



**TURNING THE TABLES: REIMAGINING IDEOLOGIES
AND DISCOURSE OF MEAT AND NONHUMAN OTHERS
FOR CLIMATE ACTIVISM IN ATWOOD'S
MADDADDAM TRILOGY AND
THE WACHOWSKIS' *THE MATRIX***

BY

RATTANASIRI KITTIKONGNAPANG

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
LITERATURE AND COMPARATIVE STUDIES
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Thesis Title	TURNING THE TABLES: REIMAGINING IDEOLOGIES AND DISCOURSE OF MEAT AND NONHUMAN OTHERS FOR CLIMATE ACTIVISM IN ATWOOD'S <i>MADDADDAM</i> TRILOGY AND THE WACHOWSKIS' <i>THE MATRIX</i>
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ABSTRACT

Factory farming is not only the top contributor to global warming, it is the greatest cause of environmental and biodiversity destruction. To meet Paris Agreement climate goals of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, a shift in meat and dairy production and consumption must be on the table but this dietary change is rarely discussed in climate conversations and in our daily conversations at the table. Science fiction, as this thesis explores, is an ideal vehicle to expose the hidden mechanisms of the dominant political system—meat-eating dominant culture—that contributes to social and ecological oppression. Approaching fictional and philosophical devices in literature from a vegan perspective allows us to imagine better possibilities of food and agriculture and relations of animals beyond the existing anthropocentric ideology of meat eating that causes environmental destruction. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse ideological processes and discourse of meat, using a veganism lens within The Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) and Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, to change our conceptions to underline and advocate for systemic change that challenges the political, economic, and social

structure of society with the goal of reducing and ending animal exploitation as part of solving the climate emergency.

The Matrix's approach to ideology and illusion, under veganism lens, also allows us to uncover nonhuman animal ideologies represented in other texts and in real life. While Atwood's central focus in the MaddAddam trilogy is about questioning ethical values and moral norms of animal-eating culture through the use of power relations in discourse. Jean Baudrillard's simulacra concepts, among other scholars including Carol J. Adams and her concept of the absent referent, can enable us to explore the ways in which the societal dynamics or ideologies of meat are influenced and controlled by the meat industry. While some writers imagine the changes in the future societies and humanity itself, the texts of Wachowskis and Atwood take another step further in a posthuman stance focus on human–nonhuman entanglements into the social constructions that shape the thoughts of humans—ones that both pose an apocalyptic threat to humanity and ones that can save us. Adapting the methods of discourse studies in order to combine perspective from posthumanism and veganism with a particular focus on human–nonhuman relationships can push readers to consider how discourse beyond human boundaries acknowledges nonhuman subjectivity as actors in their own right to form new relationships with nonhuman species who we share the planet with, and this can bring us better opportunities to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all beings under climate catastrophe.

In *The Matrix* under the veganism lens, animal eating ideology and illusion are connected. Baudrillard expressively links his concept of people's detachment from the origin of food or the reality of the meat industry through mass production, media and culture. The meat of animals has become just a symbolic of fragmented representation—a hyperreal simulation of the real. Baudrillard's theory on consumption as a form of human's relationship to the society and the world pervades the MaddAddam trilogy and this broken relationship has destroyed the foundations of human beings as the trilogy reveals. Rethinking the relationship between human beings and nonhuman others in both *The Matrix* and Atwood's *MaddAddam trilogy* enables us to explore the question of ethics in anthropocentrism and address ourselves from a non-anthropocentric perspective and carefully interrogate humanity's ethics. In

order to disempower the dominant animal-eating culture, Atwood's literary work is also an act of activism by reimagining the ideology and discourse in the narrative to destabilise and reset ideology and discourse for more ethical consumerism, a better food system for a livable future of climate resilience for all lives, not just human beings.

Keywords: science fiction, veganism, posthumanism, ecofeminism, anthropocene, discourse, nonhuman animals, illusion, simulacra, climate crisis, activism



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This small piece of work is dedicated to all livestock animals under the hands of the meat industry: 80 billion animals each year or hundreds of millions each day, and among them are 140,000 slaughtered chickens for each minute. The industrialisation of livestock production is the single biggest driver of deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate destruction that only benefits a handful of agribusiness and big meat companies globally. It is critical for the big meat corporations to be held accountable for their continued climate crime.

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Rattanasiri Kittikongnapang

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INTRODUCTION

Industrial animal agriculture is one of the less-debated causes of the climate crisis. Food production accounts for a quarter of the global greenhouse gas emissions and meat and dairy are mostly responsible. Globally, over 90 percent of meat comes from factory farms (Anthis & Anthis, 2019). This means if we don't purchase meat directly from small-scale farmers, it is almost certain that the meat we eat is a product of factory farming and we are more or less accountable for global warming. Despite animal welfare controversies and a growing scientific consensus that industrial meat production must be massively reduced globally as part of a comprehensive climate strategy, a dietary shift to food production that is more friendly to animals and our planet somehow gets sidelined in climate conversations and in our daily conversations at the table. Isn't it strange how industrial meat production maintains their everyday legitimacy amongst consumers despite these facts? Adopting a meatless diet is probably the easiest and biggest way an individual can do to reduce impact on the planet. But why are most people not ready to accept veganism as the solution? This thesis is an attempt to establish vegan thinking in the realm of speculative science fiction to aid us in investigating and unmasking the ideological foundation of our current dominant dietary culture that normalises animal eating and marginalises veganism/vegetarianism only because it is perceived as the way things should be. My aim is to exhibit how veganism should be considered to question cultural and ethical choices of humans which have become a more pressing matter in the times of climate crisis. There are already examples of vegan and human-animal studies in literary theory and criticism that examine ideas about species and humans' relationships with animals. Science fiction, I argue, is an ideal vehicle to expose the hidden mechanisms of the dominant political system—meat-eating dominant culture—that contributes to social and ecological oppression. In doing so, the inconvenient truth about our consumption ideology can be revealed and perhaps science fiction's potential, together with veganism, can be a powerful approach to change the heart and the mind to combat climate emergency. The immediate task, then, is to see the world with different eyes from our own, and this is how science

fiction and veganism can take us on a journey to, hopefully, change the world one bite at a time.

1.1 Veganism for Literary Analysis for the Climate Emergency

The dominant practice of meat consumption has a strong supporting ideological basis, while vegetarians or vegans are seen as a group of an extreme political position. Globally, it is necessary to make the issue of meat reduction political to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. When I use veganism, my intention is not about calling everyone to turn vegan or vegetarian but veganism's ethics offer challenges to the existing animal-eating dominant world that comes with ideology and discourse constructed to justify exploitation of nonhuman others. For most vegans, what it means to be a vegan is to match actions with values and their actions aim for ethical and environmental consequences of our treatment of animals beyond the idea of compassion. The term "vegan" was coined in 1944 and currently The Vegan Society defines veganism as:

A philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.(The Vegan Society, n.d.)

It can be said that veganism is the foundation of an animal ethic that rejects the commodity status of nonhuman animals, for the sake of animals, humans and the environment. The Vegan Society further suggests that one thing all vegans have in common is a plant-based diet avoiding all animal products. Not only is this an ready-made message for the climate emergency, the idea of animal subjectivity is useful for an effective action on climate goals to change the dominant ideologies that are obstacles to reducing meat consumption and production. The Vegan society's conception of ethics reminds me, moreover, of "One Health" which is currently the

approach joined forced by World Health Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organisation for Animal Health encouraging people, especially the policy makers, to acknowledge the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Similarly, veganism has for so long understood the deep intertwined cause-and-effect relationship between what we eat and its cost to the earth. To stop the profound climate impacts of industrialised animal agriculture without failure, it can be claimed that there is no climate justice without animal justice. Concern for animal injustice for climate activism has never been greater and we will see in the texts investigated here in the thesis. For years, there has already been a debate concerning eating plant-based as a single biggest way to combat devastating impacts of the climate crisis (Abrams, 2019). Veganism, as I will argue throughout this thesis, should be applied to environmental consciousness and to literary criticism to overcome anthropocentric bias. If the literary field joins the climate debate committedly, I believe that literature has the power to shake and transform the core of meat ideology and the hearts of people, and to endorse the outcome of a better future for human beings and fellow nonhuman animals.

1.2 About *The Matrix* and Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski's *The Matrix* (1999) applies hacking and virtual reality to illustrate the future of humanity under the enslavement by the machine. The film introduces the computer hacker Neo (Keanu Reeves) who receives a message from Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) to "Follow the white rabbit" and starts his journey to be awakened from the Matrix, a virtual world in which the reality was modified by computer simulation to keep humans under control, and learn how deep the rabbit hole really goes. In *The Matrix*, Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) the leader of the rebels reveals to Neo about the imprisonment of human condition and the world we perceive is "a prison for your mind" where he was born into physical and mental enslavement in which the human race is farmed to feed the race of artificial intelligence as their energy source. This is the consequence after humans destroying the atmosphere during the war against the machines, just to cut the

machines from their power source, the solar energy, by blocking the sun. Unfortunately, the machines rationally figure out another power source within the body system of humans so they grow billions of people—human agriculture—in a vast field of eggs as far as the eyes can see. To keep them out of trouble, the mind of humanity is enslaved by an illusion created by the machine called the Matrix and most of them do not even realise that they have been living in an illusion, and keeping their hearts beating for another day until the end of their lives just to serve the purpose of the race of the machines that we do not know about their existence. If this sounds strikingly familiar, life in the Matrix is a reversed situation that the human race enforces on the nonhuman race and calls the system the meat industry to serve human's so-called culture of animal eating. However, Morpheus believes that Neo is "The One" who will lead humanity to freedom and end the enslavement of humans. The machine is represented and materialised in a form of human government agents—sentient computer programmes to keep humans entrapped. As when Neo becomes The One, he is finally able to see the entire artificial world created in green lines of codes. The Agents in the Matrix who have been trying to stop him become powerless. *The Matrix* ends with Neo talking on a phone warning that he's going to expose the truth of the simulation of this world.

In the same way that *The Matrix* portrays the worst imagined dystopia of Anthropocene and the reversed fate of human agriculture, Atwood's *MaddAddam* (2013) concludes the trilogy following its previous two novels, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of The Flood* (2009), bearing witness to the pre- and post-apocalypse worlds where a scientist known as Glenn or Crake creates a virus to wipe out all the human race and replaces it with a better version of humans in a range of improvements that includes their being vegan, or rather having no instinct to consume other animals. The genetically engineered species look almost like humans but they are herbivores, insect-repellent and can communicate with nonhuman animals — all the functions that Crake believes humans should be to prevent the degradation of the planet. Proceeding *The Year of The Flood*, *MaddAddam* prompts several questions of how to reconsider the ethics of humanity for a livable planet among nonhuman others. During the pre-apocalypse in *The Year Of The Flood*, the God's Gardeners, a group of eco-conscious people who practise an environmental-based religion and spirituality

hides themselves away from corporate capitalism, where Toby the protagonist learns from their teachings to outlast the plague. And we learn in *MaddAddam* that it is the God's Gardeners' wisdom that helps Toby, other human survivors and the Crakers to live in the post apocalyptic world with other nonhuman beings. The MaddAddam trilogy ultimately drives readers through an environmental lens, of how humans deal with the consequences of manipulating and exploiting other species and the planet beyond its limit, to the vegan posthumanist lens in which Atwood expands the existing human-based ethics to find the balance of our place among other nonhuman beings.

The Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) can be viewed as many things to many people, critics and readers alike. What is the Matrix? This is the question that keeps all of us asking for over the past two decades. While the movie gained so much notice for its action packed scenes, the film, especially the first one in the trilogy has also been famously analysed on the deep philosophical concepts. The most obvious question that the film raises is about reality and illusion and this is the inspiration from Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* and explicitly quotes the infamous line from the book "the desert of the real" to express a concern on how the manner in which reality is constructed. However, this scepticism of reality and how the world around us can be made up from illusions can be useful to explore the ideology of meat and animal agriculture—the area in *The Matrix* that critics have never scholarly noticed. Therefore, a more pressing question to ask is what constitutes the ideology of meat that is powerful enough to blind us humans in life of a simulated reality without even knowing it?

There are parallels to literary representations of simulacra in the meat ideology in the MaddAddam series and I believe that it is Atwood's intention to use these representations within the genre of science fiction to explore the relation of false ideology of meat consumption and production to the current climate crisis. Margaret Atwood, best known for being a feminist author, nowadays has been recognised for her environmentalism and activism by her literary works and from how she has spoken on the issues regarding the climate crisis. In one of Atwood's speech on literature and environment over a decade ago, Atwood strongly stresses the necessity of literature to talk about the climate impacts and our actions we can take:

We have recently been made very conscious of the many threats to “the environment” – threats that may range from melting glaciers and sea ice, to rising global temperatures and the more extreme weather that results from these temperatures, to pollution of the air and water, to the chemicals we are unwittingly putting into our children’s mouths through industrial food, to the extinction of many plant and animal species, to the failing harvests on land and the dwindling fish stocks in the ocean – and even to the higher risk of plagues and illnesses that such environmental changes will almost certainly precipitate. All of these subjects can be placed into the basket called “the environment,” and I suppose that anything written about them might be termed “literature.” [...] That is one function of stories: to tell us about our choices, about the actions we might take. (Atwood, 2022)

This is why therefore the thesis insists that it is Atwood’s intention to combine her environmental advocacy in her novels—the MaddAddam trilogy is one of them to address the climate crisis, caused by capitalism and consumerism of nonhuman animals, through the climate apocalyptic dystopian world. These are the areas that will be explored in the thesis’s following chapters.

1.3 Understanding Meat Ideology through *The Matrix*

The Matrix is often used as a great framework for exposing ideologies in certain beliefs that imprison us. One thing we can learn from *The Matrix* about fiction and reality is that most people are not ready to be unplugged. In the movie, Morpheus is holding out two pills in front of Neo, also in front of us, offering the choices whether to continue living in a fictional world, or the truth. Animal advocates often wonder why it is acceptable for human cultures to exploit and eat certain kinds of animals, while most people may view veganism as ideological extremism and ignore the morality of animal abuse and ecological destruction contributed by the meat industry. It is easier for people in the broken food system to simply overlook the truth hidden behind the complex system of culture, industry’s propaganda, and

anthropocentrism to form the dominant belief of human's society that eating meat is natural and necessary for survival. Truth is more difficult to swallow. Consider Cypher's decision to deny the revealed truth of the Matrix and return to the make-believe world. This is nicely and straightforwardly illustrated in the scene in which Cypher, enjoying a succulent cut of beef, says: "I know this steak doesn't exist. I know that when I put it in my mouth, the Matrix is telling my brain that it is juicy and delicious. After nine years, do you know what I realise? Ignorance is bliss" (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). Ideology is a system of ideas. As Terry Eagleton puts it in *Ideology: An Introduction*, some definitions of ideology include "ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power" and "socially necessary illusion" (Eagleton, 1991, p.1). Cypher's desire for steak is more than just a dining pleasure. By comparing to the food in *The Matrix* that is seen as such unappetising gruel that one member describes it as a bowl of snot, the ideology of food and what humans perceive of it can be carefully read, through the lens of veganism, to consider how fiction and perception can be the ingredients of ideology of meat-eating culture created by the meat producer.

Looking at the scene again from a vegan perspective, it would mean that Cypher is well aware that the juiciness and the deliciousness of the steak are brought to him by the animal's life and all the process of factory farming that Morpheus and the team know but still left as secret to the majority of people. However, Cypher wants to enjoy the pleasure without guilt. Within the meat industry's realm of dominant culture, the story behind the piece of meat is hidden. Meat carries many meanings in our culture and meat eating significantly signals the primary oppression of animals, and the violence of dominant power encoded in the ideology of meat. *The Matrix* deals with the inconvenient fact, in terms of eating animals, that taking the fiction in the blue pill would be an easier choice than waking up to the truth of how oppressive and destructive human's meat-eating culture currently is to nonhuman others and the climate. Approaching fictional and philosophical devices in literature from a vegan perspective allows us to imagine better possibilities of food and agriculture and relations of animals beyond the existing anthropocentric ideology of meat eating that causes environmental destruction. That is also a widely held claim among theorists such as Elisabeth de Fontenay, Donna Haraway, and Jacques Derrida

who suggest readers to “reconsider our own agency and that of other animals within the network of relations that we, as individuals, form with one another” (Khandker, 2014, p.131). If literature in general, and science fiction in particular, are to offer us something against the oppression of nonhuman animals to shift our mind and our behaviour, veganism, as addition to environmentalism, is thus a critical tool to resist anthropocentrism that causes a large scale of climate crisis.

