Thus, it seems fitting to include here a brief comment on the historical and philosophical distinctions between the human and the animal in the tradition of animal studies. Distinctions between the human and the animal have been made throughout history, and, arguably, proved in turn rather arbitrary and insignificant in the scope of what rights such a distinction may or may not grant the animal (or the human for that matter). Historical and philosophical distinctions have for the most part centered around three questions: whether animals can reason, whether they can develop and use language, and whether and to which degree they can suffer. Moving from the time in which animals were thought to be mere machines, reacting to pain instinctively and mechanically rather than candidly, to that which before it was learned that chimpanzees can be taught sign language, many of these distinctions have been debunked. Furthermore, though the significance of and appropriate reaction to animal suffering is still debated, few still venture to argue that they do not feel pain or suffer.

As it can be seen, the difficulties in deciding what is distinctive of the human might be deemed arbitrary, and we might need to be reminded that one's "perception that another life has value comes as much from an appreciation of its uniqueness as from the recognition that it has characteristics that are shared by one's own life" (Stephen Zak qtd in Wolfe *Animal Rites* 36). This reminder may be made especially available to us in SF literature because it grants power to demonstrate similarities and uniqueness that derive value in new, yet recognizable organizations of worlds and power structures. Haraway suggests that our "fusions with animals and machines" can teach us how "not to be Man" ("A Cyborg Manifesto" 81), and does so optimistically. In her argument, the cyborg does not pose as a threat to the human species, but instead is a representation of our potential. Even though there is no hybrid or "fused" species in the first novel of the *Xenogenesis* series, there is a cyborg potential present in terms of regeneration, that is: bringing something into new existence. I have already touched on, and will later explore in more detail, how some critiques of race and gender have seen the setting of *Dawn* as a place in which important, cultural changes can be made by, for instance, thwarting the historical and/or cultural limitations that work on certain marginalized groups in our society. However, as I will argue, the potential Haraway is so optimistic about might not be fulfilled as satisfyingly in *Dawn* as it might seem at first glance.

"We have all been injured profoundly," Haraway writes of the many types of injustice we endure in society today, "[w]e require regeneration, not rebirth" ("A Cyborg Manifesto"

84). In SF literature this regeneration is more imminently available to us through either imagining better or, perhaps more commonly, imagining worse – either way illuminating problematic areas of current discourse and sometimes also suggesting possible solutions. Jay Clayton argues that SF writing can be approached as addressing “larger cultural anxieties” (327), that is matters with which society is already concerned. However, I would like to suggest that it might also be used to address cultural tendencies that are not necessarily recognized as problematic by the public by addressing them through activism with which people are already engaged and concerned. “From the perspective of cyborgs,” Haraway writes, “we can see powerful possibilities” (“A Cyborg Manifesto” 81). The exploration of these possibilities is easily available to us in SF literature, and the rest of this chapter will be dedicated to examining the critical potential (and failures) presented by such means in *Dawn*, with special attention to how portable outrage can be used to include a consideration of species and speciesism in the analysis.

4.2 The Trade Argument: Sex, Race, and Species

In *Dawn* the alien Oankali species has salvaged the earth and surviving humans after what can only be assumed to have been a nuclear war, and are now putting the novel's protagonist, Lilith, in charge of preparing the first group of awakened humans for their return to earth. Once there, they will be expected to engage in genetic trade, or reproduction, with the Oankali to make a new and more resistant species that will not eventually self-destruct. What I will be examining in this section is how what I call the “trade argument” – that is the argument that the exploitation and/or manipulation that takes place is serving a good or productive purpose – is used in the series to justify such a dominant treatment of other beings, and further how portable outrage can be applied in the analysis of *Dawn* to extend the critical lens from race and gender to species as well.

The focus of many critics of Butler's work is very much on that of gender and race, but such readings might ignore the heavy focus on species in *Dawn* and thus risks seeing sexism and racism as constructs that are not interconnected with, and often ruled by, speciesist discourse. There have, however, been critics interested in posthumanist/animal(ity) studies who have read *Dawn* and the *Xenogenesis* trilogy in light of both what it does in terms of the cyborg, race, and feminism, as Haraway has done on several occasions, and the disturbingly reinforced humanist perspective in much recent SF writing, as Ursula K. Heise points out in “The Android and the Animal”. I will be looking at how the “bringing together”

(Haraway, *Companion Species* 4) of the human and non-human may illuminate the texts' attempt(s) at coping with (significant) otherness⁷. Further, I will be looking at Lilith's newfound position and its overt connections to race and gender, while also discussing the promising awareness of its parallel to the position of many nonhuman animals in her pre-war world. I will argue that this promising awareness of oppressive structures is complicated and disrupted by the perpetuation of essentialist and speciesist discourse in the storyworld, and that this might be used as a disruption by which one can relocate the outrage from the Oankali treatment of humans to the humans' treatment of other beings (and each other).

Lilith herself draws attention to similarities between the way the Oankali treat her and the way that humans on Earth treat(ed) animals on several occasions in the text. When being taken around the ship by Nikanj, a sexless Oankali that will later be her partner, she comments on the way she is received by its friends that “[s]he was first amused, then annoyed, then angered by their attitude. She was nothing more than an unusual animal to them. Nikanj's new pet” (*Dawn* 55). However, she later contemplates her position and purpose aboard the ship further:

In a very real sense, she was an experimental animal. Not a pet ... she was intended to live and reproduce, not to die. Experimental animal, parent to domestic animals? Or . . . nearly extinct animal, part of a captive breeding program? . . . Was that what she was headed for? Forced artificial insemination. Surrogate motherhood? Fertility drugs and forced “donations” of eggs? Implantation of unrelated fertilized eggs. Removal of children from mothers at birth . . . Humans had done these things to captive breeders – all for a higher good, of course. (58)

Because this passage expressing Lilith's fears as a captive of the Oankali is so centered around reproduction and consent, it also makes for a powerful feminist reading in terms of female vulnerability in times of conflict because of how their bodies are targets for assault and domination. However, it is important to note that Lilith, though concerned about these issues throughout the novel (and also eventually impregnated without consent by Nikanj), is not given a passive role as a victim. Rather, she is genetically altered by the Oankali to be stronger, more retentive, made able to control the ship to a certain degree, and set to parent the first group of awakened humans. Michele Osherow argues in “The Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women's Science Fiction” that the character of Lilith “challenges how we define and consider our female social selves” (77) because she is sexual, powerful, and maternal, and I will further examine this argument later.

⁷ See Haraway (*Companion Species* 7)

This passage might also with its allusions to “captive breeding” invoke analogies of slavery. In addition, the idea that Lilith is meant to live and (re)produce is reminiscent of a slaveholder’s attitude, where exploitation, not extinction, is the driving force of the oppressive behavior. Osherow makes an argument also here, that the mutual Oankali/human reliance makes the “enslaved” human both powerful and vulnerable (79), which will be examined. I will also look at an argument made by Haraway which suggests that such interbreeding is a powerful response to notions of race purity, because it resists the compulsion to recreate the image of the Same (Penley, Ross, Haraway 16).

As can be seen, Butler’s story undeniably provides good material for gender and race centered readings. In the sections that follow I will discuss these approaches in terms of how the cyborg potential, that is: the “joining together” of human and non-human that Haraway examines, color these readings. Though Haraway both in her reading of Butler’s work and her own writing seems optimistic as to what successful, interspecies coexistence can be achieved through this, I suggest that it is not convincingly pursued in *Dawn*. The reinforcement of heterosexual, gender-normative, and suggested speciesist essentialism in the novel, which is also continued throughout the series, is disruptive and might lead to a consideration of other interspecies relationships than that between the Oankali and the humans. It might more appropriately be applied as an example of what Ursula K. Heise has pointed out in “The Android and the Animal” as part of the modern tradition of SF novels which “tend to articulate humanist perspectives that sit uneasily with the hybrid and clearly posthuman social and biological environments they portray” (508). In other words, I want to suggest that though *Dawn* might at first glance seem like an anti-anthropocentric novel where species are (reluctantly) mixed and hybridity is seen as next step in evolution, the perpetuation of problematic discourse in the novel is more suggestive of it promoting anthropocentric views after all. To put it in the terms of my theory, the original outrage of human interaction and breeding with the Oankali is disrupted by the problematic reinforcement of essentialist assumptions of race, gender, and species, and creates possibilities for that outrage to be relocated and focused on humans’ presumed dominance over a nonhuman or animalized Other.

4.2.1 Gender and Sexism

The outrage produced in response to gender and sexism in the novel, and speciesist discourse connecting with these depictions might provide opportunities for portable outrage redirected at speciesist discourse more generally. In her article, Michele Osherow examines the traces of

the mythological Lilith in Science Fiction⁸, finding and pointing at the ways Octavia Butler (and C.L. Moore) manipulate, challenge and recreate the myth, and tries to determine the cultural consequences of these recreations. What is useful here is Osherow's presentation of the mythological Lilith, which comes from a kind of literature devoted to biblical interpretation, because it lays the foundation for her exploration of Lilith in Science Fiction. She writes that it is "not at all surprising," to find Lilith in a genre "in which women generally take the form of the alien other" Osherow writes (71), and moves to argue that in Butler's work, the figure of Lilith becomes "a celebration of a hitherto feared and ephemeral female figure" (75).

Osherow argues that the revisionary mythmaking that takes place in *Dawn* by Butler's reimagining of the biblical Lilith in her narrative establishes Lilith as an alien other to everyone she comes into contact with due to her alien empowerment and female body (76). The "alien empowerment" she refers to is the physical and mental alterations made to Lilith so that she can more easily live aboard the Oankali ship, and that enables her to awaken and parent (as well as protect herself from) the group of humans which she is set to prepare for return to the salvaged Earth. Haraway also comments on the effects of this empowerment as she discusses *Dawn* in her *Primate Visions*: "Faced with her bodily and mental alterations and her bonding with Nikanj, the other humans do not trust that she is still human" (380). She is arguing here that Lilith's role, and also that of the other awakened humans, as intended to interbreed with the Oankali and repopulate the Earth demonstrate "resistance to the imperative to recreate the sacred image of the same" (378). In other words, Haraway suggests that the interbreeding with the Oankali in the novel is a way of resisting anthropocentrism. Both Haraway and Osherow suggest with this that *Dawn* recreates or renegotiates an image, either of the female (Osherow) or the human (Haraway), though Haraway admits that this recreation may be "frustrating" (Penley, Ross & Haraway 16) and "not innocent" (Haraway, *Monkeys, Aliens, and Women* 295).

I, however, fail to see how the female figure is effectively recreated in *Dawn*. Osherow seems to argue that Lilith is recreated because she is now seen as sexual, powerful, and maternal (77), but Osherow, and in part also Haraway, ignores the circumstances under which Lilith has been granted (/assigned) these characteristics and how she is received as a result of them. This is important to my reading because the perpetuation of problematic

⁸ The mythological Lilith Osherow discusses comes from Jewish folklore. Lilith was Adam's first wife, but left him after having refused to become subservient. She coupled with the archangel Samael and did not return to the Garden of Eden.

discourse about sex and gender I find present, produces the original outrage that will later be transferred to consider species and speciesism as well. Lilith is, in fact, sexual in the novel, but the idea of a sexual female human is hardly news – women are sexual in today’s society too. What might be problematic is the discourse of female sexuality, and this is still, I argue, problematic in the novel. Lilith’s sexuality and bonding with Nikanj can hardly be considered consensual, as her agency is far from real in their relationship. Firstly, her bonding with Nikanj during its metamorphosis is only consented to in part by Lilith, as she is not made aware of the mental and physical bond that results from such a bonding, making it physically difficult to separate the two after Nikanj’s metamorphosis. To Lilith, it seems simply a matter of “looking after”(107) it while it transforms. Furthermore, the human/alien intimacy is both physically and mentally coerced by the Oankali, and I will at a later point in this chapter discuss the real agency and validity of consent in the novel.

Moreover, Lilith’s strength is not her own. It has been produced in her by the Oankali to keep her alive in the environment they have confined her within. Not only is this strength as a necessity for survival true in terms of getting around and accessing food on the ship, but also more urgently necessary to protect her in her interaction with the other humans. As I have shown above, Lilith has no say in the compromise of her humanity mentally (in her bonding with Nikanj), and now this leads to further compromise (physically) to protect her from humans who will resent her: “They won’t trust me or my help. They’ll probably kill me” (110), Lilith tells Kahguyath, the Oankali who tells her she has been selected to parent the first group of humans. Lilith is partly right: some of the humans she awakens are outraged and try to kill her, but with her enhanced physique the attempts are futile. What I want to emphasize here is that both the creation and reception of the strong and sexual female are not, as Osherow and Haraway might want to argue, evident of a reimagined discourse of “woman”, as coercion and force is exercised in shaping her, and failure to conform to essentialist expectations of “female” is still met with resentment and marks her in the novel not only as “not female”, but also “not human”.

As to the matter of Lilith as a maternal character, there are two aspects of motherhood to consider in *Dawn*: the parenting of the awakened humans, and her actual conception of a construct child. When learning that she is to parent the first group, Lilith objects: “[P]ut me back to sleep, dammit ... I never wanted this job!” (111), however later accepting the responsibility reluctantly. Above, I have shown how the idea being “bred” by the Oankali sits with her. It may be argued that Butler presents a revised image of “female” because she has created a female protagonist who rejects the idea of motherhood, but this is complicated both

in the argument's logic, and further also in the novel's plot. The logic fails because it is made known in the novel that Lilith was, in fact, a voluntary mother before the war. Her objections to mothering a child, then, it primarily concerned with the aspect of mothering a nonhuman child. A construct child, in the eyes of Lilith, "won't be human ... It will be a thing. A monster" (246). Further, the plot of the novel nevertheless disregards any wishes of Lilith's, the Oankali coercing her to "parent" the awakened humans and later impregnating her with a construct child against her will. The disregard and coercion concerning motherhood in the novel (though not necessarily rape) arguably mirror rather than reform problematic attitudes towards women and motherhood in contemporary American society.