Like Morpheus, animal advocacy and other social justice movements confront us with an inconvenient truth and ask us to be “the One” who stands up and fights the oppression of nonhuman others. “You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). The truth within the red pill in terms of animal-eating cultures, that enslaves the minds of consumers and oppresses nonhuman animals, has complex roots that are traceable back into religions, social norms and long-lasting effects of Big Meat’s propaganda which promotes the worldview to make those animal-eating cultures into popular cultures. Vegan scholars in literature have already considered the problem of the meat industry and how it influences consumers like us. The meat industry enchants consumers with ready-to-eat products while isolating production facilities in remote areas, prohibiting outsiders to witness any oppression. The government’s funds and policies support the increase of meat production for profits. The mass media further normalises meat-eating culture by infrequently spreading the meat’s propaganda and ideology. This only reinforces public indifference and hides the truth behind the meat production. The result may be that consumers can easily avoid all those meat-related controversial stories because all the powerful meat industry, media and government together shape ideologies for more than five decades (Williams, 2000). It is difficult to see how what seems to be our cultures and everyday habits can harm nonhuman animals, the planet and ourselves. Science fiction is a particularly productive site for exercising and exposing ideological systems of long-established cultural practices that we all believe in and blind us to the truth. With a vegan perspective to challenge us to liberate ourselves from the meat-eating culture, I want to suggest that *The Matrix*’s approach to ideology will also allow us to uncover nonhuman animal ideologies represented in other texts

and in real life. In *Science Fiction Criticism*, Rob Latham makes an optimistic argument for the political potential of science fiction that slightly diverges with author Joanna Russ and John B. Michel's claim that science fiction has the resources to project alternative realities. Latham argues that science fiction never escapes the political unconscious that limit its ability to truly imagine the future, according to Fredric Jameson, but this instead equips science fiction with a serious political function to defamiliarise present-day reality, making this genre "one of the most powerful agencies for the critical demystification of social ideologies in modern popular culture" (Latham, 2017, p.180). By its capacity to project alternative realities and its political function, I argue that science fiction I have selected here should be read as expressing a political agenda as a form of vegan activism in response to meat ideology and nonhuman animal oppression that is crucial in addressing the climate emergency. And this is one of the thesis's goals. As people realise, *The Matrix* is interested in questioning existing ideologies and how to break away from them. Scholars who study *The Matrix* often say that "there is no ultimate reality, just the infinite series of virtual realities mirroring themselves in each other, is no less ideological" (Zizek & Irwin (ed.), 2002, p.245). Like Neo, at first we do not see the problem of eating animals because our mind is blinded by popular culture, created by the powerful machine, and we want to believe. Or like Cypher, even though our mind is aware, we still do not want to overcome denial to face difficult truths because ignorance is easier and acceptable in the normalised meat-eating world's narrative (or the Matrix). But in order to shift the power dynamic to alter the animal-eating system, the world needs a counter narrative like Morpheus' one, to awaken people from the manipulation and minimise the climate impacts of food production by rewriting the discourse of dietary stance to take the lives of nonhuman others more seriously and respectfully.

To discuss veganism as a powerful ideology countering meat culture that worsens climate crisis, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate how veganism discourse in science fiction presents the possibilities that include nonhuman animals as sentient subjects with consciousness; more than a food produced by the meat industry. By revisiting *The Matrix*, I therefore hope this thesis can peel away social and cultural conventions of meat ideology in order to explore how the oppressive relationship and

dualism of domination of humanity/animality and stereotyping through dualism occurs with both women and animals within humans' object of consumption. In this, the thesis will be like how Morpheus' attempt to create a new narrative breaks away from the dominant narrative of animal oppression; science fiction under veganism also explores imagined possibilities of how today's society can be different if we change the discourse that oppresses animals to a more inclusive one. I find that one of the most powerful samples lies in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. Atwood's story applies methods of science fiction imaginatively to identify and resist the oppression of meat-eating discourse within the accepted dominant exploitative ideology. In Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad's "Veganism, ecoethics, and climate change in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy," she argues that veganism is more than refusing to consume animals but veganism and environmentalism go hand in hand. I intend to explore further here, as she strongly puts it: "veganism functions both as an ideology through which to criticize the current anti-environmental reality and as a tool through which environmentalism can be exercised" (Prorokova-Konrad, 2020, p.79). Owing to fighting the man-made impact on our planet, veganism is deeply entwined with environmentalism. But I argue not only does veganism encourage more than animal welfare in factory farming, it is also the only thing that can change human-animal relationship and can call for system-level change. More than other literary genres, veganism in science fiction confronts great challenges about environmental issues and relentlessly compels us with practical solutions. To a degree, the great challenge still less debated in literary criticism that I want to raise here is the existing meat-eating dominant culture and constructed discourse that reinforces never-ending animal oppression in our daily lives and a worsening situation for the Earth's climate.

Meat production is one of the most environmentally damaging systems in the world, yet most people still have no clue or are reluctant to switch their diet. I would like to debate further that meat consumption has complex social structural factors that fuel environmental issues, intertwined with other social oppression issues. Gender oppression is one of them. Eating is not only a biological process but a social one. Meat is socially constructed as a commodity; so the political construction around meat and the body reflects power relations within human societies. How is meat related to not just nonhuman animal oppression, but also gender oppression? To

tackle this question, it is useful first to outline the various ways in which issues of animal exploitation intersect with animalisation and sexualisation of both women and nonhuman others. Let's follow the method of how Morpheus takes Neo down to the complex rabbit hole of *The Matrix* to peel all the layers to the root of the problem.

1.4 “I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes”: The problems of the global meat industry

I know that you're afraid. [...] You're afraid of change. I don't know the future. I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it's going to begin. [...] I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999)

The direct political debate is this: what Neo says to the audience of *The Matrix* at the end of the film after he learns about the reality of the world is someone powerful possibly does not want the world to learn about. But what kind of reality? To show you why I am conducting this research, here is the background of the meat industry and why Atwood implies ethical vegetarianism by ascribing concerns of animal eating in her trilogy. Production of food from animals has accelerated during the last 100 years, in response to growing demand, making profits on the cost of the environment, climate and billions of lives of animals annually. The global meat industry is worth more than one trillion dollars in the United States alone (GlobalData, 2020) and considered as a powerful political force, both in the legislative and the regulatory arena in many countries, including Thailand. In “Meat Makes People Powerful: A Global History of the Modern Era”, Wilson J. Warren states the emergence of the meat industry supported by governments since the late nineteenth century: “governments in the West and many non-Western countries established regulatory practices that encouraged meat production and consumption” (Warren, 2018). Laura Wright also raises the influence of the meat industry on the government's policy behind the United States' nutrition recommendations, saying that claims of “vegan healthfulness have been met less with the public ridicule (as outright

absurdity) of earlier eras, but rather condemnation by capitalist special interest groups, as in their discussion of the meat and dairy industries' quashing revisions to the FDA's "food pyramid" that would have diminished their place in the diagram" (Wright, 2021, p.33). Big meat and dairy is even more powerful beyond their nation. In the recent The COP28 Climate Summit in Dubai, lobbyists or representatives from industrial agriculture companies turned out as part of country delegations, with granted access to diplomatic negotiations, with "three times as many delegates representing the meat and dairy industry as last year" (Sherrington et al., 2023), according to The Guardian's report. At all costs, ideologies about food are particularly important to unmask because they are shaped by culture, education, and advertising. And those factors are significantly under the influence of the meat industry, empowered by the government.

The scientific fact and data about meat production as follows are significant to establish the case for the climate catastrophe caused by the meat industry. Our global, profit-driven, meat-centred food system is making us and our planet sick. The principal driver of zoonotic diseases, such as the Covid-19, Sars, Mers and Zika, which spread from animals to humans is industrial animal agriculture, and scientists have been stating this fact (Dutkiewicz, Taylor, Vettese, 2020). The food industry turns out to be the biggest contributor to the climate and environmental crisis that deeply oppresses ecology and causes suffering to nonhuman animals in factory farms. The consequences of animal exploitation are not limited only to animals. The link between abusing animals and the world's health is now no longer invisible. A taste for meat not only oppresses animals but also contributes to climate crisis and environmental degradation. According to The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the food system, including changes in land-use linked to agriculture, is currently responsible for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) that cause climate change (IPCC, 2014). According to The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s information in 2012, 13 billion hectares of forest area are lost each year due to land conversion for agricultural uses as pastures or cropland, for both food and livestock feed crop production for feeding the meat industry (FAO, 2012). As a consequence of the environmental and climate crisis, in 2019, the IPCC also suggests strongly that to efficiently limit the global average

temperature to 1.5 degree celsius, we need to address meat production and some degree of diet shift to less meat will be crucial for mitigating and adapting to climate change. Adding one important statistic related to this is the number of livestock animals killed for meat production annually: 80 billion animals, an estimated 69 billion chickens; 1.5 billion pigs; 656 million turkeys; 574 million sheep; 479 million goats; and 302 million cattle (ourworldindata.org, 2019). The data, however, does not include those nonhuman females that their feminised protein is used for dairy and egg production until they are spent. These are some of the horrors of industrial livestock farming that we hear about, perhaps not often enough. Yet most of us still believe that it is a natural way of humans.

It would be great if all the animals we kill could in reality help end global hunger or provide the global population with enough calories and protein. However, study after study shows that meat as a protein source is causing health damage, compared to a plant-based diet (Abete, I. et al, 2014). World Health Organisation (2020) reports that more people still go hungry and malnutrition persists. The number estimates that almost 690 million people went hungry in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic could tip over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020. But ironically, food continues to be lost and wasted. According to The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, which amounts to about 1.3 billion tonnes per year (FAO, 2011). And among these numbers, of the 263 million tonnes of meat produced globally, over 20% is lost or wasted. As for protein? The science is now clear that it takes almost 100 times as much land to produce a gram of protein from beef or lamb, versus peas or tofu, or other plant alternatives (Ritchie, 2021). That might well be enough to settle the matter. So who exactly the meat industry is feeding? People or their own profits? All this amounted to my assumption: the meat industry is utilising meat eating ideology to empower their business.

Back when Neo first arrives, Morpheus says to him, “I imagine right now you are feeling a bit like Alice—tumbling down the rabbit hole” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). We have to head down the rabbit hole into the darkest depths of the meat industry and the ideology that it feeds on. It is on the basis of meat ideology and discourse above that this thesis attempts to explore how writers such as

Atwood have engaged with the problem in science fiction, as a way of challenging all readers, including readers of the thesis, to go through the rabbit hole. By now, I hope you have already taken the red pill like Neo does to find out about the troubles beyond the table.

According to Allison Carruth in *Food and Literature*, popular food discourse tends to mean the aesthetic taste or “gustatory pleasure” that farm-to-table restaurants provide (Carruth, 2018, 220). While there have been some debates going on about how eating meat makes us humans (Kluger, 2016), scholars have been looking at literary works associated with eating animals related to social systems of capitalism, language and sexual politics with the intervention of veganism, especially in breakthrough novels such as Han Kang’s *Vegetarian*, Atwood’s *The Edible Woman*, and Ruth Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats*. Veganism in literary works is seen by critics in terms of the transformation of self, as Shuchi Agrawal and Gauri Mahalwar assert: “*The Vegetarian* and *The Edible Woman* promote ‘writing the body’ in its most basic sense: the idea that women may write about their bodies, changing the boundaries of ‘appropriate’ literary material” (Agrawal and Mahalwar, 2022, p.4091). I, among vegan scholars, understand that veganism in literary texts aims to transform self and society. However, my thesis takes a further step by investigating ideological values of meat that obstruct a healthy relationship of humans with food and nonhuman animals.

By acknowledging the meat ideology, this entire thesis offers a deeper scope than ethics of animal rights and environmental sustainability in order to cross anthropocentric conceptions of food in human-animal relations. Correspondingly, via the power of science fiction, a new and just set of beliefs and discourse is literalised and suggested to convey a response against meat ideology. My emphasis here is on the ideology that shapes the animal-eating dominant discourse that normalises or derealises meat consumption. Additionally, my attempt as a scholar is not merely to talk about the real world meat ideology, but to use literature’s ability to challenge this food discourse, respond to it and analyse how it influences reactions, within science fiction and beyond. Scientifically speaking, there is a strong rationality of meat eating that blinds ethical reasons for not eating animals. Supposing the Matrix is our world of consumerism and capitalism where we have perhaps tried to design our world to

look like a supermarket, full of things we can reach out and grab. An invisible Matrix in our real world of meat-eating ideology is the common rationalisation that is called the Four Ns (Piazza, J., et al., 2015) : that meat eating is Natural (humans are natural carnivores), Necessary (meat provides essential nutrients), Normal (I was raised eating meat) and Nice (it's delicious) to defend their choice of diet. This dominant ideology underlines discourse in our conversations that animal consumption is normal; as the way things are supposed to be. This rationalisation of eating meat has shaped the attitude of humans towards animals. The normalisation of things is the distortion of facts and is also the root of the problems since the start of agriculture, which in this era requires industrial resources and processes to maintain. That eventually leads to deforestation, toxic pollution, mass extinction and climate crisis. In *Ideology: An Introduction*, Eagleton also adds that philosophical thinkers from Hegel and Marx to Georg Lukacs have been much preoccupied with ideas of “true and false cognition, with ideology as illusion, distortion and mystification” (Eagleton, 1991, p.2). And with this notion of ideology and illusion, Eagleton continues to point out about the implication of the dominant forms of thought in a society: “if ideology is both illusion and the medium in which social actors make sense of their world. then this tells us something rather depressing about our routine modes of sense-making” (Eagleton, 1991, p.2). One most general discourse that reinforces justification for eating meat is: humans are at the top of the food chain. If we interpret the animal consuming notion the way as Eagleton has framed it, our mode of sense-making justifying the oppression of animals while disregarding and objectifying nonhuman lives can be seen as something rather depressing. Something depressing that is built on illusions.

I argue that illusions in animal-eating are made possible by our disconnection from the story and source of food that we eat in modern society. In a society that is fundamentally normalising animal-eating, humans make the life of an animal absent by erasing their connection of existence and body through the process of meat production. Feminist-vegan theorist, Carol J. Adams (1990) argues that in the animals' identities and stories are made “absent referent,” objectified, fragmented and consumed in the context of eating meat (e.g, beef not cow, and pork not pig). Science fiction again plays an important role in this thesis to investigate moral and political

norms of the dominant meat-eating ideology. Although *The Matrix* is not commonly associated with food choice, the film is employed with the seduction of taste, the code of eating culture, and how those presentations demand one's moral attention rather than pursuing the illusion of food. The philosophical contexts where we are examining arguments for and against skepticism allow us to question whether "meat" (as an absent referent) really exists, or can exist without social construction of "animals", for the reason to reconnect again to the truth of food. Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality is closely linked to the false ideology of meat in which reality of industrial animal production is replaced by representations that are disconnected from it. This is the area that I aim to experiment within *The Matrix*. In the book *Matrix and Philosophy*, Carolyn Korsmeyer analysed the illusion and sense that seeing can be visual deceptions of the Matrix. "Sight more than any other sense is explicitly extolled for its traditional link with the mind" (Korsmeyer & Irwin (ed.), 2002, p.47). To Korsmeyer, *The Matrix* represents that seeing is believing but touching is the truth. Similarly, I argue that the global industrialised food system disconnects us from our food, alienates us from the land, and animals' lives behind the propaganda of the meat industry. Nor is the task of solving the climate emergency made any easier by the meat industry involved in the enormous profitable business continuing to justify the industry's high environmental and social costs on feeding the world population. And in order to regain the truth, humans must learn from the physicality of touching, instead of the distant operation of vision, by reconnecting ourselves to the reality of food that we eat. Morpheus; or in the case of the meat-eating Matrix—veganism, wants us to wake up. But wake up from what?

Eagleton also explains that the way to break the power of ideology is to disinvest ourselves. But disinvesting from an ideological viewpoint involves a "painful 'decathecting' or disinvestment of fantasy-objects, and thus a reorganisation of the psychical economy of the self" (Eagleton, 1991, p.184). Eagleton's vivid description surprisingly provides a similar imagery of how Neo suffers the pain the moment he gets unplugged from the Matrix world. In *The Matrix*, The Wachowskis introduced us to the world where Neo discovers that he is a battery—an energy source for the machines that now dominate the world. The sky is blackened and the sun blocked out. The endless image of humans as batteries providing a power source and

climate catastrophe are quite strong here. Enslaving and harvesting of human energy are very similar to nowadays factory farming for meat production to supply humans, claiming to feed the world. “For the longest time, I wouldn’t believe,” Morpheus says. “And then I saw the fields with my own eyes” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). Scientifically, if The Wachowskis did want the machines to search for an eternal energy source, there are plenty more possible choices to choose from: nuclear energy, for example, or some satellites to send energy from above the dark sky instead of human farming. Under the realm of dystopian science fiction, I argue that Wachoskis’ choice of bioelectricity to farm humans is how they switch the roles of victim and victimiser to reflect how out-of-control our food production is, and how powerful the illusion created by human dominion is. It is worth pulling out veganism as a supposedly ethical action with its philosophical linkages to environmental and animal studies to operate in scholarly debate of ideology and discourse in the politics of diet to defy the current artificial construct reality of meat ideology. When all this has been said, now it should be an unavoidable urgent issue to talk about the industrialised food system that is causing global warming. And seeing the problem about ideological problems as *The Matrix* does may make it easier than it is.

1.5 Resisting the dominant ideology to combat climate emergency

Considering meat production, *The Matrix* asks us to accept the hard truth about reality instead of the constructed desirable illusion that you want to consume. Robert Grillo, an anti-animal agriculture activist, in the first few pages of the opening chapter of his book *Farm to Fable: The Fictions of Our Animal-Consuming Culture* also considers *The Matrix* and how the fictions are constructed by the meat industry. Grillo points out about the function of the blue pill (fiction) over the red pill (fact) that:

First, taking the blue pill reinforces what we want to see, hear and believe. We want to believe that farmed animals, at least for the short time they are permitted to remain alive, and treated with respect and suffer minimally on that “one bad day.” Second, taking the blue pill advances the agenda of animal exploitation industries by presenting

animals as willing participants in whatever it is we want to do with them. (Grillo, 2016, p.4)

I agree with Grillo's scheme on how storytelling and fiction are the key tools in which the meat industry employs in making their way into acceptance of dominant culture. To build on this, I argue that the meat industry is even influential enough to use their marketing propaganda to shape and create popular culture encouraged by capitalism and consumerism. And I would like to go deeper from what Grillo has abstractly developed, and explore multiple layers of the elements of food relations and fictional devices that anthropocentrically shape the way we think in the animal-eating world within *The Matrix's* philosophical questions.