Furthermore, Lilith and Butler seem to perpetuate familiar and essentialist discourse throughout the novel – reinforcing rather than challenging these notions. Nancy Jesser discusses the tendency of "tricky essentialism" (49) in Butler's writing, where acting on gender difference "may be the way to save humanity from itself, by asserting the female self-sacrifice over the self-interested power-hungry male" (50). This approach is one that, like that suggested by Osherow, empowers women socially because the essentialist qualities of female nurture and self-sacrifice are the ones needed to maintain human existence. This shift in social power-structures following the exogenesis is made explicit by Kahguyaht as he introduces Lilith to her role in the new world by saying: "I believed that because of the way human genetics were expressed in culture, a human male should be chosen to parent the first group. I think now that I was wrong" (110). In the new world that is to be established in the series, women are most suited to lead because they are the ones more likely to override self-interest for the greater good for children and kin. However, though she now is in a position where essentialist female roles and qualities are those needed to survive, these roles and qualities remain limiting and essentialist, and thus problematic. While the original outrage produced by the text might be directed at the Oankali treatment of humans, and perhaps also at the sexist discourse exercised in reducing women to "pets" or "heifers", the ironic perpetuation of such problematic discourse works as a disrupting condition in the novel. Because of the connection Lilith makes between herself and nonhuman animals on several occasions in the text, I argue that the possibility is presented to place the relocated outrage here. The way Lilith and the other humans condemn the "animal" treatment they receive (as women and as humans), is problematized by the fact that they do not seem to condemn such treatment of "real" animals.

It is not only the female figure that falls victim to the essentialism present in Butler's novel, as there is an assumption of a natural tendency for male violence throughout. This

assumption is established quite early in the novel as Lilith meets the first human male, Paul, after her awakening. She narrates:

He stared at her for several seconds and she feared him and pitied him and longed to be away from him ... Yet, it would do no good to fight him physically. She was tall, had always thought of herself as strong, but he was much bigger – six-four, six-five, and stocky. (93)

At this point, where Lilith is sizing up Paul, expecting him to be (sexually) violent, he has done nothing but kiss her “awkwardly”, and she narrates it being like “being kissed by an eager boy” (92) – an image that hardly strikes fear in the heart. Moreover, after Paul has indeed tried to force himself on her and the Oankali has had to intervene, Lilith comes to his defense saying: “You kept him away from women for how long? Fifteen years? More?” (95-96), echoing many essentialist and victim-blaming rape defenses that rely on men’s perceived inability to control themselves, their violent tendencies, and sexual desires.

These essentialist constructions of gender, both of men and women, are not predominantly new or reformed in Butler’s story. Rather, they stem in part from a discourse of “animal” instincts and evolution. Michael Lundblad, as seen in the introduction, discusses the Darwinian-Freudian discourse of the jungle, which presumes that violence and heterosexuality can be explained as natural in humans when it is driven by the evolutionary drive towards survival and reproduction. This is problematic because such discourse does not only strive to justify such oppressive discourse, but furthermore might also reproduce as well as provoke more of it, when some assume to be more evolved and, consequently, more “fit” to rule and dominate others. The cyborg potential, though present and toyed with, is thus not realized convincingly in *Dawn*, and we witness a trade argument that comes closer to reinforcing and justifying speciesist discourse. This disruption may lead the reader, as indicated above, to transfer the original outrage to also question whether the superiority humans presume over animals can be used to justify their exploitation and oppression, in the same line that they are led to question the right of the Oankali to exploit and oppress humans.

4.2.2 Race and Slavery

The obsession in *Dawn* with reproduction, parenthood, and consent can be argued to signify something different than an attempt to reshape the perceived social self of women (or men) in our society. Lilith’s aversion to engage in the Oankali trade, or being bred, as she more commonly perceives it in the novel, is not primarily connected with her aversion towards being a mother. In fact, we know that Lilith was a mother voluntarily on Earth before the war. Rather, as can be supported more convincingly in the novel, her aversion is against

being forced and having nonhuman children. The idea of being forcefully impregnated, or “bred” as it is presented in Butler’s novel, as well as the implied notion of racial or special purity can and has been connected with discourse of breeding, slavery, and racial mixing in African American literature and history also. The connection with cultural criticism concerning race and gender might also be producing original outrage in the text, which can be made portable with through the disruption of its simultaneous perpetuation and condemnation in the novel.

Michele Osherow writes that: “The Oankali rely upon Lilith for genetic progress, similar to slave holders’ economic reliance upon slaves” (79). The dire likeness between the African American female slaves and Lilith in *Dawn*, Osherow argues, is that their biological potential makes them both powerful and vulnerable. Powerful because their captors rely on them to survive and perpetuate their way of living, and vulnerable because of the overarching threat of sexual assault and bodily violation they have to suffer in order to secure the existence of themselves, their children, and kin. Angela Davis helps us, in “The Android and the Animal”, to understand why reading Butler’s Lilith as a matriarch is, because of this vulnerability, a “cruel misnomer” that implies a “decisive authority” which is simply not present (84). Instead, Davis argues that it is the essentialist female role as caretaker and nurturer that put her in the same central position in the slave community as in *Dawn*, because it in both cases leaves her essential to the survival of her community.

Though the argument of Lilith’s vulnerability can be supported by the text, I am not convinced as to her powers. She is in some ways essential to the Oankali because their survival relies on the genetic trade, but the Oankali have salvaged many humans from the war and can furthermore now make the trade with only the genetic prints, if they have to. Lilith develops a “learn and run” strategy in the novel, where the idea is to “learn [the awakened humans] all she could teach them, all the Oankali could teach them, then use what they had learned to escape and keep themselves alive” (118). This strategy is argued by Osherow to be an essential part of Lilith’s mission and part of the planned sabotage and destruction of the Oankali. The strategy coincides with the “studied insolence” described by Davis in connection with slavery (86). However, as Lilith notes, the agency she has to refuse the work the Oankali have bestowed upon her is limited. Aside from this “learn and run” strategy “[h]er only other personal possibility was to refuse to Awaken anyone – hold on until the Oankali gave up on her and went looking for a more cooperative subject” (118). And what would happen to her then would be what happens to any human troublemaker: she would be put back into animated suspension. Though the threat is not a whipping or literal death, the

real agency here is similar to that of a slave. At one point, Lilith voices this ironic “choice” to one of the Awakened humans who considers resisting: “If that’s what you want – to be split up, to begin again alone, to go through this however many times it takes for you to let yourself get all the way through it, keep trying” (166). It is clear that Lilith does not consider the agency real either. Essentially anthropocentric, the original outrage that may here be directed at the discourse of slavery employed in the storyworld by the Oankali to justify their oppression and exploitation the humans. However, the disrupting condition of the (il)logical perpetuation of the same type of discourse in the novel might redirect the outrage at the treatment of species and speciesism here as well.