In any case, food issues have not yet gained full attention to environmental criticism in literature. And actually there are many crossed-issues such as: sexuality, human and nonhuman oppression, and environmental justice that are resulting from industrial food production and consumption. I agree with what Lawrence Buell criticises in *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* that: "Environmental criticism in literature and the arts clearly does not yet have the standing within the academy of such other issue-driven discourses as those of race, gender, sexuality, class, and globalisation" (Buell, 2005, p.129). Ecofeminism speaks more about the victims of the environmental injustice that is the root cause of inequality of humans and nonhumans alike. Buell discusses that: "Ecofeminism is itself a multiverse, but inquiry starts from the premise of a correlation between the history of institutionalized patriarchy and human domination of the nonhuman (Buell, 2005, p.19). Certainly this intertwining of sexual and environmental issues in ecofeminism influences my methodology in this thesis. By reading from a vegan perspective, I argue that literary work is also an act of activism to establish the problem needed to be fixed, regarding social justice issues and climate justice that includes animals, by shifting our attention fully to the nonhuman sphere and reimagining the ideology and discourse in the narrative. Veganism calls for more than individual diet change. Veganism as a movement is a way to underline and advocate for systemic change that challenges the political, economic, and social structure of society towards reducing and ending animal

exploitation. So it would seem reasonable to argue in this thesis scholarly approaches to works of science fiction that call into question and offer ways to reimagine ideology as found in *The Matrix* and the MaddAddam trilogy, should also be considered as direct calls to readers to become activists and changemakers—from writers to readers—like Morpheus searching for The One. And in this research, you will see that a vegan perspective successfully fills the gap. Barry Grant, a science fiction film critic, is quoted in J. P. Telotte's *Science Fiction Film* describing the genre's general ability to pose such challenges and “a progressive resistance to dominant ideology” (qtd. in Telotte, 2001, p.178). In the same way as Grant, I would like to see how the authors challenge and resist the dominant ideology of meat consumption, then, enable us to answer their call to action to save the planet if we place science fiction and veganism on the same table.

Finally, we may need to examine the ideology beyond the wall of industrial animal agriculture—to the human/animal dualistic thinking that creates inferior others and privileged others that is also found in man/woman, culture/nature. This dualistic hierarchy is one of the factors that distorts human's relationship with nature and other animals: animals are objectified and reduced to commodity status. This is similar to the objectification that happens in women when they are valued by patriarchal society simply on their sexual functions. Seen from a feminist perspective, this discourse leads to particular biases and oppressions. Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy similarly alludes to what I am addressing—the intersectional oppression of nonhuman animals and women. Both struggle to either survive, or to be eaten. Before looking at Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy, it is worth noting that the sexual politics of meat consumption often plays a huge role on gender boundaries, as meat consumption is also associated with masculinity, strength and male dominance. This belief of human dominion over animals is reinforced: top of the food chain versus the object of food. In animal-eating culture, meat is linked with human power, strength possession as the most highly valued of foods. This resonates with how Cypher craves and enjoys his beefsteak in *The Matrix*; or the way the painballers in the MaddAddam trilogy hunt the Gardeners and eat their livers. In some respects, we all acknowledge the ideology of the sexual politics of meat, according to Adams, the author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990). There are some popular notions about meat and power; such

as “real men eat meat.” Hank Rothgerber who verifies Adams’ *The Sexual Politics of Meat* in his research on the psychology of this notion finds out that: “male justification strategies were correlated with greater meat consumption, whereas endorsement of female justification strategies was correlated with less meat and more vegetarian consumption” (Rothgerber, H., 2013). Adams argues that this association between meat eating and power/maleness is intertwined and deeply embedded in our meat-eating culture upon the anthropocentric assumption of animal inferiority. Some ecofeminists (e.g. Adams, Greta Graad and Vandana Shiva) have consistently argued that an intersection between animal/environmental exploitation and women oppression is found in the way the notions of animality have been brought into the concept of gender stereotypes and consumption as parts of human/animal dualism and gendering.

Under an ecofeminist lens, Paula Wieczorek addresses the parallels between the exploitation of nature and animals as well as the oppression of women in the capitalist patriarchy in *The Year of the Flood*, Book two of the MaddAddam Trilogy. Wieczorek makes clear that there are hierarchical dualisms implied in the novel to criticise the system that privileges man over woman, nature and animals, reason and technology over instinct, as seen in the Gardeners’ speeches, and the bodies of female characters being represented as victims of capitalism (Wieczorek, 2018). Wieczorek’s argument is exactly the point. In addition to the hierarchical dualism leading to the doom of humanity, the materialisation of the nonhuman animals and nature are also accompanied by the commodification of people. Mahinur Aksehir-Uygur argues that “Atwood’s trilogy basically treats the possible catastrophic consequences of the modern materialisation of the mother earth through the depiction of a kind of future existence which obviously has strong parallelisms to our present world” (Aksehir-Uygur, 2014, p.44) and within that futuristic world, Atwood presents issues of animal abuse disguised as scientific study, or food, to serve humans. As an apocalyptic novel, Aksehir-Uygur notes that “all the genetically altered animals become loose and the real apocalypse begins” and humans who play with nature eventually become prey to the pigeons, pigs with the human’s brain. As pointed out by literary scholars, Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy criticises how oppression of

nonhuman others eventually brings destruction of humanity and civilisation. But that is not all.

As Atwood questions the very survival of humankind after the point-of-no-return for man-made climate destruction in her novels, most critics comments that the first two apocalyptic books—*Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood* are Atwood's reflection on environmental and posthumanist concerns over the cause and effect of corporation-controlled world and humanity's relationship with nature. In *Margaret Atwood*, Marion Wynne-Davies highlights the "what if" concerning the way human beings treat the natural resource currently and Atwood demonstrates this issue in her speculative fiction—"a form she defines as human society and its possible future forms, which are either much better than what we have now, or much worse" (Wynne-Davies, 2009, p.80). While in *The Cambridge Introduction to Margaret Atwood*, Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson observes that this is Atwood's attempt to offer a new religion with environmentalism at the core in order to successfully save humanity (Wagner, 2009) . In my research, I would rather focus on how Atwood applies discourse in the religious element to fix the relationship of humans and nonhuman animals in the capitalist society and its destructive consumption and production of meat across Atwood's trilogy, and to explore whether Atwood suggests any remedies for humanity's ills and ultimately, climate crisis. In which case, I may agree with Prorokova-Konrad's point that the last two novels "speak about veganism more overtly" and how she asserts that "veganism through the lens of survival, making the issue of ecoethics more pronounced" (Prorokova-Konrad, 2020, p.84). Yet the issue of ecoethics Prorokova-Konrad suggests may parallel, instead of support veganism as ecoethics include man as an ecological animal in the relationship between man and nature that still encourages the commodity status of animals, in somewhat sustainable ways. Veganism, as I want to argue, bears the primary responsibilities of individuals in their political roles as citizens, also toward corporations, for moral consideration to ensure climate justice.

The simple solution to the environmental crisis and ethical problems associated with the meat industry and its exploitation is to consume less meat, or to shift diet. I argue that Atwood's central focus in the MaddAddam trilogy is about questioning ethical values and moral norms of animal-eating culture. The animals are

objectified and reduced to their protein functionalities; such as “large bulblike” chicken that humans typically eat, similar to nowadays industrialised farm chicken. Would animal exploitation and “real” meat consumption are still justified as normal and social status as the planet is approaching the climate crisis? According to Laura Wright’s “Vegan Zombies of the Apocalypse”, the first two books draw consistent attention to the belief system and real/fake boundaries: the plant-based meat alternative versus the meat from genetically modified creatures or some “secret” meat that we do not know. The question around reality and illusion based on the dominant belief is echoing *The Matrix*’s theme. Wright asserts that “these shifting belief systems are prescient in the way that they ask us to consider how our future might look if our current patterns of consumption remain unchecked in times of environmental destruction” (Wright, 2015, p.87). I want to build on Wright’s thoughts about belief systems and consumption and this research should develop more on the ethical ideology of meat and the industrialised meat system in Atwood’s novels that include the last book in the MaddAddam trilogy which most of the critics have not explored yet.

Up to this point we have been examining meat eating ideology shared in the dominant society, and the strategies and arguments that are commonly used to defend these attitudes. We have seen, more or less, that from a logical point of view these discourses are very strong but weak in terms of nowadays scientific evidence. Should we now seriously question meat eating rationalisation? Atwood may have already been doing it. In questioning eating, Atwood’s narrative focuses on food and the ethics of consumption in the postapocalyptic present after the waterless flood by understanding nature that includes nonhuman. But what I have observed, Atwood has done more than criticising the objectification of women and nonhuman animals in her work. She even redefines the animal-eating discourse to a new one that does not oppress all creatures and serves for climate justice. This should be seen as a call for activism. Eating animals now is a choice, not a necessity, unless one has a geographically or economically limitation. Jonathan Safran Foer raises a point in his book *Eating Animals* (2009), telling the story about the suffering of billions of animals in the meat industry to motivate people to at least stop a moment and consider meat reduction in their diet. His words resonate with a call to activism that I find in

both *The Matrix* and the MaddAddam trilogy: “Whether we change our lives or do nothing, we have responded. To do nothing is to do something” (Foer, 2018, p.38). With all the problems addressed, the issues about factory farming should not be only an argument for veganism. Whether it is a climate crisis or moral crisis, eating meat is bad for the planet, animals and humanity. It should be an argument for every human being for a wiser, more sustainable and ethical animal agricultural practice and more honourable consumption. Now we are choosing the culture of massive slaughter and war against the only planet we have. Can we tell a new story? A new ideology and a new discourse?

1.6 Reexamining our relationship with what we eat

When all this has been said, there still remains the practical question: what can we do to change the deeply rooted ideology of nonhuman animal exploitation that is harming our relationship and health with the planet. My suggestion is this: in order to rewrite the existing discourse to no longer oppress nonhuman others, the nonhuman environment and animals must be represented as an active presence and player to change the way we talk about animals and reform social structure for climate justice. This should be an ethical encounter that is not centered on the human subject. And veganism in science fiction can give us a new perspective to reexamine the problem of the animal-eating ideology, and present us a new relationship between humans and nonhuman animals for the future of our planet and humankind. The result that I, and perhaps the texts reach for, is both ideological and behavioural shifts. In science fiction, we are crossing and breaking the ideological boundaries of reality and fiction. This is the area that will be carefully considered in this thesis to explore the ideology constructed by meat eating dominant culture. As Telotte puts it, “The science fiction film inevitably foregrounds as no other genre does our attitudes toward the real” (Telotte, 2001, p.73). And with this interrogation of the real, this thesis explores how *The Matrix* and the MaddAddam trilogy effectively address several critical questions for human culture as Telotte poses: “How do we define ourselves, how do we construct our world, and even more broadly, how do we know?” Towards the the politics of food and meat consumption issues in the era of

climate emergency, if science fiction truly serves as a running commentary on the world and providing countercultural interventions, the questions that I want to explore further in this thesis include: To what extent can I read Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy and The Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) using a veganism lens to understand the dominant meat-eating culture and imagine a counter culture and by what means? What are the components within these science fictions? How do The Wachowskis and Atwood imagine ideology that links to meat ideology, such as Toby's moral choices of meat in the MaddAddam trilogy, and the philosophical functions of food-related symbols in *The Matrix*? What does Atwood suggest to us in the MaddAddam trilogy about the new imagined discourse? Considering the way in which Atwood includes wider implications of the meat industry in her texts, is this the same thing vegans/environmentalists argue about the meat industry? And why would environmentalists agree with the new discourse and ideology of the Gardeners? And finally, how do these texts present a call to action from a vegan perspective? While some writers imagine the changes in the future societies and humanity itself, The Wachowskis and Atwood seem to dig more deeply into the social constructions that shape the thoughts of humans; the one that brings humanity the apocalyptic threats and the one that can save us from the end of the world as we know it. I want to explore specifically in the area of animal-eating ideology and discourse in both stories under veganism.

I argue that the dualistic thinking of human/animal and its boundaries are being challenged in science fiction, opening up ideological space for debating humanity and animality, especially the consequences of humans' dietary habits hugely influencing global warming. This will be my object of investigation to analyse both animal-like humans in *The Matrix* and slightly more human-like animals and ethical questions in the MaddAddam trilogy that helps humans understand more about meat consumption and production and disrupt the boundary of human-animal. And by reconsidering fact and fiction of ideology in light of *The Matrix*, I hope to disempower the dominant culture imposed by capitalism and the meat industry and expose its function as propaganda for dominating. A critic in the field of science fiction, Vint's *Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal* highlights the human-animal boundary that justifies us to exploit and consume other

species, who we share the planet with. Vint describes this as a shift that directly correlates to the expanded boundary of human dominion is the increase of factory-farming methods, further engraving “the ethical dilemma of who eats whom” that has become “central to human-animal interaction” (Vint, 2010, p.26). Science fiction imagines nonhuman others’ subjectivities, and inventions of alternative ecologies, societies and value systems. Vint’s research about animals in science fiction has paved the way for my research to investigate more about the imagined relationship between humans and nonhuman animals and what are possible solutions that humans can respect animals in coexistence. In order to disempower the dominant animal-eating culture, we need to destabilise and reset ideology and discourse for more ethical consumerism. And I argue that this is what Atwood and The Wachowskis attempt to do in their respective science fictional worlds.

It is at this point the aspect of veganism can effectively intrude into our lives and discourse to destabilise the power dynamics of dominant meat-eating ideology. As some works of the science fiction set in space are claimed to use “the motif of planetary adaptation to explore the inequalities and excesses of humankind’s social and political relations” (Pak, 2016, p. 56), speculative fiction is uniquely able to acknowledge the forms of inequality caused by the dominant discourse to humans and nonhumans. As discourse is seen as a means through which ideologies are being reproduced, an analysis of voice and language in science fiction can help us define sociocultural rules and conditions for power. Jan Blommaert, the author of *Discourse*, asserts that: “People, consequently, are not entirely ‘free’ when they communicate, they are constrained by the range and structure of their repertoires, and the distribution of elements of the repertoires in any society is unequal” (Blommaert, 2005, p.15). Without realising it, we are all trapped within the prison of ideology, like one in *The Matrix*. Social anthropologist, Nick Fiddes, argues in *Meat: A Natural Symbol* that the meat system symbolises human’s supreme power and control over the natural world but it does not always mean we each consciously acknowledge this every time we take a bite of animal meat. And he further suggests that those in positions of power “gain most from the perpetuation of this ideology” (Fiddes, 1991, p.172). To counter this, I will explore Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy and how she coins new terms for the oppressed—women and nonhuman others—and constructs a

new discourse that only exists in her imagined world to present a new way of animal-human relationship and a better perspective on food and climate justice. This thesis calls for a closer attention to identify, in the hopes of resisting, how language supports and hides exploitation of meat-eating into accepted dominant exploitative discourse and/or ideology, and why a new discourse is necessary for a more just planet. These issues will be also pursued through the use of discourse analysis as a research method: on how Atwood's imaginary ecological narrative centering women and nonhuman animals produces, and restructures the existing order of the dominant animal-eating discourse which I think is useful as vegan environmentalist thinking in the real world. To do this, meat and eating animals subjectivity in Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy is questioned via apocalyptic terror.

An analysis of language and rhetoric is an analysis of power effects. I wish to see how and what kind of impact it will occur, in the MaddAddam trilogy, if discourse about nonhumans is changed. Voices of nonhuman and women are unmuted within counter narratives to undo and resist the existing logic of dominant culture. By suggesting an alternative discourse, I argue the MaddAddam trilogy provides a counterpoint to the usual view of anthropocentrism that comes with social and environmental problems. And to prove this, Veganism/Ecofeminism perspectives will be applied here to explore the relationship dynamics between human subjects and nonhumans in influence of words and meanings and their impacts. Vegan thinking in the MaddAddam trilogy, which challenges inequalities along gendered and species boundaries, can help us imagine healthier relationships between animals, women and men for a better future of the planet we all live on. The consequences of this discourse will also be analysed about how the new ideology has an impact on the broader socio-cultural practice, and whether it can promote change and justice for all lives. The result of this, I believe, is that Atwood may suggest that her imagined discourse should exist in the real world—and this is Atwood's serious call to activism for climate justice. The question to investigate here in the novels is if the language that supports animal oppression is changed, will people's attitudes and behaviours change too? Because if the words which tell the truth about meat as food are unfit to our ears, the meat itself should not fit our mouths. Perhaps, only by rewriting discourse and ideology, humans can really coexist with other lives peacefully.

Opposing anthropocentrism does not mean that we hate humans. What it means is seeing how we humans are included in the biosphere as one being among others. As Adams reflects: “Vegetarianism is an act of imagination. It reflects an ability to imagine alternatives to the texts of meat” (Adams, 2015, p. 169). Reimagining an alternative setting that perhaps includes a vegetarianism perspective can be found in Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy. “No Meat! Don’t eat death!” The Gardeners protest in front of SecretBurgers, the place where its ingredients are so secret that it is rumoured that it contains human meat. This scene is a small yet significant event in Atwood’s story. Demonstrations against a big fast food restaurant are not something new. But Atwood’s choice of word defining meat to death is how she raises a voice for the made-absent animals in the place of meat by changing the discourse and unmuting the violence of meat eating. By being fully conscious of the environmental impacts of Big Agribusiness and the meat industry, one of the chantings of Gardeners also includes remembering Rachel Carson and her publication *Silent Spring*, the fundamental female-led environmental movement that speaks truth to power. Accordingly, I assert that Atwood’s use of discourse contributes to the (re)production of power relations in society in order to promote change by imagining a range of vegan responses to a world that has been brought about through an extrapolation of bad tendencies in the real present, including the meat industry’s treatment of animals.

What interests me most is how veganism in the reimagined world points to reordering, not only for the patriarchal moral order, but the foundation of belief. Atwood uses literary devices to create a new religion that is respectful and honours a real person who actually changed the world for a better and healthier place. A woman who was a pioneer in the frontline fighting for ecological justice, and countless “insignificant” insects, birds and fishes. Animals are no longer absent in the language of Gardeners. I believe that Atwood intentionally capitalises the words such as “Feathered” and “Creatures” while leaving “ddt” small and insignificant letters, because those are words appointed by Agribusiness. The consequences of a changed foundation of belief result also in the languages used in daily life of Gardeners, for example “meat-breath” (Atwood, 2014, p. 85) as an insulting word as if meat is the worst of the worst objectifications of human’s invention. The result of how veganism

can dismember texts instead of dismembering animals is to free the oppressed voices from meat and its rhetoric. This reimagined world with new animal-related discourse will be fully investigated in this research. I assert this kind of language innovation helps further essentialise the discourse of veganism created by Atwood and how she uses it as an activism call for equality for nonhuman animals and climate justice. Perhaps, people may have been reading Atwood's trilogy quite wrong for over a decade and have only looked closely at its apocalyptic warning to realise that this kind of discourse is a possible solution for the oppression of nonhuman others, starting from our new foundation of belief and language.

No one can truly understand just what factory farm animals are enduring but women and animals somehow shared their oppression and objectification within human's object of consumption of patriarchal society. Through consumption, Atwood also stresses very clear links between women and animals and how similar they are victimised by the same animal-eating dominant system.

Toby was familiar with the way of such men: she's been almost killed by one of them before she'd become a God's Gardener. Anyone who'd survived Painball more than once had been reduced to the reptilian brain. Sex until you were worn to a fingernail was their mode; after that, you were dinner. They liked the kidneys. (Atwood, 2014, p.17)

This is another strategy of Atwood, I notice, for changing our views of the human and nonhuman animal relationship: shifting the power of narrative to construct the way we make sense of the world and the possibilities for changing it. In the third book of the MaddAddam trilogy (the one I will focus on), Atwood shifts the point of narrative; from Jimmy; a close friend of the mad scientist who creates the new species designed to replace humanity Crakers to Toby, a strong female survivor of the apocalypse. Now she is the one who tells the stories to the Crakers. Toby's story is no longer a story of lies like Jimmy's. And she passes on the legacy to Blackbeard the young Craker who can talk with nonhuman animals and is willing to tell the story of peace and coexistence among all creatures on earth. Atwood's science fiction imagines a co-created community with nonhuman animals and dwells with them, not

only in a shared physical environment, but a social world. At the end of the trilogy, humans live in harmony with nature and Pigoons who they fight together in the great war against vicious humans who rape and kill lives for entertainment. This is how science fiction that has a vegan agenda helps us develop an understanding of the multispecies community which refuses to reduce animals to our commodity but rather equal beings on a more just planet.

Veganism provides an alternative and possible world. As if Atwood also implied that, if to be human is to be carnivorous to an extreme level that destroys other lives on earth as the novel seems to suggest, then to live peacefully with other creatures is to be like the Gardeners or Crakers, the creatures created by humans to be vegans. My argument again relates to what Adams says:

Vegetarian activities counter patriarchal consumption and challenge the consumption of death. Feminist-vegetarian activities declares that an alternative worldview exists, one which celebrates life rather than consuming death; one which does not rely on resurrected animals but empowered people. (Adams, 1990, p.175)

For centuries, humans have modified and exploited the nonhuman others for our own benefits just for, the worst of all, the profits of a few large multinational corporations. The corporate's gain is the public pain, and climate injustice. Veganism and my effort are to understand ideological processes of meat, rearrange them to change our conceptions in equally dramatic ways that can lead to behavioural and systemic change. And I intend to explore how *The Matrix* and the MaddAddam trilogy succeed in doing this.

1.7 Chapter Outline: The Journey toward Reconnecting with Nature and Animals

It cannot be a coincidence that the directors of *The Matrix*, The Wachowskis, two trans women who in 2020 had just come out as trans publicly and announced that *The Matrix* is a “trans metaphor,” as reported by BBC (2020). The metaphor that trans people recognise in there is about the “egg” days (Vanderweff,

2019) or being “closeted” between realisation and reality. Although this will not be the area of this research, it reveals some connection of the oppression caused by superiority of the human male and the shared struggle—of non-male humans and nonhuman others—to be alive and to be exploited, literally and figuratively. An egg is also a product of industrial meat production from endless numbers of domesticated chickens in battery cages and considered as a feminised protein; a term coined by Adams. Perhaps we can never know the true intention of the Wachowski behind *The Matrix*. Whatever it is, ignorance is surely not bliss. Eventually, is there really a spoon?

To find the existence or the nonexistence of the spoon, the cultural important tool for eating, and to prove that ignorance should never be a bliss, the first chapter “Everything tastes like chicken”: Ideology and Illusion of the Meat Industry” will extend *The Matrix*’s perspective on ideology to consider how the allegory of ideology is applicable to the vegan perspective through the film’s interest in the relation between ethics and food. *The Matrix* establishes humanity’s fate the same way as animals in the factory farm being used as energy for the superior beings and how human beings’ capacity to inflict planetary-scale destruction forced humans to realise the climate crisis, and how philosophically questioning the existing dominant ideology helps readers break away from it. To break the imprisonment of the Matrix and free humanity with the truth, I would like to invite you to unplug and free yourself from the “egg”—from meat consumption ideology and its illusion. By revealing the truth about our current meat consumption, Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad argues that Atwood’s novels criticise the meat-eating culture as the product of Anthropocene (Prorokova-Konrad, 2020, p.76) and people take the environmental crisis for granted. My topic will be situated also within the ecofeminism lens to see how the animal-eating culture becomes dominant and nonhuman others become lesser beings, reduced to mere commodities to serve humans, while veganism can recognise what we fail to understand. From my revision, the connection between the oppression of nonhuman others and capitalist patriarchy is established more clearly in food and the industrial system that produces it. The goal of this analysis is the question of the “truth” of eating and being in the times of climate emergency, which direction will be examined again in the MaddAddam trilogy and its imagined discourse.

Chapter Two “The Simulacra of Meat Ideology” continues to explore the elements of illusion and false representations of the industrial meat production in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy and its concept of absent territory or a referential being—the desert of the real in terms of animal production where the influence of media and the food industry generate models of the real without origin or reality. I argue that the trilogy contributes to materialise Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* through the corporate-governed world of *MaddAddam* and its desert of the real as the impacts of commodification of nature to the point that humans lose their connection to the original. The simulacra symptoms of capitalist consumerism, caused largely by human’s exploitative activities to animals and the natural world such as overconsumption and industrialisation, will be investigated to illustrate the impacts of the broken relationship of human and nonhuman beings to the condition of society and individuals.

During the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a viral share across social media platforms posing the question: “What if humans are viruses to this earth and corona is the vaccine?” Personally I don’t believe that. But this is not the first time that humans are accused of this. Twenty years earlier, Agent Smith also confronts Morpheus In *The Matrix* with some difficult thoughts: humans are viruses to this planet. As Agent Smith puts it, humans multiply until “every natural resource is consumed” then spread to another area. Are human beings really viruses like Agent Smith says? Chapter Three, “Becoming Less Human in the Anthropogenic Climate Catastrophe,” will explore the authors’ reconfiguration of new possibilities of human beings for nurture and care within both science fiction. The question mark gestures towards the enigmatic problem of anthropomorphism as the notion that humans are centralised in the top-down control. I argue that both *The Matrix* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy attempt to decentralise the human subject and ask human culture to seriously question the exclusive tradition of humanism, similar to how posthumanist literature and veganism challenge the meaning of being human. The situations in *MaddAddam* that will be particularly analysed are the hybridity of the Craker-human babies, and how the young Craker Blackbeard is chosen by Atwood to pass down reading and storytelling. Besides new alternative ontologies, regarding to our ideological foundation, the hybridity of Crakers themselves and also the babies indicate that the

separation between different species, such as humans and other forms of nonhuman others, should not be taken as fundamentally, but can live in ethical coexistence. Humans relate to other lives on the planet and the texts discussed here may confront us in rethinking human subjectivity which is urgently needed before all other nonhuman animals become extinct.

In her book about posthumanism *After the Human*, Vint argues that posthumanist work does not “get rid of” the human but rather explores ways in which the human is embodied in the world and, through this, connected to other species and matter. Considering this, both *The Matrix* and *MaddAddam* also do not get rid of humans, but find ways—in reality as much as in fiction—for humans to coexist in respect to other species we share our world with, even though it means changing the foundation of ideology, storytelling and our being that oppresses nonhuman others. Another argument from Vint is related to my last point in the final chapter. Vint asserts that social movements around the world have long responded to the Anthropocene, in the interest of livelihood injustice, especially in relation to climate justice. “The era of the Anthropocene has been a call to the social sciences and humanities to become more active in thinking about and with the diverse species and matter of the world. What the future looks like and how it positions the human as a species within it, however, depends on the discourse one adopts” (Vint, 2020, p.144). This finally leads back to my point at the beginning of this introduction: it is time, now more than ever, for the literary field to join the debate and the movement for climate justice and stand up for a new more just future for all beings.

We, human beings, perhaps start to learn to coexist with other beings. But will that save us in time before the apocalypse comes? In *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995), Buell claims that “apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal” and a powerful narrative template in the twenty-first century. Ursula K. Heise (2020) argued further that it has long been “a staple of environmental storytelling.” Nonetheless, the current planet’s biggest existential threat is beyond partially environmental problems; it is a climate crisis that we should treat it like an emergency and it really is. As the Guardian updates their terminology in 2019, “Climate change is no longer considered

to accurately reflect the seriousness of the overall situation” (Zeldin-O’Neill, 2019), what we associate with an emergency is we need to take bold action urgently. My emphasis is on the new thinking that we cannot end the climate emergency without a transition to a just and ethical plant-based food system and to end industrial animal farming.

Shifting the ideological perspective from anthropocentrism to veganism can help human beings act beyond the profits and taste buds to actually make individual and systemic change before crossing the point of no return on the climate crisis. But this is a big challenge. The final chapter “Mouth and Meat: Discourse and Activism” will take a close look at Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy, using the method of discourse analysis to find out how Atwood’s manipulation of discourse can guide readers with a new table of norms to look at nonhuman animals. To do this, I will pay attention to how Atwood imaginatively compares the practice and the forms of talk and texts produced and consumed by people in the animal-eating society—within and outside of the science fiction’s narrative world—to the Gardeners’ practice, in order to explore intersectional questions of specism, anthropocentrism, global capitalism and gendering that reinforces justification for eating meat .

To rethink the human-animal boundary, I want to explore how Atwood rejects the existing discourse of human superiority and how veganism perspective enables animals as active characters in the new discourse innovation in the *MaddAddam* trilogy to establish new relations among humans and nonhumans alike as a doable solution in both imagined and real world. For Foucault, discourse, truth and power are interconnected to constitute the oppression of those “others” in our society, serving to marginalise, silence and oppress them (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013, p.24). Thus, discourse has “meaning, force and effect within a social context” (Mills, 1997, p.13). What I am interested in is how Atwood implements her activism through the language of the Gardeners to fictionally construct the accounts of the social world of environmentally concerned citizen based on veganism to counter the discourse of powerful institutions such as the government, the corporations, scientists, media or consumerism and their animal-eating discourse. I then continue to place my attention on vegan thinking across the *MaddAddam* trilogy which may suggest Atwood’s climate activism and how Atwood reflects the ethical questions on meat consumption

as a counterargument in resisting the power of the dominant animal-eating culture to avoid the climate apocalypse.

After we have followed Neo down the rabbit hole of complex issues behind the meat-eating dominant culture, expectfully, we liberate ourselves from the invisible ideological trap of the enclosed universe into its outside. Throughout *The Matrix*, we are asked to question not only whether indeed Neo is “the One,” but what it means to be the One. Can we really be the One, or should we retreat back to the illusion of juicy steak and blissful ignorance? The answers lie in both *The Matrix* and *MaddAddam*—in how we find connections of our existence to other beings and how a narrative shift is taking place. Who should/can shift it? And why business as usual is no longer the option. Unless we recognise the root problem and do our part to change it, we can never escape the “egg” that we are trapped in. Morpheus says in the film: “You’re going to realise, just like I did, the difference between knowing a path and walking a path” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). Knowing the problem is easy. Walking the talk to fix the problem requires much more than realisation. It needs individual actions to challenge the dominant system. Like the young Craker in Atwood’s *MaddAddam* has said: “First the bad things, then the story,” it is not enough just to inspire fear of future scenarios from human’s destruction. We need to write a new story, together with animals and nonhuman environments as equals, starting with the food system that respects all beings.

“Then you will see that it is not the spoon that bends. It is only yourself” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999).

Chapter 1

“Everything tastes like chicken”: Ideology and Illusion of the Meat Industry

It makes it all different for Neo after he journeys down the rabbit hole and takes the red pill into the truth of our humanity where they were born into physical and mental enslavement in which the human race is farmed to feed the race of artificial intelligence as their energy source—human agriculture—in a vast field of human eggs as far as the eyes can see. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Matrix, under veganism lens, is a reversed situation that the human race enforces on the nonhuman race and calls the system the meat industry to serve human’s energy and our culture of animal eating. What if this modernised production and consumption is also a copy and a copy of a represented reality of the postmodern world that is no longer relevant to the reality? As Morpheus puts it, the Matrix is the “world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.28) and we convince ourselves that the world we see is the real world. When Neo questions his perception of reality of the world, Morpheus relates our sense that we use to recognise food to answer Neo: “What is real? How do you define real? If you’re talking about what you feel, taste, smell, or see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.39). These questions are raised to Neo in the movie, but answering them should help us think about our disturbing animal eating ideology in our own world too.

Taking the red pill is making a decision to step out of our world into a reality, even if it is a less pleasant one. And in the time of climate emergency, the perception of food has become even more complex and more than just an ethical choice. It is a matter of survival of humanity together with nonhuman lives, as discussed in Introduction. According to Naomi Klein, a climate and political analyst author, the logic of humans has long given “the right to place ourselves above the ecosystems that support us and to abuse the earth as if it were an inanimate machine” (Klein, 2014, p. 177), and this ideology has been operated around since “Francis

Bacon's casting of the earth as an inert machine whose mysteries could be mastered by the human mind" (Klein, 2014, p. 184). Klein's thought here is chosen in part because it provides some striking illustrations of human's ideology on nonhuman beings, being positioned as an exploitable resource like a lifeless machine. But also, in part, because it is worth considering how the nonhuman machine race of *The Matrix* may represent the nonhuman others and animals under the oppressive relationship with human beings. Building on *The Matrix*'s plot functions—both philosophically and ethically problematising—this chapter will further explore the connection between “prison for your mind” and our sense and perception of food and animal eating ideology within the movie and how the fictional space poses questions to the real world and the choice we take. Through different characters' interaction with the taste of meat and other food, the concept of illusion has a lot to do with the question about the broken/disconnected relationship between our sense of reality and ideology on food within a limited perception of human culture and the control of Big Agribusiness.

As the ecofeminist Vandana Shiva has noted in her book *Ecofeminism*, the word “development” and “science” too function as a tool of modernity and coloniality, claiming to be the one source of truth, while some scientific research and reasoning are used to justify natural resource exploitation: “the economic model shaped by capitalist patriarchy is based on the commodification of everything, including women” (Mies & Shiva, 2014, p. xvi). The devaluation of contributions from women and nature goes hand-in-hand with the value of development in the name of globalisation. While some independent scientists like the pioneer Rachael Carson, and the author of *Food Fix* (2020), Dr. Mark Hyman claim that scientific research is manipulated by Big Agriculture/Meat industries to empower their business.

So “what is real?”. Long before Morpheus raises this question in *The Matrix*, the same interrogation of reality had been explored by philosophers since ancient times, from Plato to Baudrillard. The movie has famously been analysed by philosophical critics about the human condition as prisoners of perception with limited experience of reality and this thought experiment is often read as an allusion to Plato's “The Allegory of the Cave”. In *Republic*, Plato's mirage of truth is projected through the shadowy performance on the wall—a representation of reality.

Slavoj Žižek asserts in “The Matrix: Or, The Two Sides of Perversion” that unlike the Plato’s cave prisoners, what humans in *The Matrix* find on the surface of the Earth is “no longer a bright surface illuminated by the rays of the Sun, the supreme Good, but the desolate “desert of the real” (Irwin, 2002, p. 241). I want to build on Žižek’s observation to explore how *The Matrix*’s dark ruined “desert of the real” may represent the consequence of human’s ambition in conquering the machine by blocking the sun. If the sun is the ultimate truth for Plato, the way that humans block the sun in *The Matrix* can metaphorically be interpreted as how humans are so blinded by their dominant power over other nonhuman beings that intentionally shield themselves against reality. According to William Irwin’s analysis, the prisoners of Plato’s cave do not know that they are prisoners and do not suspect there is any reality beyond what they are experiencing. But for *The Matrix*, Neo has always suspected reality and is ready to wake up from the prison of the mind with the help of Morpheus and Trinity. However, most humans, both in *The Matrix* and the real world, are perhaps more similar to the prisoners in the cave than we think—they are living in a dreamworld and do not want to wake up. Or as Irwin puts it: “They have been this way since birth and so have no conception of any other way of life” (Irwin, 2002, p. 12). Human beings deceive and enslave ourselves with the pattern or the matrix of culture and belief, as the Wachowskis may remind us. Thus waking up from our own constructed ideology to leave the captivity of ignorance is not an easy matter.