Lilith’s commitment to the “learn and run” strategy proves useless rather than essential in the survival of the human species, as the awakened humans are manipulated (or violated) by the Oankali to the extent that human sex and reproduction is no longer a possibility for them. Nikanj explains to Lilith at the end of the novel that the humans, though given the opportunity to live separately from the Oankali, will need an Ooloi (sexless Oankali) to reproduce (245), and can thus not save their species by resisting or running from the Oankali trade. Nancy Jesser argues that what Butler is doing by this is writing “about the costs of damaging ideological fantasies such as slavery and an unwillingness to change fetishized notions about genetic purity” (51). This is where the disrupting condition might be located. The notions about genetic purity are perpetuated by (most of) the humans in the novel as they are outraged by the treatment they receive from the Oankali is disrupting. Furthermore, that the connection between this treatment and slavery can be made because of the way humans were animalized, dominated, bred, and owned as slaves is arguably a cause for the portable outrage to include a consideration of species and speciesism in the novel, as well as race and racism.

I have earlier shown that Haraway considers the *Xenogenesis* series as resisting notions of purity and reproduction of the Same, and in this line, in a *Social Text* interview, she says: “[Y]ou retell the history of what it means to be white, then you see the perversion of the compulsion to reproduce the sacred image of the Same: the compulsion of race purity and the control of women for the reproduction of race purity” (Penley, Ross, and Haraway 16). Haraway might argue that the cyborg, which in the case of *Dawn* and the *Xenogenesis* series would be the Oankali/human children (called “construct children” in the novels), resists the “compulsion to reproduce the sacred image of the Same” (Penley, Ross, and Haraway 16). However, in *Dawn* the process of training and returning the humans to Earth and creating construct children is disturbingly reminiscent of the slave trade, regardless of whether the

children seem to resist the notions of race (or species) purity on which that system was built. I want to make the point that these notions of the genetically pure are arguably not contested consistently in the novel but rather, at times, perpetuated. The language humans use to produce outrage against the Oankali is commonly associated with race and racism, treating ideas of being dominated, “bred”, or owned, but can, in fact, be more closely associated with animals. I argue that this animalized language, in combination with the disrupting condition, provides a powerful possibility to transfer outrage and consider whether the novel might also, in its advocacy for the human, be presenting possibilities to advocate for the animal.

However, it is made clear in the novel that the Oankali do not consider their transaction with the humans to be enslavement, but rather a trade that benefits both species in terms of evolution, as perpetuating purity in the species will lead to human self-destruction. Seen from the perspective of the Oankali, the perceived tendency for humans to be hierarchical (let not the essentialism in this presumption go unnoticed) may place humans below the Oankali, who is simply presenting the next step in human evolution. “We will moderate your hierarchical problems and you will lessen our physical limitations” Nikanj explains of the trade, “[o]ur children won’t destroy themselves in a war, and if they need to regrow a limb or to change themselves in some other way they’ll be able to do it” (*Dawn* 247). It is, as predicted by Lilith, for the “greater good” (58). But does that necessarily make it justifiable? Again, I would like to point out the problematic essentialism perpetuated in the organization of thought in seemingly all characters of the novel – even the Oankali. The idea that anything is or can be “essentially” or “purely” human is, in terms of species, deeply embedded within the same, impossible and illogical obsession with the “pure” as genetic or racial purity, and leads me back to the discussion of what implications assumptions concerning nature and evolution might have (see section above).

4.3 “An Unclean Thing?”: Consent and Agency in the Novel

Connected with my discussion of the trade argument, the trade might at first glance be seen as a fair one because the humans who trade with the Oankali have made a choice to do so. However, as Nancy Jesser suggests, human consent in *Dawn* “cannot be seen as consent in any real sense of the word” (55) because they are managed and manipulated to give it. That the humans though consenting in word might not be doing so in truth is an important factor in turning the reading of *Dawn* from a predominantly posthuman reading to one that is actually

more anthropocentric. Seeing that the “bringing together” of the two species in the novel might not be considered consensual after all can furthermore draw attention to the perpetuation of anthropocentric and speciesist discourse in the novel, and highlight the need for intersectional cultural criticism that includes a consideration of species. In this section, I will discuss three unsettling aspects of consent and agency in *Dawn* that work to produce portable outrage: political, sexual, and behavioral.

After the newly awakened humans have been nursed and trained by Lilith, they are brought to earth and given a choice to stay with the Oankali or to run away and create resistor settlements. I will address this as the aspect of political consent and agency because it reflects whether or not the humans are willing to submit to the new political order of an interspecies trading society. However, as I indicated earlier in this chapter, this choice cannot be seen as a real choice because of its nature. The humans are essentially given a choice between submission and destruction. In this light the “trade” that the Oankali offer the humans seems more like an ultimatum than a choice. I argue that in *Dawn* humans are in no position to give actual consent (consent given without coercion or exploitation of trust, power or authority), because the survival of their own species relies on the Oankali, and furthermore because the Oankali use other means of coercion and deception in obtaining consent. Elyce Helford’s discussion of Butler’s work can be used to further examine the actuality of human agency in the novel. Though Helford is writing about Butler’s short story “Bloodchild”, her description of the way the alien species “attempts to win cooperation through coercion and contentment through narcotics” (267) is very much applicable in *Dawn* as well.

When the awakened humans have been nursed and trained by Lilith, the humans are kept “drugged for days – drugged and guarded” (191) by the Ooloi, who explain that: “In the end, no one will be [drugged]. We dull your natural fear of strangers and of difference. We keep you from injuring or killing us or yourselves. We teach you more pleasant things to do” (192). It may seem like a convincing argument due to the “biological contradiction” the Oankali have found in humans, but it is telling in terms of how the human agency is reduced from their instinctive “defiant tension” to “drugged tranquility”, to borrow some fitting descriptions from Helford’s text. When the Oankali uses coercion and narcotics to coax cooperation and consent from the humans, the connection between discourse of the human/animal and other, interhuman systems of oppression is exemplified because “the complexity of human-alien relations allows us to see the degree to which species, like gender and race, is primarily a matter of who has the power to construct and label whom (Helford 270). In other words, hierarchical organization and discourse of domination is still a problem

and a disruptive force in the novel, even though the Oankali insist that their species does not practice such destructive behavior. The consideration of human political agency in the novel can be extended by use of this disruptive force in passages, like the one treated above, where the Oankali use techniques of control associated with the human use of animals in, for instance, the food industry and for scientific research.

Another aspect of consent in the novel that might cause portable outrage that could be used to exemplify problematic human/animal discourse is sexual consent. In terms of sexual consent, the Oankali reject vocally expressed dissent because, as Nikanj explains to Joseph after having forcefully seduced him: “Your body said one thing. Your words said another” (*Dawn* 190). This is obviously problematic to readers of our contemporary society not only because it is dealing with interspecies sexual relationships, but also because of its connection with implied consent rape defenses. The Oankali, though taking pride in being non-violent and respecting of life over all, uses other means of domination and extortion such as labeling humans as inherently self-destructive beings that are unable to survive without Oankali intervention, or drugging them into submission – discourse that is familiar and frequent in relation to human manipulation of nonhuman animals or animalization of a human Other.