The prisoners in “The Allegory of the Cave” are too compelled to look straight at the light and rather take refuge in the objects of shadowy vision—the comfortable illusion. At first, Neo is also horrified at the sight of reality of other unawaken prisoners chained in other eggs. This harsh reality is the part that *The Matrix* is engaging with: the truth is not always comfortable. Or as Cypher puts it in the movie: “Ignorance is bliss” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.61). In *The Matrix*, the group of rebels led by Morpheus chooses the truth even though it is unsettling and rejects the comforts of the Matrix. But we also see Cypher who retreats into a tasty and delightful illusion although he knows with all his heart that the steak does not exist, without a cost of the animal’s life and climate, and it is the Matrix that is telling his brain that it is juicy and delicious, not reality. More than an ethical stance, according to a research project conducted by Niccolò Bertuzzi (2017),

veganism for the majority of people is a central issue in the animal advocacy that relates to veganism as a philosophy and/or lifestyle against the use of non-human animals for human interest. Just as how the prisoner in Plato's allegory is led out of the cave and like Neo is led out of the Matrix, veganism also attempts to navigate our mindset and behaviour from the oppression of nonhuman others, an intersectional issue that leads to inequality and environmental destruction—an extensive discussion of which is found in my literature review. Combined with the theory of ideology of truth that *The Matrix* is presenting, reading *The Matrix* from a vegan perspective can thus question food about its illusion of existing culture that usually defines humans as the dominator of the food chain, while animals and the natural world are mere lifeless resources for feeding humans' endless appetites. By resisting the illusory ideology, it may help us face the light of truth, no matter how inconvenient it is.

Read Mercer Schuchardt philosophically interrogates what the Matrix is in *Taking The Red Pill* and answers it in the context of postmodernist thinking in relation to technology. Schuchardt argues that: “the Matrix, while ostensibly being future technology's enslavement of the human race, in appearance actually resembles the industrialized world as we find it on the day we enter the theater. In other words, the Matrix is the trap the world has become” (Yeffeth (ed.), 2003, p.28). In the very first scenes of *The Matrix*, Neo uses a hollowed-out book of Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* to hide his illegal hacker programme, and later in the film Neo encounters Morpheus who also refers to Baudrillard after he wakes Neo from the illusion created by the machine: “You have been living inside a dreamworld, Neo. As in Baudrillard's vision, your whole life has been spent inside the map, not the territory. This is the world as it exists today. The desert of the real” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.39). The map or the concept of artificiality that we rely so much on has lost us all contact with the real world that preceded the map, which has now, according to Baudrillard, determined the real world. The Wachowskis are not just echoing Baudrillard's famous line from *Simulacra and Simulation*. They even create a representation of reality for the audience. In doing so, as Dino Felluga analyses in another chapter of the same book, the Wachowskis invite the viewer “to see *The Matrix* as itself an allegory for our own current postmodern condition” where “we have already lost all touch with even a memory of the real”, in the manner of

Baudrillard (Yeffeth, 2003. p.87). According to Baudrillard, a simulacra—something that replaces reality with its representation—is associated with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, the distinctions between the image and the representation begin to break down because of mass production and the proliferation of copies. The new technology of industrial revolution in the eighteenth century also brought about the massive increase of animal agriculture’s contribution to economic progress (O’Brien, 1977) , including meat and dairy products within the same era and that also concerns Baudrillard on many levels.

Although many critics discuss the clear relation of *The Matrix* and Baudrillard, they still miss the obvious concern of the industrial meat production from Baudrillard that may be implied in *The Matrix*. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard straightforwardly addresses the problem of the meat industry and its illusions: “Beasts of consumption, they have become the meat of industry” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.133). By saying so, Baudrillard expressively links his concept of people’s detachment from the origin of food or the reality of the meat industry through mass production, media and culture. In a new changing way of modern treatment of animals, livestock animals are forced into the industrial process—from breeding and genetics to raising and rearing—nonhuman animals are made to be removed from the concept of animals to mere products of consumption from pre-birth to death. The meat of animals has become just a symbolic of fragmented representation—a hyperreal simulation of the real. Or as Baudrillard defines it: “Animals must be made to say that they are not animals, that bestiality, savagery—with what these terms imply of unintelligibility, radi-cal strangeness to reason—do not exist” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 129).

As if to respond to Baudrillard, Cypher says to us that he enjoys the virtual juicy steak, even though he realises that it does not exist. Most consumers do not know how the products they consume are related to real-life things. Or, like Cypher and his simulacral steak, they know about the distortion of media and culture but, at that point of realisation, want nothing more than to go back to the simulation without the knowledge of the real world that comes with the uncomfortable underlying reality of the food we consume, especially meat products. To Baudrillard, when left with the choice between the simulated world and the real world, the vast

majority of people are going to choose the simulation. So humans are not merely helpless victims of the spoon-fed representation of truth that the media provides but many times we are the active participants in it. And we can choose to either accept or reject upon different ideologies or information we consume. Reading it from a vegan perspective, Neo is transformed into a simulacrum of the hyperreal ideology of the dominant animal-eating culture—the copy of the representation of reality, and he is fighting to reclaim his connection to reality. Or as Andrew Gordon, a postmodernist scholar argues, “*The Matrix* protests against our corporate cubicle lives, the sort of artificial life Neo must reject” (Yeffeth, 2003, p.111).

Besides being inconvenient, truth is not always welcomed and *The Matrix* illustrates that the dominant ideology can be the obstacle that keeps us from accessing reality. The mass of people in *The Matrix* are living out their daily lives blinded by their false sense of reality that humankind is at the top of the evolutionary ladder. But, as I would like to argue in this thesis, Morpheus informs Neo that in this posthuman world, humans have become farm animals under the control of the race of the machines. Humans, under the illusion created by the machines, believe that they are normal citizens of the late twentieth century. The primary antagonists—Agent Smith, Agent Brown and Agent Jones—represent those ideologies or individuals that shield the truth from those who question and challenge against the normalised cultural norms of food. The agents are, as Morpheus puts it, those who “so hopelessly dependent on that system, that they will fight to protect it” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.53). When the safe and comfortable hyperreality is disturbed, they hunt the rebel group. They do not want anyone to escape the prison of their mind. But for Neo, Morpheus sees him as “a man who accepts what he sees because he is expecting to wake up” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.27) because Neo knows that “there’s something wrong with the world. You don’t know what it is but it’s there, like a splinter in your mind driving you mad” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.28).

And there is something wrong with the world’s industrial food system indeed but the reality is too uncomfortable for most people to accept. *The Matrix* perfectly exemplifies this idea of meat production and consumption in human’s embedded postmodernist culture by literalising it; food in the Matrix is an illusion—

our reliance on simulacra and its technological produce—and it is made real because it is the thing we have done. As the cultural geographer Don Mitchell asserts, culture is not an ontological thing but “exists as a concept that it is made real [...] It is the way people make sense of what they have done” (Mitchell, 1995, pp.108-9). Mitchell agrees with Neil Smith’s definition of ideology as the ideas that are rooted differently in one’s perspective, and in this way ideology is a partial reflection of reality with an attempt to universalise its own perception of the world. Ideology was believed to be a tool that “hid the truth” (Yeffeth, 2003 p.88), according to Felluga. He asserts that language, as “a product of ideology and productive ideology”, is the basis of our very perception of reality from postmodernists’ view. And according to this view, “there is no way to be free of ideology, [...] because we are so reliant on language to structure our perceptions” (Yeffeth, 2003. p.88). The relationship to Baudrillard’s theories becomes especially clear. Seeing *The Matrix* via veganism, perceptions of meat in the Matrix are mixed with false appearances that disguise the reality, and we need to break away from the prison of spoon-fed ideology and language in order to dwell in the real world—where Cypher knows the steak is an illusion—to inhabit the world without the false meat consumption culture, just as Neo eventually learns the important lesson that there is no spoon—a tool used in human culture.

To maintain the order of society, ideology has become a tool served to transmit capitalist values. A reference to the Marxist theorist Louis Althusser’s notion of ideological state apparatus and the agents of repression might be of some help here. Althusser conceptualises that other institutions like the church, school and arts are to “ensure subjection to the ruling ideology” (Althusser, 2014, p.236) for reproduction purposes. While normally in the system, the vast majority of the subjects work “all by themselves”, those who resist interpellation or what Althusser calls “bad subjects” provoke the intervention of the Repressive State Apparatus, like the police and military force, who enforces violence. These agents who perform their tasks to ensure the reproduction of ideology mirror the Agents dressed in identical black suits in *The Matrix* of both being named and unnamed whose primary function is to protect the machine-run illusion to keep us under control—in order to turn humans into a battery. Or as Claudia Springer briefly analyses in her examination of “rebel iconography” that the Matrix’s Agents are “the coercive branch of the AI regime, its police force,

called upon to crush resisters when the illusory Matrix fails to placate them” (Springer, 2013, p.176). But for *The Matrix*, as I observe, the active protector of the ideology does not limit to the state’s officials but all the inhabitants in there can also take the form of the Agents. While Neo is running away from the three Agents, ordinary people like a woman who is cooking in her home or a pedestrian on a phone are transformed into Agents when they sense Neo and the rebels. Morpheus explains to Neo that “anyone that we haven’t unplugged is potentially an Agent [...] Inside the Matrix, they are everyone and they are no one” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, pp.54, 63). Although Neo and the rebelists now are individually freed prisoners, to borrow Plato’s term, the bigger obstacle is the majority of people within the system of power. The excessive violence of the fight scene and bullet firing between Neo’s group and the Agents, I argue despite the film’s commercial purpose, can be read as how Neo and the group of rebels challenge every single person who is actively defending the system of the particular ideology, the dominant animal-eating ideology for this case, either out of ignorance or choice. As illustrated in the film, these ideological barriers are built into the system of power. To overcome them, Neo has to understand these obstacles, not avoiding them. And when Neo is accustomed to the light of truth, he finds out like Morpheus tells him so, that he does not have to dodge the bullets of blinding ideology, he outlives them.

The two research objects this chapter is exploring—animal eating ideology and virtual reality or illusion—are connected. Perception of sight is influenced by different ideologies and beliefs. In the virtual world of *The Matrix*, the characters wear sunglasses even when it is dark. According to Carolyn Korsmeyer’s “Seeing, Believing, Touching, Truth”, vision is easily manipulated and the visual deceptions of the Matrix can “blind you from the truth.” In this way, the Matrix understands that the bright light of sudden truth can hurt the eyes, the same way the prisoners emerge from the cave. Vision is being compromised to some degree under the illusory ideology. To Korsmeyer, “sight more than any other sense is explicitly extolled for its traditional link with the mind” (Irwin, 2002, p.47) and therefore the values of touch are often regarded as more reliable than vision. The physicality of connection here in *The Matrix* also conveys the message for food as a medium to reconnect humans by making them question the concept of food and no longer accept

the spoon-fed meat ideology. At a meal outside the Matrix world, Mouse asks about Tasty Wheat:

“How do the machines know what Cream of Wheat really tasted like? Maybe they got it wrong, maybe what I think Cream of Wheat tasted like actually tasted like oatmeal, or tuna fish. It makes you wonder about a lot of things. Take chicken for example. Maybe they couldn't figure out what to make chicken taste like which is why chicken tastes like everything” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.63).

The taste of wheat is compared to both plant and meat while the chicken is said to taste like everything. The biggest reason behind Mouse's thought is more than the seduction of taste of meat product but through a vegan lens, *The Matrix* is provoking the thought that perhaps everything that you think is real about meat products actually is a part of an illustory generated world by the machine, or something that puts us in “a prison that you cannot smell, taste, or touch” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.28). Food in the Matrix exemplifies elements of our current postmodern condition as Baudrillard would have imagined, a product of the meat industry, the notion of the taste and food injected to our perception that even may not be based on our first hand experience.

Nowadays it is not just Althusser's State Apparatus or the decision makers who own the power over the public's ideology. It is instead influential multinational corporations, particularly Big Meat or Agribusiness, who own a powerful political force of both regulatory and cultural influence over food from farm to fork, and can dominate their ideology of how the world should operate is the way Big Meat claims to feed the world's rising demands for animal proteins. The same is true for *The Matrix*'s characters who doubt free will in limited choices within the illusion created by the machine. The film dramatically offers mirror reflections on reality and illusion twice: the first time is the split identities/choices on the sunglasses of Agent Smith and Morpheus before Neo takes the path of truth over a simulated illusion; the second time is more significantly reflected on the spoon in the Oracle's apartment. Despite the fact that taste can be a deception, the Wachowski sisters associate the enlightenment and realisation scene with an eating tool amidst the

cookie aroma. In the room of the young potential Oracles, a boy with a shaved head telekinetically bends the Matrix spoon through the power of consciousness and says to Neo: “Do not try and bend the spoon. That’s impossible. Instead, only try to realize the truth. [...] There is no spoon. Then you’ll see that it is not the spoon that bends. It is only yourself” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.70). At that moment, we see the reflection of Neo bends. Later after talking to the Oracle, Neo discovers the phrase “Know Thyself” inscribed over the door. One of the most prominent reads of *The Matrix* many critics agree, especially for this spoon scene, is the illusoriness of empirical reality that is parallel to the fundamental teaching of Buddhism, Zen and other Eastern faiths. It is not, however, the only possibility. This scene is as if asking Neo to entirely free the mind from the illusion of a constructed ideology and its cultural production and reproduction. Like normal humans, Neo is also tempted by the seduction of food, the same way Cypher is. Neo was asked by the Oracle: “Smell good, don’t they?” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.71). The Oracle appears to be an old lady wearing big oven mitts, baking chocolate chip cookies and warmly offers Neo a piece of meatless food with a piece of wisdom right in the kitchen. Unlike Cypher whose piece of steak is disconnected from the process of production, these cookies are home cooked with probably carefully chosen ingredients. Although we do not yet know the origin of the ingredients, as Neo is yet to realise his true self, at very least we are one step closer to the food we take in. Before leaving, the Oracle reminds Neo that he is in control of his own life and eventually he is not seduced by the aroma of the cookies. Only then, not before, the Oracle offers Neo: “Here, take a cookie. I promise by the time you’re done eating it, you’ll feel right as rain” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999, p.74). And the Oracle is right; the tightness in Neo’s chest fades. Contrast to Cypher whose choice of steak comes with the choice of ignorance and illusion, Neo chooses wisdom to free the mind from the illusion and in control of fate. He is already equipped with awareness and able to control himself to bend, not the spoon. For this, Irwin asserts that: “Neo too learns that intellect is more important than the senses. Mind is more important than matter” (Irwin, p.14). Although it may not be the Wachowski sisters’ intention, Cypher’s choice of meat deals with ignorance and the total loss of memory while the meatless cookies are offered with a lesson to Neo to be in control of his

mind and senses, and to feel better to reconnect with food. Through a veganism lens, animal-eating culture is shaped by illusion. In truth, a small group of people may not be able to change the dominant ideology at once—the same way that it is almost impossible to bend the spoon. The spoon does not bend, since there is no spoon. There is only the mind.

Baudrillard's criticism on the hyperreality and simulation of society has completely become the standard argument considering the relation between his work and *The Matrix*. However, this chapter has pointed out there is an absence of philosophical analyses that engages with the meat industry as the result of animal eating ideology causing the hyperreality that concerns Baudrillard hugely: "Our destiny has never been separated from theirs, and this is a sort of bitter revenge on Human Reason, which has become used to upholding the absolute privilege of the Human over the Bestial" (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 133), *The Matrix* has emphasised it well in the way the film interrogates food and the human's fates as livestock breasts themselves in the literary world. The problems arising from this abusive ideology towards nonhuman others are either humans ending up being the prisoners for the mind, or the fugitives in the system of power. Are humans capable of achieving more than running away from their wrongdoings? *The Matrix* helps us understand ideologies in general, the meat-eating ideology in particular. And this understanding will be a kick start to understand the MaddAddam trilogy that applies and counters the meat-eating ideology by transforming language to formulate a new ideology to combat the existing one and open up the possibilities for better relationships with the nonhuman beings out of planet scaled destruction. This point will be addressed in the later chapter, where Atwood's post climate apocalyptic trilogy is a form of reflection to evaluate the basic terms within which we think and act—our discourse in the postapocalypse of the real.