“Animals get treated like this,” Lilith tells Paul when she meets him, “Put a stallion and a mare together until they mate, then send them back to their owners. What do they care? They’re just animals!”(93). She is making the connection between the Oankali treatment of humans to that of current breeding practices of nonhuman animals both for companionship, science, and production. This comparison to human/animal relationships is evident also in the heterosexual pairing of the Awakened humans. Nikanj reveals to Lilith how her partner, Joseph, was strategically chosen for her with the goal of having them mate: “I examined memory records of thousands of males. This one might have been taught to parent a group himself, but when I showed other ooloi the match, they agreed that you should be together” (165). When Lilith, less outraged this time asks disbelievingly: “You ... You chose him for me?”, Nikanj answers: “I offered you to one another. You did your own choosing” (165), not convincingly separating the intention of her meeting with Paul from that with Joseph. Here the outrage directed at the Oankali treatment of the humans might easily be redirected to that of human breeding of nonhuman animals, disrupted by the fact that Lilith, in her outrage, expresses no issue with “real” animals being treated this way, leading to the perpetuation of anthropocentric discourse that *humans* should not be treated like animals.

In *When Species Meet* Haraway discusses practices of breeding at length, both in connection with companion animals and Species Survival Plans (SSPs), which can be useful

in understanding the possible transfer of outrage by the perpetuation of such speciesist discourse. The perils of breeding for the “greater good” and the survival of a species, as the Oankali assume they are doing, is according to Haraway that “an SSP ... is not operating with adaptional criteria of selection; the point of an SSP is to preserve diversity as such as a banked reservoir. This preservation could have doleful consequences several generations later” (148). When the assumption is made by Lilith that the Oankali are not fit to take these risks and breed humans, her perpetuation of the discourse when applied to other animals can be seen as problematic also. Furthermore, the idea that pure-breeding of companion animals could be considered “an abuse, an abomination, the embodiment of animalizing racist eugenics” (Haraway, *WSM* 96) attest to the interconnectedness of speciesist and other, interhuman and oppressive discourse, such as racism.

The Oankali also frequently coerce sexual consent in humans by the use of both emotional and chemical manipulation. Details of the chemical manipulation used by the Ooloi to seduce humans is not revealed explicitly until we follow the first construct Ooloi, Jodahas, in the third *Xenogenesis* novel, *Imago*, but it is still very much present implicitly in *Dawn*. Lilith, who is conflicted throughout the novel with her desire to survive and desire to resist, can eventually not “go on hating” her ooloi, even when he has broken his promise of letting her return to earth and forcefully impregnated her (*Dawn* 244). The fact that even someone so intellectually opposed to the Oankali-human trade cannot emotionally resist mating with an Oankali, also bears witness to ooloi manipulation at work. Lilith contemplates her strange reaction to the ooloi after having seen it seduce (/rape) Joseph for the first time: “She stared at it for a moment longer wondering how she had lost her horror of such a being. /Then she lay down, perversely eager for what it could give her” (191). As can be seen from Lilith’s changing attitudes, being forcefully entered into a sexual relationship once is all it takes for the humans to lose their real agency to give consent. After, only emotional manipulation is necessary for the ooloi to fend off conflicting feelings within their human mates.

After having broken its promise of letting Lilith return to Earth, in response to Lilith’s argument that “the human species deserves at least a clean death”, Nikanj executes a very personal and emotional attack by asking: “Is it an unclean thing that we want Lilith? ... Is it an unclean thing that I have made you pregnant?” (245) The response provided by Nikanj here is in line with the one discussed in Helford’s essay on “Bloodchild”, a short story where Butler writes about interspecies sexual relationships and male pregnancy, where she discusses the similarly “manipulative remark” made by T’Gatoi, another alien impregnator,

when Gan, her mate, confronts her with the coercive nature of their relationship (268). In “Bloodchild”, as in *Dawn*, there is a parallel drawn between the human characters in the story and the treatment of animals in terms of sexual domination and allusions to a culture of breeding. The lack of real consent and agency works as a disruptive force in the construction of this binary, as it is apparent that these relationships are mutually dependent in a way that Donna Haraway would classify as that “which gives the lie to the autonomy of the self” (82). This, of course, ties in with the aspect of political consent as well, and can be further examined with help from Helford’s analysis of the human/alien relationships in Butler’s work:

[Alien] reliance on humans for breeding, paternalistic control and manipulation of human destiny, lack of freedom of movement for humans outside of the Preserve - all of these determinants of life for human and [alien] can be read as reencodings of elements of both master-slave and human-animal relations. (269)

In “Bloodchild”, Helford makes the metaphorical connection between humans and animals through an analysis of the human tendency of breeding domesticated animals. Again, this is a connection that could be made and explored in *Dawn*, as Lilith has sometimes referred to herself as Nikanj’s “pet” (55) and, as I have shown above, compared herself to certain breeding animals (a “mare” (93) or “nearly extinct animal” (58)). The master-slave relation is one that is explored more frequently in Butler’s writing, and Helford’s connection of the two here also speaks to my argument of portable outrage and advocacy.

Marc Steinberg makes an interesting analysis of the description of animal-like ownership of slaves (and women) in “Inverting History in Octavia Butler’s Postmodern Slave Narrative”. Steinberg writes about Butler’s *Kindred*, which is set in the past, but his argument about the discourse of ownership stretches into the present and also, one could argue: the future in which *Dawn* is set. *Kindred* is about an African American woman, Dana, who finds herself shuttled back and forth between her 1976 California home and a pre-civil war Maryland plantation. Steinberg argues that Butler “critique[s] the notion that historical and psychological slavery can be overcome” (467) by showing how the discourse of the past is still at work in the present. A similar theme might be traced in *Dawn* with its discourse of breeding and ownership still at work in the imagined future. “Part of Dana’s power struggle with slavery,” Steinberg writes, “is coming to an awareness of the ways in which she might be considered and object of possession both in the past and in the present” (469). The outrage Lilith experiences when she discovers that we have yet to overcome such practices in the

future is defensible, but disrupted by reinforced essential discourse that can further be connected with speciesism.

To return to Helford's argument, then, the alien reliance on humans, like the master's reliance on his slaves, reencodes human/animal relations because it too demonstrates "the degree to which intelligence (and the value of that intelligence) is determined by those in power" (Helford 269-270). Though the Oankali need the humans to ensure their survival, it is them that assume control and use their power to manipulate the human destiny by attaching their ships, who will leave the Earth "less than the corpse of a world" (*Adulthood Rites* 119) and uninhabitable for remaining humans. The Oankali grant the humans a status of intellectual beings, but still argue that they cannot know like the Oankali know how fatal their older and more primitive hierarchical quality will be to them, ironically organizing themselves above humans in terms of intellect while condemning hierarchical behavior. This contradiction within the storyworld is another that unfortunately seems to reinforce speciesist discourse that assumes a "natural" superiority of one species over another as much as it can be seen to reinforce racist or sexist discourse, and the outrage can as a result be extended to advocate for both humans and animals.