Chapter 2

The Simulacra of Meat Ideology

Proceeding from the similar logic of simulacra in the meat ideology as discussed in the first chapter, which claims that when seen through the lens of veganism, animal-eating culture is shaped by illusion and *The Matrix* in this analysis is capable of challenging us to free the mind from the illusion of a constructed ideology and its cultural production and reproduction via the reversed fate of human agriculture. In this chapter, it is equally important to think about Baudrillard's concept of simulacra and simulation in the way humans become caught up in the meat-eating ideology within food production and the exploitation of nonhuman beings under corporate control that is being materialised in Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy to the point that humans in everyday society lose their connection to the original. Although *The Matrix* enjoys popular recognition for its engagement with the ideas of Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard himself disputed this, saying in an interview that there have been misinterpretations in *The Matrix* and "does not truly evoke the problem". According to Baudrillard:

The set-up is cruder and does not truly evoke the problem. The actors are in the matrix, that is, in the digitized system of things; or, they are radically outside it, such as in Zion, the city of resistors. But what would be interesting is to show what happens when these two worlds collide. The most embarrassing part of the film is that the new problem posed by simulation is confused with its classical, Platonic treatment. This is a serious flaw. The radical illusion of the world is a problem faced by all great cultures, which they have solved through art and symbolization. What we have invented, in order to support this suffering, is a simulated real, which henceforth supplants the real and is its final solution, a virtual universe from which everything dangerous and negative has been expelled. (Baudrillard, 2004)

To Baudrillard, the disappearance of the real in the realm of information and simulacra is what people experience in the emergent postmodern condition or the world of hyperreality where we have lost contact with the real. And that is why Baudrillard disapproves of *The Matrix* but the argument in the first chapter has been proposed as a humble disagreement. The previous chapter's argument attempts to engage in wishful thinking that Baudrillard would approve of the connection of simulacra on the illusion of meat with some vivid representation of his chapter "The Animals: Territory and Metamorphoses" and the broken relationship of humans and nonhumans through the meat ideology in *The Matrix*. In Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy, Baudrillard may not verify the use of simulacra in the series again, however, in order to understand Atwood's literary representations of the meat industry and the climate apocalypse, the key to investigating this is to apply Baudrillard's concept of absent territory or a referential being—the desert of the real in terms of animal production where the influence of media and the food industry generate models of the real without origin or reality. This chapter will examine the extent to which Baudrillard's simulacra concepts can enable us to explore the ways in which the societal dynamics or ideologies of meat are influenced and controlled by corporations of the food and pharmaceutical industry. This speculative fiction presents the pre-apocalyptic capitalist era in the near future where the majority of people become clearly absorbed in the hyper and virtual realities manipulated by media and corporations to the point that the survival characters create cyberspace and virtual culture to escape and resist against the influence of media and corporations. Atwood also obviously and intentionally states about her work as a simulacrum in an interview with the *New York Times* that:

My own recent simulacrum, the three-book "MaddAddam" series, in which some of the characters use online video games as portals to secret chat rooms where they can communicate free of government surveillance. One of these made-up games is called Extinctathon, a game so arcane and tedious that only the most geeky of biogeeks would ever play it. (Atwood, 2013c)

Speculative fiction's roles for Atwood in this way are not for predicting the future but for unpacking the layers of human beings and what ideologies may lead

us into an apocalyptic state. While *The Matrix*'s realm is operated by a group of more powerful beings, the machines, who control the way humans perceive the world, *MaddAddam*'s world is governed and completely controlled by corporations of the food and pharmaceutical industry—a painful reminder to readers of the likely possibilities of today's world. Under corporate dominance, the capitalist society is divided into the biotechnology world and the pleeblands or slum areas, the outside world beyond the gate of secured compounds. These are corporations that advertise to push the boundaries of death and biological limits. Genetically engineered animals are created to serve humanity's endless needs of over-consumption and immortality, and this prompts some questions on human beings' moral standing and the anthropocentric premise that the *MaddAddam* trilogy acknowledges. These representations of Atwood's reality serves as a dystopian cautionary tale in which food production and the exploitation of nonhuman beings are directing us to biological catastrophe which wipes out almost all of the human race. This is a wake-up call for us, human beings, to make ethical choices, especially on consumption and nonhumans, for a better future.

In this chapter, the elements of simulacra and simulation, as defined by Baudrillard, will be examined to explore how much Atwood applies it into her *MaddAddam* trilogy to make the corporate-centred world a hyperreal form—a simulacrum that dominates and reduces nonhumans and some less-privileged human beings into mere commodities. The whole world seems to believe in the illusion of this anthropocentric ideology just because of the capitalist desire to reduce nonhuman value to economic value for human consumption and achieving immortality. Baudrillard's assertion early in his *Simulacra and Simulation*: "Take your desires for reality!" can be understood as the ultimate slogan of power since in a nonreferential world, even the confusion of the reality principle and the principle of desire is less dangerous than contagious hyperreality" (Baudrillard, 1994, p.22). The chapter here continues the work of the first chapter in showing the ways that the meat industry, both in our real world and in fiction, has long created and protected the illusion to their own benefits of carefree exploitation on nonhuman lives to the point of climate destruction. By approaching this analytic direction, I realise that scholars of both literary and philosophical works have not talked about Baudrillard in this way, and

this is how I adopt Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation to read Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy in terms of how it applies Baudrillard's works to its full potential. Thus by analysing the MaddAddam trilogy, the illusion of meat ideology resulting in an anthropogenic climate crisis will be recognisable. In order to deepen the analysis, this chapter will also attempt to show what is symptomatic about this industrial capitalist condition caused by the powerful corporation by looking into the functions of media advertising and myth-making, and the altered, hybridised and artificial life forms of nonhuman animals under the control of the corporation. How Atwood establishes Baudrillard's absent territory or a referential being in the trilogy will be considered, particularly as it is experienced by Jimmy. Then how those help us see more clearly about how the false representation of simulacra can lead us to the real destruction of human society and the environment that humans depend on. To wake up from the simulacra of the corporate-centred society, characters in the MaddAddam trilogy also unplug themselves, like *The Matrix's* Neo, from the simulation that the capitalist corporates create and plug themselves into the simulation that they create on their own to break free from corporatisation by rekindling the relationship of humans and nonhuman beings, as well as bringing back the names of extinct animals.

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard explains that an imaginary world like Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation with illusions in the social microcosm with an excessive number of gadgets to maintain its effects. Similar to Baudrillard's characterisation of Disneyland, Atwood's compounds exist in order to hide the environmental destruction and how the rest of the society actually live their lives in "pleeblands" beyond the gated science compounds.

This masks something else and this "ideological" blanket functions as a cover for a simulation of the third order: Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America that is Disneyland (a bit like prisons are there to hide that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, that is carceral). (Baudrillard, 1994, p.12)

In this light, the constructed compounds within walls and high secured gates are set up in order to rejuvenate the ideology of the consumerist and capitalist society and to conceal the fact that the world is driven to social and environmental destruction to the point of no return of climate catastrophe. The similarity is depicted directly by Atwood in describing the OrganInc compound: “Jimmy’s mother said it was all artificial, it was just a theme park and you could never bring the old ways back” (Atwood, 2013a, p.31). The real world, outside the gates of compounds, is no longer real. For Baudrillard, postmodernity is a copy of a copy of representation, whose representation itself is a simulacrum. There are four phases of the representation. In the first phase, it is the reflection of profound reality or the referent. The second phase is the reflection of a copy of a copy so the difference between what is true and what is artificial may no longer be possible to locate the original representation. In the third phase, the reality is hidden or, as Baudrillard describes it, it masks “the absence of a profound reality” and “the order of sorcery” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.6). While the fourth has no longer the relation to any reality—a pure simulacrum. Atwood both engages and settles her readers in the extreme situation of simulacra in her trilogy particularly in the third and fourth phase to show the near-future consequences of the current treatment of nonhuman animals and the environment, in which unethical and exploitative food production is paving our ways to a doom. The analysis in this chapter will follow the third and fourth phases, along with its impacts and the disruptive moments that the characters aim to break away from the illusions constructed by the corporate-centred world.

Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy—*Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of The Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013)—applies the separation of the simulacra and the origins of the real world as in Baudrillard’s third phase of separation under the influence of a handful corporations by speculating about how the capitalist society of a world where the powerful food and pharmaceutical company called HelthWyzer Corporation acts as the government. Within HelthWyzer’s compounds, the corporation separates its researchers and their families from the rest of the society—the areas the trilogy calls the “pleeblands”. The scientists in the compounds genetically modify creatures such as pigs spliced with human stem cells for growing humans’ organs, bulb-like chicken without heads, wolf-dog hybrids bred for military

service, luminous glowing green rabbits injected with jellyfish DNA and multicoloured sheeps with human hair-like coats to serve for human wigs. Other related corporations include AnooYoo and RejoovenEsense, specialising in perfecting humans, and SecretBurgers, where its meat is so secret that no one knows or cares. Not just replacing the government, HelthWyzer's CorpSeCorps also take the functions of the state's police and their role is to keep eyes on all people from any activities that can become a threat to the company. Beneath the high-tech everything, the world is at its lowest state in human history in regards to morals: the society is full with crimes, rape and pollution affecting all inhabitants. The planet reaches its point of no return when a scientist named Glenn or Crake decides to reset the world by using a virus hidden in sex pills and replacing the human race with his own genetically engineered humanoids known as the Crakers. Glenn/Crake is initially assigned by the RejoovenEsense Corporation to fix mortality, instead Glenn/Crake's grandmaster plan is to fix the future of the planet by creating the environmentally-friendly Adams and Eves who will be guided by Glenn/Crake's best friend Jimmy in the post-apocalypse life. However, Crakers are not the only new version of Adam and Eve in Atwood's trilogy. There are also Adams and Eves who are the leaders of a group called the God's Gardeners, a resistance group of eco-conscious people who practise an environmental-based religion and spirituality hides themselves away from corporate capitalism, set in the pleeblands outside Compound walls founded by Adam One. It is the God's Gardeners who warn about the coming Waterless Flood and manage to survive the human extinction with their own tactics and ways of life. Both groups of Crakers and the God's Gardeners later join forces with Pigoons to eliminate evil human beings. By the end of the trilogy, it seems clear that hope is in the hands of the young Craker in telling a narrative of multi-species cohabitation and when human survivors start to learn to treat nonhuman beings with respect and as equals.

Baudrillard also relates simulacra to the absurdity of capitalism and how market values seem totally disconnected from real events. This foundation of Baudrillard's thinking can be used to read MaddAddam's society as a simulacra of the real world being distorted to suit our anthropocentric ideology. It is as though the corporate-governed world of Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy is materialised the way Baudrillard has described the industrialised society driven by mass production and

commodification of nature to the point that humans lose their connection to the original: “Everywhere we live in a universe strangely similar to the original—things are doubled by their own scenario” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.11). The portrayal of humanity’s future in pre-apocalypse of the MaddAddam trilogy appears to fall under Baudrillard’s concept of “a hallucinatory resemblance of the real with itself” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.23) in which people, or the consumers, yearn for good health by applying supplement pills and from the animals’ part modification. The trilogy represents the dystopian society in which signs in the objects are more valued than the subjects and portrays what Baudrillard describes as “science itself has become pure simulation” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.8). The separation of the simulacra and the real world is even clearer when those who live in the compounds have never experienced the city in person, only through television screens.

Jimmy had never been to the city. He’d only seen it on TV—endless billboards and neon signs and stretches of buildings, tall and short; endless dingy-looking streets, countless vehicles of all kinds, some of them with clouds of smoke coming out the back; thousands of people, hurrying, cheering, rioting. There were other cities too, near and far; some had better neighbourhoods in them, said his father, almost like the Compounds, with high walls around the houses, but those didn’t get on TV much. (Atwood, 2013a, p.31)

The Matrix provokes some good questions on illusions of the real but perhaps Baudrillard’s simulation is more intertwined and enforced in reality that it can be impossible to get ourselves out. In MaddAddam’s world and also our world, the majority of people only see the virtual reality of the society represented and filtered in the television. Baudrillard interestingly quotes Ecclesiastes at the very beginning of *Simulacra and Simulation*: “The simulacrum is never what hides the truth—it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true.” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.1). It seems as if Baudrillard implies that it is impossible to discover the truth because the truth is made absent. Televisions represent the models of a real without origin or reality—a hyperreal. In a capitalist society as in MaddAddam, the lives in the television are more real than the lives beyond the walls. The simulation in the novels,

as Baudrillard would agree, has become more real than real. The lines between facts and fakes are blurred by the media industry allowing information and entertainment to be not distinguishable.

The displacement of a real life, from personal and community experiences to a form of life taken places in television screen instead of direct communication and experience, alienates people from the daily life, by turning away from the struggle of people in real life and taking away their ability to reclaim their attachment to reality to the earth and people. According to Baudrillard, simulacrum is used as an effort to try and make the world real, by reducing everything to an easily consumable and commodifiable form in a manageable and understandable image of the world—an image that becomes more real than the lived experiences. Baudrillard explains the simulacrum impact of television through the news of the mass murder incident at Auschwitz, Nazi Germany's largest concentration camp and extermination camp, that: "one would like to have us believe that TV will lift the weight of Auschwitz by making a collective awareness radiate, whereas television is its perpetuation in another guise, this time no longer under the auspices of a site of annihilation, but of a medium of deterrence. What no one wants to understand is that Holocaust is primarily (and exclusively) an event, or, rather, a televised object" (Baudrillard, 1994, pp.49-50). By this, a lived experience has been reduced to a mere greatest television performance, distracting and obscuring the viewers from actual problems such as the climate apocalypse in both fictional and the real world.

This thus invites more direct comparison with how human society places its position by shaping simulacra in the relationship with animal others: the dominant and the exploited. A very obvious evidence of television as a simulacrum emerges in a situation of meat production behind the secret of SecretBurgers that no one knows the source animal protein, but from a fragment of Toby's suppressed memory, cat fur, a mouse tail and a human fingernail are pieces found in the meat. What Toby later observes is that:

If there was a so-called reality TV exposé, the CorpSeCorps would make a pretense at investigation. Then they'd list the case as Unsolved and discard it. They had an image to uphold among those citizens who

still paid lip service to the old ideals: defenders of the peace, enforcers of public security, keeping the streets safe. (Atwood, 2010, p.40)

This manipulative use of media of an influential corporation like the CorpSeCorps ultimately calls attention to the pretense of possibilities for corporate power elites to create another reality in an event or a televised object to hide the truth and get away with the exploitation of animals and less-privileged others. This other use of TV simulacrum proposed by Atwood ultimately invites readers to see the society within the “desert of the real” in which television also becomes, as Baudrillard might have put it, a “model of deterrence” and a conduit for corporate control. For the benefits of their ambitions, one of key ways to control information is to control the media. If a public discussion on a company’s practices is unwelcome, a means of restricting information is to frame conversation by creating false information and once this newly created reality becomes dominant, dissenting voices will appear marginal and irrelevant. Given the narration from a person like Toby who is not part of the compound’s privileged population, similar to the 1% that makes up the richest of the real world, the majority of people in the pleeblands are being forced to be silenced due to their economic and social status while corporations can keep on producing lies and simulations that exploit people’s livelihood, animals and the planet. The inhabitants of the pleeblands are Atwood’s speculative people and our current present under corporate control. The common tactic of any influential corporations in our world is also known as lobbying to control the media, government and public to manipulate reality and power at their own will. Does this then echo “the order of sorcery” as Baudrillard has put it? If, indeed, the CorpSeCorps of MaddAddam as a representation of the third stage of Baudrillard’s simulacrum that masks the absence of a profound reality and the condition of our reality—a condition that is driving the planet to the climate apocalypse.

Perhaps it is the industrial meat production in the food system of Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy, such as the SecretBurgers, that is the key element of simulacra and simulation which combines the impacts of inability to reconnect with the real and separate the false by exploiting the reference of the real and creating another type of reality that has turned into the real. The impossibility of rediscovering

an absolute level of the real is dominantly underlined in how meat is manufactured, especially in the way science is used by giant corporations like the CorpSeCorps to materialise nonhuman animals to the point that there is no resemblance of the original—the real is no longer what it was. The new invention of chicken as a food product—ChickieNobs—brings about several shocking reactions from Jimmy. The ChickieNobs are large bulblake chicken parts without heads, just the breasts. Scientists in the compounds recognise less and less subjectivity of animals as Jimmy gets older. One of the scientists explains “No eyes or beak or anything, they don’t need those”. As for Jimmy, he thinks “this thing was going too far. At least the pigeons of his childhood hadn’t lacked heads” and now the chickens have been manipulated into “a nightmare. It was like an animal-protein tuber.” (Atwood, 2013a, p.238). This lack of referentials, a term coined by Baudrillard for the absence of the real and of the rational that open onto an age of simulation, reduces chicken or other animals to the objects of consumption, or as Baudrillard puts it “hyperreality of the commodity” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.67). How animals are made absent in name and body lends another layer to what the vegetarian feminist critic Carol J. Adams calls the absent referent as the animals are butchered and transformed into food through the gastronomic language that renames their bodies. Adams asserts “Live animals are thus the absent referents in the concept of meat. The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present” (Adams, 2010, p.66). This allows human beings to consume animal products without considering the animals involved. With the absent referent, because of its absence, prevents our experiencing the real connections of us, consumers, to the animals or food we consume.

What readers see with the thought provoking ChickieNobs here, at the service of fiction, is how Atwood imagines the hyperreality of what animals being made absent through situations in which both ethics of consumption and production of meat are tested, whether a lab-grown meat from a living animal offers a guilt-free solution. Instead, from Atwood’s assumption, a shift toward meat-engineering can be a false solution or a “nightmare” to both consumers and animals, and it is still a corporate-controlled meat production that is beneficial only to the company who owns the technology. ChickieNobs, along with the rest of genetically-altered animals are

Atwood's ethical critique on human relationship with animals and the hyperreal condition of industrial meat production. Human's manipulation of other species like chickens for food has been ongoing in our reality since the industrialisation of livestock production. Donna Haraway points out in *When Species Meet* that chickens for meat have been "manipulated genetically since the 1950s to rapidly grow megabreasts" and this results in their inability to live naturally as chickens as "young birds who are often enough unable to walk, flap their wings, or even stand up" (Haraway, p.267). Their lifetime windows only last for 45-60 days—a life of suffering from hatch to slaughter. The simulacrum of chickens and other animals for meat in Atwood's text generates important questions for humanity and our current and future path on the industrially and centrally-produced food system—the direction that is not only an illusion claimed by Big Meat's myth of feeding the world, but also pushing our earth beyond the planetary boundaries to climate doom.

Recalling the food experience in the world of environmental degradation, Jimmy questions about the realness of the ingredients of the food produced by a mega corporation. "The desserts were heavy on the chocolate, real chocolate. The coffee was heavy on the coffee. No burnt grain products, no molasses mixed in. It was Happicuppa, but who cared? And real beer. For sure the beer was real" (Atwood, 2013a, p. 245). The perfection of the simulacrum under the work of a mega company and its capitalist mode of production has come into doubt but a person in the dominant group within the corporate wonderland like Jimmy could not care less. According to Baudrillard, "simulators attempt to make the real, all of the real, coincide with their models of simulation" (Baudrillard, 1994, p.2). This is the illusion of value of real or originality that has already been disengaged by the mass production of the food industry—the desert of the real. The description of the Happicuppa products as being "heavy" on the chocolate and coffee in that scene emphasises on how "when an object is exactly like another, it is not exactly like it, it is a bit more exact" (Baudrillard, 1994, p.107). Worst than the question of authenticity, the perfection of simulacrum and how the simulacrum approaches the truth without trying and even appears to be more real is what Baudrillard also sees as evilness or a threat to the real:

The closer one gets to the perfection of the simulacrum (and this is true of objects, but also of figures of art or of models of social or psychological relations), the more evident it becomes (or rather to the evil spirit of in-credulity that inhabits us, more evil still than the evil spirit of simulation) how everything escapes representation, escapes its own double and its resemblance. (Baudrillard, 1994, p.107)

Atwood plants Baudrillard's evil spirit of simulation early in the trilogy and it starts to lurk behind and eventually inhabit the characters through their ways of consumption that we will later witness and analyse in this chapter. In this light, both conditions of lack of referentiality and of perfection of simulacrum within this part of the text also to the trilogy as a whole, simultaneously remind us that the industrial production of meat, among other products of the food industry beyond control, is a sign and symptom of capitalist mode of production and consumption based on mass production and commodification that keeps humanity focused on an illusion and thus failing to develop a culture of social and climate justice in the society.

To Baudrillard, consumption is more than an act of using or eating something but it is an active form of relationship to society and to the world that forms our entire cultural system. As Baudrillard writes: "Consumption is an active, collective behaviour: it is something enforced, a morality, and institution. It is a whole system of values, with all that expression implies in terms of group integration and social control functions" (Baudrillard, 1999, p.89). That is to say, mass production and the industrialisation of meat and dairy production under the influence of animal breeding and genetic engineering for the need of meat quantity and corporate profits are addressed by Baudrillard as the failure of humanism that shapes our ideology to the point that humanity ignores "the parallel between these animals sick from surplus value and humans sick from industrial concentration" (Baudrillard, 1994, p.131). The food system based on the meat industry is currently destroying the foundations of the society and the planet that we live on. There are many relations and parallels drawn by Baudrillard between meat production and consumption. In one of many examples, he has argued,

Everything has happened to them that has happened to us. Our destiny has never been separated from theirs, and this is a sort of bitter revenge on Human Reason, which has become used to upholding the absolute privilege of the Human over the Bestial. (Baudrillard, 1994, p.133)

From this parallel, Baudrillard notices the crisis of humanity founded on our anthropocentric ideology that shapes our perception of nonhuman beings allowing us to abuse inferior others. The comfort and satisfaction of the ideological role of consumption here, as Baudrillard asserts in *The Consumer Society*, can be very influential that it becomes religious rituals for the society. Baudrillard says: “Consumption can on its own substitute for all ideologies and, in the long run, take over alone the role of integrating the whole of society, as hierarchical or religious rituals did in primitive societies” (Baudrillard, 1999, p.89). Here again Baudrillard’s claim explains the consequences of the animal consumption in the meat-eating culture as readers experience them in Atwood’s trilogy.

Baudrillard’s theory on consumption as a form of human’s relationship to the society and the world pervades the MaddAddam trilogy and this broken relationship has destroyed the foundations of human beings as the trilogy reveals. Both Baudrillard and Atwood seem to be aware of the risks we are heading towards. By finding simulacra more comforting and alluring to live with, the hyperreal aspect of anthropocentric ideology would eventually lead the society to chaos and confusion. In Atwood’s MaddAddam world, inventions and advanced science have become tools for the out-of-control powerful corporations to promote and manipulate consumer culture, the same way hyperreality allows invasion of the virtual reality to the physical reality. In defence of animals, Baudrillard states strongly that science, used as a tool to abuse animals, is “a principle of objectivity of which science is never certain, of which it secretly despairs” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.129). A steadily more complex sense of the unhealthy relationship of human beings and its cultural system of meat consumption and production is shown by Atwood in a form of acceptable violence being broadcasted through images and videos and the audience cannot even differentiate if the violence is real.

The constant state of simulation in images and videos in the technologically sophisticated postmodern society that eventually make people unable to distinguish the real and the artificial is vividly addressed by Atwood through her depiction of violence and lack of empathy as the effects of the distant representation of reality within the hyperreality that at last drives the world to the apocalypse. In a small yet significant scene when Jimmy and Crake/Glenn are browsing the internet in their free times and some sites show some similar violence to both humans and nonhumans in faraway places as being described in those scenes:

They'd watch animal snuff sites, Felicia's Frog Squash and the like, though these quickly grew repetitious: one stomped frog, one cat being torn apart by hand, was much like another. (Atwood, 2013a, p. 93)

And later:

Or they might watch hedsoff.com, which played live coverage of executions in Asia. There they could see enemies of the people being topped with swords in someplace that looked like China, while thousands of spectators cheered. Or they could watch alibooboo.com, with various supposed thieves having their hands cut off and adulterers and lipstick-wearers being stoned to death by howling crowds, in dusty enclaves that purported to be in fundamentalist countries in the Middle East. (Atwood, 2013a, p. 94)

On the existence of animals as commodities on the internet, Soledad Altrudi's analysis of animal representation in media, from photography, television, cinema to online platforms explains that the lack of reference to humans positions "human-animal relations in specific ways through their representation of animals not only as providers of entertainment and spectacle but also as expendable resources to be exploited and dominated"(Thurston-Torres, p. 162). From online entertainment like one that Jimmy and Crake enjoy, Altrudi views it as how nonhuman animals are not constructed as subjects but rather objects to be consumed in a social media "free" market along with the existing words that objectify them by the food industry such as "meat", "poultry" and "livestock". Altrudi concludes the objectification on animals

and their commodification on social media as “the juxtaposition of hyperreal images with commodity-oriented language as well as their massive circulation in digital spaces, work to reify the objectification of animals that already occurs in other areas of our capitalist society” (Thurston-Torres, pp. 162-3). In other words, the real animals are removed and “be left with a simulacrum of an animal as a digital object” (Thurston-Torres, p. 163).

All of these distant violences on humans and nonhuman animals broadcasting online bring Jimmy to the question if these people are really being executed and if what he sees are only simulations. “A lot of them look like simulations.” “You never know,” said Crake. “You never know what?” “What is reality?” (Atwood, 2013a, p. 95). Baudrillard asserts that the network of artificial signs becomes “inextricably mixed up with real elements” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.20) and the artificial signs reduced reality to a perfect simulacrum and as a result: “Transgression and violence are less serious because they only contest distribution of the real. Simulation is infinitely more dangerous because it always leaves open to supposition that, above and beyond its object, law and order themselves might be nothing but simulation” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.20). These daily practices of entangled orders of simulacra, from the production of meat to distant violence of both humans and nonhumans as a form of entertainment, as Baudrillard might suggest, is the root of devastation of the postmodern world and its impacts on inferior lives of both nonhumans and humans under anthropocentric capitalist society.

The relationship of photography to reality and its distant suffering can also lead to serious consequences as to objectification and dehumanise its subjects. Susan Sontag famously argues about the cultural implications of photography in her 1977 collection of essays *On Photography* that the act of photographing significantly reduces life to a mere object, rather than a real living individual. Especially in an industrial society, photography can be manipulated by both the public and the one in power.

The camera’s twin capacities, to subjectivize reality and to objectify it, ideally serve these needs and strengthen them. Cameras define reality in the two ways essential to the workings of an advanced industrial society: as a spectacle (for masses) and as an object of surveillance (for

rulers). The production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by a change in images. (Sontag, 2005, p.140)

Pictures and videos are primarily the communication methods in the modern world and the functions they serve to culture are easily abused and never presented to you in an unbiased way. In Sontag's perspective, to take pictures is to objectify by freezing a moment and turning it into a thing that anyone can use as they prefer. Sontag declares "To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (Sontag, 2005, p.10). As if to illustrate Sontag's words in action, Atwood gives us a clear impact of objectification through the eyes of Jimmy and a picture from a freezing video of an exotic girl, Oryx at the age of eight years old, that has become Jimmy and Crake's object of desire ever since they first see her. Crake prints the moment of Oryx looking at the camera and Jimmy or Snowman has saved it, like an object that belongs to him.

Crake pushed the reverse, then the freeze, then the download. Every so often he froze frames. [...] So now he saved that one moment, the moment when Oryx looked. [...] So Crake had printed it, the picture of Oryx looking, and Snowman had saved it and saved it. He'd shown it to Oryx many years later. "I don't think this is me," was what she'd said at first. "It has to be!" said Jimmy. "Look! It's your eyes!" "A lot of girls have eyes," she said. (Atwood, 2013a, pp.103-05)

The pornography of Oryx is actually videos or images of horrible things that happen in a different part of the world. What Jimmy and Crake do is an act of taking in the suffering contents like some pleasurable thing you enjoy while you passively live your life and respond to a small snapshot of a bigger horrible life the suffered ones were living: "What were you thinking?" (Atwood, 2013a, p.105). How Atwood visualises the scene of a faraway sex trafficking and dehumanising business of pornography in the postmodern world through a hyper-sexualised Asian Oryx in videos is served beyond a representation of camera as the male gaze but powerfully objectifying subjects and materialising their sufferings. The act of photography, as

Sontag asserts, is “to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time’s relentless melt” (Sontag, 2005, p.11) and its violence resembles to “a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a sublimated murder—a soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time” (Sontag, 2005, p.10). Without a sense of empathy, Jimmy keeps pushing Oryx for her reasons of committing porns. And as if the camera was a gun, Oryx replies “I ever got the chance, it would not be me down on my knees” (Atwood, 2013a, p. 106). However, Oryx does not receive empathy from the audience like Jimmy who keeps asking “It would be someone else?” instead of feeling bad for his lover’s being abused and forced into sex trafficking. In the industrialised world, women alongside nonhuman animals, are consumed visually and physically by audience and consumers through the act of eating and photography with the help of the postmodern’s distant reality accessible by two dimensional truth of images and videos. Seeing the picture of suffering of people, as simplified by Sontag and Atwood, equates seeing the images of suffering with knowing the suffering of other people. Viewers not only lose the ability to distinguish the difference between reality and simulation, they also lose the ability to emphasise the sufferings of others—both human and nonhuman lives. Unfortunately, as Atwood narrates later on in the trilogy, the way we interact with images more or less relates and the way we react with reality of the world, by commodifying and objectifying lives without empathy.

Sontag’s observations about photography are related to how Baudrillard views manipulated reality under the impacts of consumerism and its exploitation on the environment. To Sontag, photos do not make others’ suffering accessible and understandable but photography is a way of imprisoning truth and making the world accessible to the audience as consumable subjects the same way that the postmodern society commodifies nonhuman lives accessible to consumers through the industrial capitalist mode of production. According to Sontag, photographs “exploit natural resources, increase productivity, keep order, make war, give jobs to bureaucrats. The camera’s twin capacities, to subjectivize reality and to objectify it” (Sontag, 2005, p.140). The process as Sontag describes is similar to the mode of production of capitalism and it represents the way we interact with images and react with reality. As

Sontag explains, “Needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism” (Sontag, 2005, p.18). By turning experience into a way of seeing in order to confirm the reality’s existence, the experience or reality is shrunk to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form. Sontag also echoes Baudrillard’s third stage of simulacra and simulation on how this stage plays at image being an appearance, by suggesting that “To possess the world in the form of images is, precisely, to reexperience the unreality and remoteness of the real. (Sontag, 2005, p.128). Sontag raises more than a question on the reality but more importantly on the ethics of photography and the empathy towards the sufferings of others. Atwood’s trilogy suggests a lack of ethics in a similar distinction or more accurately it offers a way to enable human awareness to regain connection of viewers and the suffering ones in photography. In the scene of Oryx’s child pornography, Jimmy experience what he calls “at least three layers of contradictory make-believe, one on top of the other” and that “they were supposed to look like that” while Jimmy or the audience of that media material is ignoring the violence going on to the sex trafficking victims. Suddenly,

Oryx paused in her activities. She smiled a hard little smile that made her appear much older, and wiped the whipped cream from her mouth. Then she looked over her shoulder and right into the eyes of the viewer—right into Jimmy’s eyes, into the secret person inside him. I see you, that look said. I see you watching. I know you. I know what you want. (Atwood, 2013a, 103)

Atwood makes explicit connections of the absence of reality in the exploitative capitalist mode of production that animalises human beings the same way as they objectifies nonhuman animals, from Jimmy’s observation such as “their kittenish tongues and their tiny fingers” (Atwood, 2013a, 103). Indeed, this idea of animality of women is underlying a direct parallel symptom of oppression in capitalist society, and women and animals are in the frontline.

Atwood’s depiction of how the bodies of both women and animals are represented as consumable objects or victims of capitalism, I would argue, is the intersectional oppression of nonhuman animals and women in conjunction with each other and the environment. Under the industrial capitalist-mode of production,

according to a scholar on interspecies intersectionality Éilis Espiner, “Both humans and nonhuman animals are oppressed and exploited under the current food system” (Espiner, p. iv) and that broken food system is fueled by intensive animal agriculture that creates other social and environmental justice implications and climate crisis. Social inequalities among humans, like the tragic fate that Oryx faces, show many of the same patterns that animals face and this same power structure also oppresses women on their sexual functions by the same systematic violence of patriarchal capitalism. Adams, among other ecofeminists, considers that an intersection between animal/environmental exploitation and women oppression is found in the way the notions of animality have been brought into the concept of gender stereotypes and consumption as parts of human/animal dualism and gendering. Related to Sontag’s observation on photography and its remoteness of the real, Emelia Quinn analyses the dietary choices of Oryx as “a form of protest against Western, meat-eating masculinity” (Quinn & Westwood, p. 159) which is the diet of the cameraman of the child porn films who she notes that “smelled too strong, because he was a meat-eater. He ate so much meat!” but didn’t like eating fish” (Atwood, 2013a, 164). However, Quinn argues that Oryx’s rejection of meat-eating appears to have no direct link to her views on animal ethics. My observation here is most scholars overlook the intersectionality of women and nonhuman animals that Atwood’s texts strongly demonstrate. The cameraman eats so much meat that he smells, while he also conducts continued sexual violation on Oryx and the children, and keeps producing remote violence and broadcasting through the act of photography as if Atwood is trying to emphasise that the intersectional sufferings of women and animals under the patriarchal capitalism should not be considered separate from one another. In relation to this, Adams argues: “An alternative way of considering the girl’s refusal of meat is this: they perceived meat as a symbol of male dominance—whose control over their lives would tighten as they reached adulthood—and thus they rejected not male eros but male power” (Adams, 2010, p.214). This vision of Adams and the intersectionality of women and nonhuman animals gives Oryx a sense of unity with other beings, as I will demonstrate furthermore in the next chapter, and allows Oryx to become the mother to all animals according to Crakers as Oryx suffers the same fate

as animals do, too, in the world that their sufferings are objected and consumable entertainment.

We also need to consider the simulacra articulated through such relationships of the human-animal oppressor – the one who enjoys violence on the other side of the screens. The viewers through the camera, as Sontag argues, “people become customers or tourists of reality” (Sontag, 2005, p.85) who are just visitors of the pain of others and keep it as a token in the form of images, like Crake and Jimmy do. Oryx’s return of their gaze thus challenges the way that photography transforms her into a consumable object and uses it as a way to communicate her sufferings with the audience. Such an approach gives Jimmy the effect of being consumed: “Jimmy felt burned by this look—eaten into, as if by acid” (Atwood, 2013a, 104). Although Jimmy, as one who has been living under the simulacra for his entire life, fails to express his compassion, his reaction instead posts a question on a moral system in a society in which such images and eye contacts cannot draw moral awareness beyond sexuality itself offered for consumption. With that result, the MaddAddam trilogy illustrates further that this dysfunctional consumption, both individual and collective, that we much rather enjoy to take pleasure for ourselves, to which Baudrillard sees this kind of relationship in the capitalist consumer society of “not just one’s relationship with others, but also one’s relation to oneself becomes a consumed relation” (Baudrillard, 1999, p.89).

Building on Baudrillard’s assertion on a consumed relation of people to the society, it is indeed this pleasure for ourselves or narcissism of humans and how destructive consumption can influence all ideologies towards other living things, especially on thinking about human-animal social relation. Baudrillard comments that: “The narcissism of the individual in consumer society is not an enjoyment of singularity; it is a refraction of collective features. However, it is always presented as narcissistic investment of ‘oneself’” (Baudrillard, 1999, p.95). This comment returns us to Atwood’s imagined situation of advertisement as a means for the corporations to manipulate reality to sell their products for the sake of making profit through the rhetoric of self improvement and perfection: “Cosmetic creams, workout equipment, Joltbars to build your muscle-scape into a breathtaking marvel of sculpted granite. Pills to make you fatter, thinner, hairier, balder, whiter, browner, blacker, yellower,

sexier, and happier” (Atwood, 2013a, p.291). Jimmy, from his school life as a son of a microbiologist and of a bioengineer, has been employed as a copywriter for the pharmaceutical industry’s advertising during the pre-apocalypse and writes these make-up words that do not have any existing meaning. “Once in a while he’d make up a word – tensicity, fibracionous, pheromonimal” as to please his employer “because they sounded scientific and had a convincing effect” (Atwood, 2013a, pp.291-2). Through advertisements of mega corporations, fabricated words are seen as credible scientific knowledge even though those words are not related to science at all, “That is why advertising no longer has a territory,” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.93) according to Baudrillard. Science again has an effect of simulacrum that does not hold any reality in itself. Baudrillard mentions in his other book *Simulations* that the collapse of reality into hyperrealism also includes a reproductive medium like advertising. “From medium to medium the real is volatilized; it becomes an allegory of death, but it is reinforced by its very destruction; it becomes the real for the real” (Baudrillard, 1983, p.141-2). In this way, Atwood interrogates the fourth stage of Baudrillard’s simulacra and simulation of which there is “no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation” (Baudrillard, 1994, p.31). AnooYoo a part of the corporate compound which capitalises on the society’s desire for their agelessness and perfection that targets especially on women as the cultural model of self-indulgence, the sense of beauty, charm and youthfulness—simulation of the consumers’ ideal reality that is initially shaped and influenced by the media they consume. Baudrillard argues in *The Consumer Society* that “It is not in the direct discourse of advertising, but there that the real consumption effect is to be found (Baudrillard, 1999, p.122) and the characteristic of the consumer society may be defined as “It is difficult to accept that (human, social, political) relationships are produced in the same way as objects, and that, once they come to be produced in that same way, they become, similarly, objects of consumption” (Baudrillard, 1999, p.172). This seems to accord with Jimmy’s relationship as he has higher career development, the foundation of relationship with others is also changed into an object of “some child’s free gift dug out of a box of cereal, colourful and delightful but useless” (Atwood, 2013a, p.294). Until at one point, after years of being lost in absent territory or a referential being of the hyperreality of the society and the products he has created, Atwood describes

Jimmy's experience that "It felt like a party to which he'd been invited, but at an address he couldn't actually locate. Someone must be having fun at it, this life of his; only, right at the moment, it wasn't him" (Atwood, 2013a, 296). As a product of the industrial capitalist society, well beyond all the superficial social relations to other referential beings, Jimmy finally loses the territory of himself.