Like Gan in "Bloodchild" Lilith also expresses the humans' resentment of being treated "like animals" by the Oankali, yet the "[a]wareness of their people's status as (metaphoric) animals causes no change in ... humans' problematic treatment of the animals under their control" (Helford 270). The human perpetuation of the "pecking order" by continuing their discourse of the human/animal binary as an actuality while condemning the treatment they receive from the Oankali is interesting, and one that this chapter has gestured towards throughout as the disrupting factor in my theory of portable outrage. The original outrage in the novel is, as has been shown, concerned with the Oankali treatment of humans, as it can be seen to mirror commonly criticized practices connected to racism and/or sexism. However, though the humans in *Dawn* are clearly uncomfortable with being submitted to dominance as part of a hierarchical power system themselves, they still perpetuate the same speciesist discourse in other areas. This includes notions of remaining pure (wanting to have purely human children) and "staying human" (178) by not reverting to "animalistic" tendencies such as violence and rape (as if "real" animals ever raped each other). This (il)logical disruption is what I argue makes an opportunity for the relocated outrage, which may then be aimed at the human treatment of nonhuman animals. Perpetuating speciesist discourse relies on our support of the hierarchical thinking justified by the Darwinian struggle to survive, which implies that "might is right" – thinking that is, at least superficially,

challenged in the novel. When the novel fails to challenge this thinking also in areas where humans are (or consider themselves) superior, the seemingly posthuman novel reads surprisingly anthropocentric.

What will be considered here concerning behavioral consent and agency will be the aspect of meat-eating and veganism in the novel. To Lilith, the Oankali has “made it clear they would not kill animals for her nor allow her to kill them while she lived with them” (*Dawn* 88), and though she ends up living a vegan life with the Oankali, many of the humans do not. As the group of awakened humans is brought to Earth, Nancy Jesser comments that the human desire for blood “is manifested in the story by their rejection of the meatless diet as their first act of free human will” (44). Eating meat is not necessary for the humans, as sufficient nutrients can be found in the construct plants or procured by the Oankali ships and cities, yet some of the humans continue hunting and eating animals. This can, as both Jesser and the Oankali suggest, be seen as a manifestation of the human’s supposedly “hierarchical nature” and need to establish and demonstrate self-sufficiency and power after having been occupied by the Oankali. However, I want to suggest that it can also be seen as a way of reclaiming agency in the Oankali/human relationship, as it is learned in *Imago* that the ooloi will not sleep with a human that has consumed animal products until they have been digested. This affects the humans too, who “perversely” crave what the Ooloi can give them, but it provides them with an opportunity to challenge the power structure where the Ooloi would otherwise force themselves on people who feels conflicted about their attraction to them.

The representation of killing to satisfy a bloodlust or need to dominate complicates the boundaries of what it means to be human because it contradicts the way humans in the novel feel about being dominated by the Oankali, as well as it also recognizes the problematic (bloodthirsty and violent) animal within the human. Meanwhile, “spoiling” one’s own meat might be seen as a way for the characters in Butler’s story to reclaim agency that is otherwise lost to them in the new system. This is comparable to the way some have argued distressed slaughter animals provide meat of lower quality than content ones, and might implicitly be advocating humane treatment of animals. However, though this human/animal parallel can be found and in the least draw attention (/outrage) to the treatment of nonhuman animals, I suggest that the behavioral contradiction in the novel of perpetuating the “pecking order” is overpowering and problematic in the way it reinforces speciesist discourse. However, the fact that the novel can be seen as essentially anthropocentric does not necessarily take away from its potential for animal advocacy through portable outrage.

4.4 Advocating the Human(e)

It is difficult to decide whether the text ultimately advocates for the human or for the humane, and what the difference between these advocacies really implies for the reading of the novel as anthropocentric or posthuman. However, I will continue to argue in the line of Ursula K. Heise that though the work might initially seem superficially posthuman with its (superficially) consensual interbreeding of species, the perpetuation of speciesist discourse that implies an essential difference between humans and animals (whether it be consciously at work or not) makes the novel read overpoweringly anthropocentric – and I want to suggest that this is also true in its potential for advocacy.

The idea that treating captive, nonhuman animals ethically in the period that leads up to their slaughter (for produce or convenience) justifies the human exploitation and/or manipulation of other species' is one speciesist notion that might be challenged in *Dawn* and the *Xenogenesis* series through portable outrage. In many ways, the Oankali can be seen as treating humans better than what humans are treating nonhuman animals appropriated for human entertainment, food, fashion, and science today. Their treatment of the humans, both of those who choose to stay and trade with the Oankali and those who resist, is what would, in current terms of animal discourse, be considered highly ethical and humane. They are given food, clothing, medical care, and private spaces. They are also only initially contained and refused contact with other living beings and not put to sleep (in terms of animated suspension rather than euthanasia) unless they endanger themselves or others – luxuries that are rarely offered in such plenty to most nonhuman production animals in society today.

Dawn addresses the problems with such a discourse by placing humans in the position of the exploited and/or manipulated animal, and having them react to that treatment with outrage. Lilith's comments on this treatment are, for instance, mostly based in the outrage that humans should not be treated "like animals". However, I have discussed how (and why) the presence of such a human/animal parallel in the text can serve as channels through which that outrage can be relocated to focus on the treatment of "real" animals.

The comparisons further challenge current discourse of human/animal relations because the novel reminds us that we are ourselves animals who would not like or approve of being treated in the manner we have ourselves deemed rightful, ethical, and sometimes even humane. It is not to be taken for granted that this connection leads readers to interpret *Dawn* as a novel advocating animal rights, though I argue that portable outrage makes this sort of analysis possible. The idea of the humane can, much like the storyworld's posthumanism, be

considered a concept that is only superficially satisfactory in terms of species and speciesism. Advocating for the humane might ultimately be seen as equally problematic as advocating for the human because, as Marianne DeKoven and Michael Lundblad have argued, “granting [humans] power of choosing, or failing to choose, to act in a humane fashion towards both other animals and other humans” is, according to arguments of some theoretically informed posthumanists, also part of the essentialist separation between human and animal (7). Cary Wolfe, for instance, exemplifying such an argument by asking: “Is humane advocacy ‘humane’ when it reproduces ‘a certain interpretation of the human subject’ that has itself been the ‘lever’ of violence and exploitation toward our fellow creatures for centuries and in the most ‘developed’ nations on earth?” (“Humane Advocacy and the Humanities” 46). The extent to which the novel can be seen to advocate humane treatment of nonhuman animals, then, is still problematized by its underlying anthropocentrism, but enabled through portable outrage.

The anthropocentric discourse in the text does not mean that the subject of the animal or animal advocacy should be disregarded as a possible theme in the text. The interspecies relationship between the Oankali and humans in the novel has been used, as I have shown, to mirror problematic discourse connected with, for instance, race and gender. The reactions of outrage elicited in readers from this discourse’s representation even in the imagined future might, with the analogy to the animal and the (il)logical disrupting condition of accepting such discourse from one species to another while condemning it between others, be transferred and directed at human’s presumed dominance over other species. Arguably, the novel’s (ironic) depiction of the humane only reinforces this disruption and makes the transportation of outrage more feasible.

I have now argued that the consideration of humane treatment in *Dawn*, though useful in terms of producing portable outrage, is essentially anthropocentric in the way that it relies on the moral and intellectual superiority of the human to decide how nonhuman animals should be treated, and because humans in the novel seem to consider themselves “too good” for such treatment. Referring back to my brief summary of the debate of the distinction between the human and the animal earlier in this chapter, Haraway has further argued that: “nothing really convincingly separates the human from the animal” (“A Cyborg Manifesto” 72), which makes the disruption of the humans’ perpetuation of speciesist discourse in *Dawn* more powerful.

However, Haraway is, as has been shown in the introduction to this thesis, not one to argue for animal liberation, nor the end of humans using nonhuman animals for productive

purposes. “To be in a relation of use to each other,” she writes, “is not in the definition of unfreedom and violation” (*When Species Meet* 74). This is also true, of course, of interhuman relationships. It could, perhaps, be argued that the Oankali/human relationship in Butler’s story is not one characterized by unfreedom and violation. However, in the light of my discussion on consent and agency in the novel, I would say the textual evidence largely works against such a reading. What is shown, through the analogies to slavery and gendered oppression, is that the nature of the Oankali/human relationship is, in fact, one to be condemned. But could it be defended? The justification used in the novel, the “trade argument”, is that the Oankali treatment of the humans serves the “greater good”. To Haraway, the fact that suffering and dying cannot be borne symmetrically does not mean that the practices causing suffering and death should be terminated. Rather, what she suggests this lack of symmetry implies is “that these practices should never leave their practitioners in moral comfort, sure of their righteousness” (*When Species Meet* 75). In other words, suffering and death can, according to Haraway, be justified if the use-value is sufficient, and if the practitioners keep in mind that their reason is not, and never, sufficient. I argue that (portable) outrage in *Dawn* presents a challenge to such an argument rather than conforming to it because of the inconsistency in its application between Oankali/human and human/animal in the text. The humans in the text seem to disproportionately regard their own suffering as more complex and significant than the suffering of other beings, both in the Oankali and other nonhuman animals, which in turn disrupts and presents a possibility to consider human dominance over animals as well as Oankali dominance of humans.

The topic of suffering is one often considered in animal studies, and it is worth considering some other theories of it here as well. Figures within animal studies, such as Peter Singer and Jacques Derrida present an opinion on sentience that might be seen in conflict with Haraway, arguing that sentience should be seen as a basis for rights, rather than mere consideration. (I will not engage here with the theory derived from French philosopher Rene Descartes that animals do not feel pain at all, but rather refer to Singer’s treatment of this subject in *Animal Liberation* (10-15).) On the topic of animal sentience, Singer writes: “[T]here can be no moral justification for regarding the pain (or pleasure) that animals feel as less important than the same amount of pain (or pleasure) felt by humans” (15), taking a utilitarian approach to the subject which also includes a consideration of difference in mental capacity. With this, Singer argues that though the comparisons of suffering of different species is difficult to make precisely, knowledge of animal suffering advocates that measures should be taken to avoid this suffering to maintain their rights and interests. This might be

seen as what Lilith is advocating for the humans in *Dawn*, though ironically and disruptingly not for other, nonhuman animals. Similar to Singer, Derrida states: “The *first* and *decisive* question would rather be to know whether animals *can suffer*” (*The Animal That Therefore I Am* 27, emphasis in original), continuing by stating that animal suffering can not be denied, and suggesting that it is our responsibility and obligation to react to the modern “*unprecedented* proportions of [the] subjection of the animal” (25, emphasis in original) by granting the animal the same rights we grant ourselves (135). The disruption of Lilith’s (and other character’s) inconsistency in applying this ethical framework might, through this connection, transfer the outrage at the unjust human exploitation of other animals as well.

If sentience is not, as Haraway seems to suggest, the main concern of whether or not someone (human or nonhuman) ought to have their rights and interests protected then there would be little reason for outrage in *Dawn*, unless the reason and utility of the relationship was skewed disproportionately. But it cannot be denied that this outrage is present even though the Oankali are (seemingly) in their right to “save” the self-destructive human race. Is it then there because the humans deny the human essentialism the Oankali are enforcing (humans are *essentially* intellectual and hierarchical, and thus they must be contained for their own good)? The humans might attempt to resist essentialism, but this, too, would mean, in line with Singer, that there is no essential difference between the animals they refuse to be “reduced” to and themselves – maintaining the disrupting contradiction in the novel of perpetuating the problematic discourse on other levels (human/animal).

In *Dawn* sentience as a consideration is thematized by the Oankali having little understanding of the suffering they impose on the human species by not allowing them to have human children, for instance. Nor will any Oankali attempt to understand what pain this causes them until the first construct male, Akin, is forced to live among human resisters in the second *Xenogenesis* novel, *Adulthood Rites*. Humane treatment or the trade argument proves insufficient as justifications in the novel. “You don’t understand us as well as you think you do” Lilith tells Kahguyaht, to which he responds: “And you don’t understand us at all” (*Dawn* 111). This acknowledgement of the difficulties of truly understanding another species, even when linguistic communication is possible, may be applied to human/animal relations as well as to Oankali/human ones through the disrupting contidion. Thus, *Dawn* might lead us to question, rather than take for granted, the human assumption that we are entitled to make distinctions between the way humans should accept being treated and the way we should accept treating other sentient beings, such as nonhuman animals, based on whether we *recognize* their suffering or not. There might, as it is in the case of the Oankali

denying humans reproduction, be an array of emotions, needs, and interests that we do not recognize in another species simply because it is not an important part of our own existence, or because they are not expressed in a familiar way. *Earthlings*, a well known animal-rights documentary that relies on advocacy based on sentience, demonstrating how production animals suffer in entertainment, food, clothing, science, and companionship -industries today, comments appropriately on this matter: "In truth, we know very little about how specific animals may feel," says the narrator, "but it's nonsense to say that the animals do not suffer because they have a lower order of intelligence. Pain is pain...and there are other nerves than those of intelligence" (1:18:48). That the Oankali do not recognize human suffering as valid or significant might be paralleled with the way many humans today do not consider animal suffering valid or significant. This passage where Lilith and Kahguyaht acknowledges the impossibility of two species understanding each other fully arguably draws attention to this connection, and provides a passage through which the outrage can be relocated to consider animal advocacy that is based on sentience.

Dawn accesses the experience of suffering from oppression also under humane conditions, illuminating the complexity of individuals and the problematic perpetuation of speciesist discourse. The humans' awareness in the novel of their being treated "like animals" may be used to stress that beings who have the capacity to suffer have a right to "be regarded morally as ends in themselves"(Wolfe, *Rites* 33) rather than receptacles of valuable experiences, whether those beings are human or nonhuman animals, in the same line as the Oankali/human relationship might be used to illuminate problematic discourse concerning gender and race.

4.5 Conclusion

Lilith is outraged by recognizing the treatment she receives as one fit for an animal, and the reader is likely to also recognize the implied parallels to and critique of racism and sexism in the text. This awareness is, however, complicated by the way hierarchy and hierarchical structures are elsewhere reinforced and considered natural in the novel, exemplified for instance by the Oankali consideration of humans as *essentially hierarchical* or Lilith's preconception of men as *naturally violent*. I have shown in the discussion of some of Cary Wolfe's theory in the introduction that critiques of -isms such as sexism and racism can be placed within the larger framework of speciesism (*Rites* 1), and it may be fruitless or at the very least shortsighted to critique these without tackling the overarching structure that allows

for a hierarchical organization of beings. This interconnectedness, I argue, is made clear in *Dawn* by Lilith's insistent comparison between herself and nonhuman animals of pre-war earth, though many critics are more inclined to read the novel in light of race and/or gender theory – theories that, according to Wolfe, remains “locked within an unexamined framework of *speciesism*”(1). But it needs not remain unexamined. Elyce Helford writes that the “[d]enial of the importance of human(e) treatment of animals – and even the fact that humans are animals - in many ways echoes the objectification and minoritization faced by women and people of color” (262), skillfully transitioning discussions of race and gender in Butler's work to one of species. This move coincides with my theory of portable outrage, where outrage produced by the perpetuation of racist, sexist, and speciesist discourse the Onkali subject humans to is relocated to concern humans' presumed dominance over nonhuman animals.

It is important to note that the transition made by Helford is a possibility and not a given, and this is also the case of portable outrage in general. Lilith's recognition of her being treated “like an animal” does not guarantee that readers (or critics) recognize the text as one advocating animal rights or examining species as a theme. The critique of interhuman systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism, that might be clearly seen as present in *Dawn*, seems to demand that humans should not be treated like animals (enforcing anthropocentric discourse), and not necessarily that animals should not continue to be treated as they are. On one hand, the undermined essentialism where “animal instinct” (female tendencies for self-sacrifice, male tendencies for violence) and evolutionary discourse (the fit dominate the unfit, natural hierarchies) works to maintain the category of the animal and reinforcing speciesist discourse. On the other, the outrage of the Oankali treatment of humans might, through the disruption of the ironic reinforcement and an awareness of the parallel made to human treatment of animals and the topic of species in the novel more generally, be relocated to advocate for animals as well. The human perpetuation of the discourse they condemn is disruptive enough, I argue, to make this transfer possible.

To conclusively summarize my argument, *Dawn* is a SF text in which portable outrage can be used to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the otherwise often separated traditions of cultural criticism, where readings of gender and race can be extended to include considerations of species without presuming to take away from (but rather adding to) those readings. My analysis of *Dawn* is intended to argue that issues with which we are already concerned in literary criticism, such as sexism and racism, are part of a greater, interconnected system of oppression that has been extended and applied across species to be

even more prominent and cruel. Furthermore I argue that hierarchical organizations leading to cruel and unjust treatment of others will not end unless we discard the system of thought that allows for such oppression in its entirety though I have shown that some critics, such as Haraway, would disagree. While the novel, in my opinion, reads as ultimately problematic in itself, there is still powerful potential presented in the possibility of transferring originally anthropocentric outrage (directed at racist, sexist, or misplaced “animal” treatment of humans) to animal causes as well, due to the disrupting condition of the contradictory perpetuation of such discourse in the novel.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis I have devised and applied a theory of portable outrage that I hope will be considered useful in highlighting the interconnectedness of animal criticism and other areas of cultural criticism. It was devised inspired by Cary Wolfe's argument that speciesism is the system in which all other cultural -isms are borne, and appropriated inspired by critics such as Donna Haraway and Michael Lundblad, who suggest a more mutually beneficial relationship between species and between cultural theories. I have in my analysis of the realistic fiction, non-fiction, and SF works in this thesis tested out the theory to argue that outrage can be transferred and seen as useful in revealing possibilities for animal advocacy and critiquing speciesism, both when the text reads initially anthropocentric, as is the case in *Fast Food Nation* and *My Year of Meats*, and when it initially seems to advocate for interspecies relationships, as in *Dawn*. Furthermore, I suggest that the theory helps create a better understanding of the interconnectedness of traditional cultural criticisms and animal studies, as in these works the discourse of oppression is shown as being closely connected through anthropocentric or speciesist discourse that animalizes or otherwise seeks to dehumanize the oppressed and suffering Other, whether it be human or nonhuman.

To briefly and more detailed sum up my findings in these three chapters with regard to the narratives of choice I would like to begin with my reading of *My Year of Meats*. I suggested that this realistic fiction novel read initially anthropocentric, but that its proximity to and treatment of the meat industry in combination with its treatment of classism and sexism makes for a productive analysis using portable outrage theory. I argued that the initially anthropocentric concern with the effects of DES use on humans produced an original outrage directed at how humans are damaged by the practice. However, the disrupting condition by violently describing animals for slaughter and (il)logical disruption of the idea that humans can remain separate from or outside of nature, works to relocate the outrage to how animals are reared and slaughtered for their meat. This, I argue, leaves powerful potential for animal advocacy as well as human advocacy.

Similarly, in *Fast Food Nation*, Schlosser concern is essentially anthropocentric, attempting to produce outrage directed at the way in which workers and consumers are exploited in the fast food industry. Here, the disrupting conditions are also the violent scenes narrated by Schlosser, especially considering animalized workers and animals in the slaughterhouse, and the (il)logical disruption of trust in authorities that seems to be

misplaced. The use of animal and speciesist discourse and language throughout the narrative produces a possibility for the outrage to be relocated towards the treatment and discourse that concerns the “real” animals, which are located at the bottom of the chain and replicated throughout the system.

Finally, I have looked at *Dawn* without isolating it from the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, arguing that the story seems initially anti-speciesist, because it narrates an evolutionary (progressive) step for humans that entails interbreeding with an alien species, the Oankali. In this story the outrage is produced predominantly by the main character, Lilith, who directs it at the treatment the humans receive from the Oankali. The disrupting condition in this SF novel is the contradicting perpetuation of speciesist discourse, both by Lilith and in the storyworld as a whole, which might lead the analysis to redirect the outrage at speciesist treatment more generally, including the human presumed superiority over nonhuman animals.

I have tried to be careful in my analysis not to draw away from the importance of the other critiques that may be present or found in the text, as it is my argument that oppressive discourse can be more fully understood and easily prevented when they are considered holistically and not in an isolationist manner. Through this work, though I have found that speciesist discourse is often replicated throughout other oppressive discourse, I have not been able to decide, as Cary Wolfe suggests, that speciesist discourse is the foundation of all other oppressive and exploitative discourse. However, the repeated pattern of how such oppressive and exploitative behavior is justified, which often do play on animal/ speciesist discourse, indicates that the connection is definitely present if not decisive and should thusly doubtlessly be included in the scope of consideration and criticism. Furthermore, I have attempted to refrain from making anthropocentric assumptions both in my language, analysis, and conclusions. However, this has, as I am a contemporary to this dominant discourse, at times been difficult. I realize, for instance, that by referring to “humans”, “nonhuman” and “animals” throughout, I in some sense participate in and reinforce the discourse I am trying to critique, but have found it difficult to express myself clearly without falling back on such essentialist language.

Lastly, I hope that the texts I have chosen convincingly make my argument without suggesting that they are the only text with which my argument and theory would work. In the introduction I indicated other works and genres that I would consider interesting to examine using portable outrage, and attempting to apply the theory in such places would be a logical next step. If the theory might be considered useful also in other examinations of interspecies

narratives that are traditionally read and interpreted with an anthropocentric focus, I would boldly suggest that the need for consideration of animal advocacy within cultural criticism and the productiveness of animal studies' response to cultural politics of animality and "the animal", as suggested by Michael Lundblad and Marianne DeKoven, would be more firmly situated.

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