However, readers of Atwood's trilogy are able to see two different worlds, the compounds of CorpSeCorps under the simulacra and simulation and the other world of the vegan God's Gardeners that is trying to break away from the corrupted society, returning to reunite with the natural world and treating other species respectfully. Instead of layers of simulation without the original truth in the Compounds' society and corporations, the God's Gardeners attempt to regain the reality by retreating, from the influence of simulacra in media, technology and advertisement of the powerful CorpSeCorps, to present a singular truth and to reunite with nature. According to Baudrillard, in *Simulations*, "To exist from the crisis of representation, you have to lock the real up in pure repetition" (Baudrillard, 1983, p.142). Atwood's world brings us into the hidden place of the God's Gardeners, a group of eco-conscious people who practise an environmental-based religion and spirituality hides themselves away from corporate capitalism, as Baudrillard may put it—"to move the real back to pure objectivity" (Baudrillard, *The Order*, p.143). The God's Gardeners live close to nature and don't take any chemical and animal products as a way of showing respect to human-nonhuman relationships on this planet. The Compounds view the Gardeners, as described by Adam One, as "twisted fanatics who combine food extremism with bad fashion sense and a puritanical attitude towards shopping" (Atwood, 2010, p.58). The Compounds have derided the Gardener's home-grown vegetable based diet as food extremism, but to the Gardeners community, this is an ethical diet that restores their relationship to the earth and nonhuman beings.

Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy does not simply explore the simulacra and problematise the reality construct in the industrial capitalist society to illustrate the impacts of the broken relationship of human and nonhuman beings. Instead, Atwood, as I wish to argue, also applies the use of simulation to create a counter narrative as resistance against the corporate control and bring back the connection of humans and animals via remembering the massive species extinctions caused largely by human's

exploitative activities to animals and the natural world such as overconsumption and industrialisation. Humans' domination establishes alienation between humans and the rest of nature. This alienation from nature, similar to Marx's theory of alienation under the capitalist society as Steven Vogel argues, "arises from the failure to recognize the human origin of objects that have been produced by human activity, and that the overcoming alienation is for him associated with the achievement of this recognition" (Vogel, p. 374). The Extinctathon game that Crake introduced to Jimmy involves clues about plants and species that have gone extinct during the last 1000 years – from dodo to the causes of animals' extinction and players win points for guessing the correct answers: "the habitat and when last seen, and what had snuffed it. (Pollution, habitat destruction, credulous morons who thought that eating its horn would give them a boner)" (Atwood, 2013a, p.92).

Extinctathon is an online networking system operated by a rebellious eco-group known as MaddAddam who links with The God's Gardeners. ("Adam named the living animals, MaddAddam names the dead ones. Do you want to play?" (Atwood, 2013a, 92). The simulacrum of the online game's virtual reality is recreated by Atwood to highlight the lack of concern for the ethical treatment of animals and the natural world. Atwood again emphasises human beings' unethical eating practises that pushes a species towards the extinctions. Unlike other virtual gaming reality and ready-to-consume entertainment of pornography and distant violence that allow the audience or players to completely distance themselves from reality, Extinctathon not only reminds players the existence of the extinct animals, the game attempts to mend the human-animal connection by applying the names of the extinct animals to themselves. By naming "the dead ones", Extinctathon has become the opposite simulacrum of the other online virtual realities that objectify lives into consumable things. The personification of forgotten animals is a simulacrum of reality that brings back lives of the animals who are gone for good; a means to bridge the relation and de-alienation of humans from the nonhuman world. Extinctathon also serves as the Gardeners' online communication channel to other members in the society, but not before establishing the relationship with nonhuman animals as if Atwood is trying to suggest that to break away from the desert of the real of anthropocentrism, our relationship to animals and the natural world is the priority. On recognising

humanity's connectedness to the other lives on planets, Vogel further asserts that the end of alienation means a new kind of humanisation and a new relation to the world:

our connectedness to the environment means rather our rootedness in nature, and the increasing sociality of the physical environment (the result of technological development) appears rather as a symptom of our denial of this connectedness, and hence of our increasing alienation. Thus for this view we overcome our alienation not by explicitly asserting the humanness of the environment, but by acknowledging and emphasizing the naturalness of humans—by learning to live in harmony with nature and to respect its laws instead of trying to dominate it, and above all by limiting the extent to which we act to transform it. (Vogel, 1988, p.376)

By pointing to how living in harmony with nature is the key to the connectedness of new humanity's relation to reality and the world, Atwood leads readers to investigate the simulacra symptoms of capitalist consumerism under the corporate regime that commodify all lives into objects of consumption. It is only when the connection to the environmental world is established, however caused by Crake to release *The Waterless Flood* to bring back what he sees as balance to the world, that leads the trilogy to decentralisation of the humans along with their existing ideology, and the end of Anthropocene. But what is Atwood's solution to actually reset the simulation and reform social structure for climate justice? The next chapter is going to find out.

Chapter 3

Becoming Less Human in the Anthropogenic Climate Catastrophe

Toward the end of both The Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) and Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy, some particularly troubling questions are raised; one question asked by a nonhuman to humans—whether humans are virus; the other question asked by a human to herself—whether a nonhuman race is more human. While it is worthwhile to ask what humankind is, an increasingly more important question to ask in this 21st century under the threat of climate crisis is: how or what can make humans overcome their human-animal moral status for a better chance for survival of all species in this warming planet?

We have explored how the meat industry and its meat-eating ideology pose a particular problem in the world of *The Matrix* and Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy and how it drives the human's world to be the Desert of the Real under the simulacra symptoms of industrial capitalist consumerism. The texts considered in this chapter will further constitute the connection between this challenge of the existing ideological condition of destructive anthropocentric meat ideology and what transformative subjectivity can be the solution to the climate emergency, as queried by science fiction through the perspective of veganism. In the previous chapter, the analysis has drawn on Atwood's clarification that reconnecting with other nonhuman beings can also heal humanity from an existential risk to the health and life from the climate crisis. To go beyond humanist arrogance, as science fiction allows, this chapter crucially interrogates the human-animal boundary within *The Matrix* and the MaddAddam series to recognise how the two texts suggest the solution of human existence to overcome the anthropogenic climate crisis.

In *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Yuval Harari associates humankind with the ecological tragedy that kills off other nonhuman animals everywhere humans spread. “The tragedy opens with a scene showing a rich and varied population of large animals, without any trace of humans. In scene two, Sapiens appear, evidenced by a human bone, a spear point, or perhaps a potsherd.

Scene three quickly follows, in which men and women occupy centre stage and most large animals, along with many smaller ones, are gone (Harari, 2015, p.80). *The Matrix* raises a thought in resonance with Harari's argument. Agent Smith, a planetary nonhuman being, confronts Morpheus with the claim that humans are viruses to this planet as they multiply until "every natural resource is consumed" then spread to another area. "There is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern. Do you know what it is? A virus" (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.98). *Homo sapiens* are scientifically and historically proven as the species who drive species to extinction, one after another over and over. Whether hunting for food, fur or for fun, humans hunt down animals until there are none. Contrary to this, veganism is against hunting and unnecessary suffering to animals, anthropocentrism regards humankind as a separate life form and superior to nature and nonhuman others. The ideological dominance of anthropocentrism values humanity as the most important existence and all other nonhuman beings are means to human ends. If saving the world from anthropogenic climate apocalypse is about the termination of anthropocentrism, would this mean the end of humanity is necessary? In this chapter, I will consider the way that rethinking the relationship between human beings and nonhuman others in both *The Matrix* and Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy enables us to address ourselves from a non-anthropocentric perspective and carefully interrogate humanity's ethics. This chapter, then, will attempt to explore the question of ethics in anthropocentrism, specifically aiming critically to enquire into presuppositions about the meaning of human beings against or above nonhuman others.

Veganism challenges the logic of human ethics in the same way as posthumanism or the field of science fiction demonstrates that the notion of humans at the top of other species and nature no longer makes sense. In Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet*, posthumanism is an ethical position and condition that humans need to figure out to cohabit a multispecies world by extending moral concern to those who are different from us—nonhuman animals. Likewise, veganism encourages us to decentralise and take the interests and rights of species that are different from us seriously. The boundary of human beings and other species is equally important when thinking about human and nonhuman animals social relations. These stories, *The Matrix* and *MaddAddam* confront us by asking us to reconsidering human subjectivity

by highlighting how in the time of climate apocalypse—anthropocentrism is ethically wrong by reversing roles of human and planetary nonhuman others, and more specifically highlighting the difficulty of applying models of morality to another being when ideological norms are different from our own, particularly when the ethics of eating are intertwined with the ethics of living.

To interrogate the ideas of identity between self (human) and other (nonhuman), *The Matrix* explores what it feels like to be the species trapped and farmed under the dominance of intelligent higher beings—squid-like machines. Trinity and Dozer describe the destructive nature of Squiddy as “a killing machine designed for one thing. Search and destroy” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.56). Throughout the story, we learn only a few things about the machines: they are smart and powerful, and they keep human beings in captivity to extract their energy. This destructive nature is uncannily similar to human-nature relations and how humankind hunts and converts life into food. *The Matrix* thus makes us think not only about the fantasy of coexisting with nonhuman others but also the destructive behaviour that obstructs human beings to acknowledge others as a fellow subject. According to Sherryl Vint’s *Animal Alterity* on human and animal study, squid or octopi are lifeforms which “human culture would fail to perceive as sentient” (Vint, 2010, p.159). The cephalopods, consisting of cuttlefish, squid and octopuses, are often considered as one of the most intelligent species who are able to apply logical reasoning to capture prey. Peter Godfrey-Smith, the author of *Other Minds: The Octopus and the Evolution of Intelligent Life* is so fascinated with “the other minds” of the octopus that he compares them to “the closest we will come to meeting an intelligent alien” and he explains later that “yet it’s not really an alien; the Earth and its oceans made us both” (Godfrey-Smith, 2018, pp.5, 119). It means that they are alien to us and humans are equally alien to them. From what both Vint and Godfrey-Smith suggest, what is noticeable here is the borders of different species and the space they occupy to the point that convince humans to perceive squid and octopus as an alien—in terms of their otherness to humans. They are Other only because they are smart and apply reasons and tools, yet they do not look like humans or primates. With reasoning abilities, squids are more than just instinctive creatures—they have minds like humans. That is to say: Squiddy, and other octopus alike, qualify as real life

aliens or cyborgs—creatures or vectors of posthuman relationality in science fiction. Dealing with boundaries of self/other, sf establishes images of otherness by reflecting how we, humankind, think about other species, thus putting all these overlapping ideological, social and ethical borders in question.

The Matrix's Squiddy deals less with being an uncanny object of the human species' repression around the unknown animals, however, and more with the particular anxieties that surround human's exploitation of animals. As *The Matrix* will demonstrate, animals are very much similar to human beings, just as humans are not different from animals. The important question to ask is how our relations change. Vint argues in *Animal Alterity* that: "sf in particular is useful for thinking about the contemporary difficulties of human-animal exchanges given its ongoing interest in rethinking human subjectivity which, as human and animal scholarship has established, requires rethinking the human-animal boundary. Such interrogations offer hope for a changed social world for all species which is urgently needed" (Vint, 2010, p.211). To achieve this, sf, especially *The Matrix*, weaves ways to communicate or listen to nonhuman beings—the real aliens to humanity on this interspecies planet—and to experience what they experience in a human dominated world, in hope that our perception can also shift in the real world.

To shift our sympathies in ways that challenge humans' mindset on anthropocentric dualism of human/animal, and demand new ways to think about subjectivity and personhood, some of the reversal roles of human and nonhuman others in *The Matrix*—in which the humans are treated unkindly the same way that humans treat nonhuman animals—prompt a reconsideration of human's place in the world. Carol J. Adams remarks in *Neither Man nor Beast* that dualism such as human/animal, male/ female, culture/nature and human/nature are seen as oppositional and reduce diversity to two categories: either it is A or B. "We are people, they are beasts." (Adams, 2018, p.179). This oppositional dualism discourages nonhuman consciousness and upholds the logic of domination. Right now humans are at war with many life forms on earth, human life included, because of this destructive logic. Building on Adams' observation on "either man or beast" dualism, one small group of domesticated human beings in *The Matrix* break their ideological and physical imprisonment to challenge the dominance of the intelligent machines, who

are able to personalise to look and behave exactly like humans. Crucially, under the same fate as animals, *The Matrix* keeps the category of human creatures intact; not inferior, not superior—only being victimised and exploited. This means *The Matrix*'s role goes beyond discussing and challenging the logic by which nonhuman creatures should be considered as sentient—because they are. Throughout the story, we tend to root for the victimised human characters to survive and defeat the animal-like machines. But reading beyond the heroic narrative, we might see the parallel struggle of the human characters in *The Matrix* and nonhuman animals in our world. That is why when Agent Smith likens humans to a virus and criticises humans, Morpheus can only remain speechless and uncomfortable. “Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You are a plague. And we are... the cure” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.98). During the scene, while Morpheus is being held captive and under drugs to supply the codes from his brain to Zion's mainframe, his body is described: hunched over, leaking and twitching—the fate that is similar to animals within a laboratory or a slaughterhouse. Agent Smith also uses the same logic of humans categorising other beings to classify human species and states that “you are not actually mammals” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.97) because we do not live in harmony with the surrounding environment as other mammals. Human behaviours are more relatable to viruses. *The Matrix* makes a point that human's logic of dualism as suggested by Adams, either it is A or B, is proven wrong. So theoretically wrong for classifying other species and putting humans above them all. So ethically wrong to classify human species as one of mammal species but drive them to extinction. Up to this point, dignity and identity of humans are shaken: being animalised to even lower than an animal—a virus—a small parasite that clings on the life of an animal host.

To further attempt to shake the border lines of humans and nonhuman others, another essential look is at the mind of Agent Smith, an artificial intelligent machine who seeks a collapse of human/nonhuman subjectivity due to humanity's fail ethical behaviours, especially environmental ethics. Agent Smith is portrayed as an artificial intelligent machine in the physical form of a human body with his own mind and desire to be free from the Matrix system. “I hate this place. This zoo. This prison. This reality” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.147). The same reality that the humans have made as a consequence of how humans do not want to cede control and our position

as the strongest and smartest being on the planet. *The Matrix* in this way works against typical representations of nonhuman others in human beings' culture and history that reduce them to creatures of instinct alone—killing and surviving. Instead the machines express their environmental ethics and their concern at the root of the problem—man-made climate destruction. From what Morpheus describes as “the desert of the real” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.38), the Wachowskis visualise climate destruction as the impact of how humans “scorched the sky”(The Wachowskis, 1999, p.39) to block the sun, the energy source of the machines. Although unmentioned in *The Matrix*, all life forms naturally depend on the sun and humankind is a part of the ecological system. Whether the Wachowskis realise it or not, blocking a portion of the sun's rays is an “geoengineering” or “global-scale technological interventions that would attempt to reverse rapid warming” (Klein, 2015, p.57), as asserted by Naomi Klein in *This Change Everything*, as this kind of intervention is not an climate action but it is about protecting our way of life by taming the nature and this kind of thinking Klein believes that got us into this mess. The real world exists today for *The Matrix* is “the ruins of a future city protruding from the wasteland like the blackened ribs of a long-dead corpse” (The Wachowskis, 1999, p.39). The nonhuman subjectivity, in this case the environment, has long been ignored and animalised by comparing the city with the bones and dead corpse of an animal, as if the city is killed by human species. The capitalist economy increasingly regards the world as a resource and turns everything into objects for the human subject. To live is essentially to live the life of another; animals or plants. Killing for survival is an unavoidable interaction within multispecies cohabitation but overkill other species—the act that only humans are capable of—can lead to biodiversity loss, resulting in the extinction of species. As Haraway suggests, “It is not killing that gets us into exterminism, but making beings killable” (Haraway, 2008, p.80). Perceptions of what life is categorised as fundamentally killable and consumable belong to human sovereignty and these perceptions also shape the future as *The Matrix* foretells. Sf widens our perspective to see from a non-anthropocentric point of view to see how repulsive our carnivorous habits would lead us to. *The Matrix* challengingly puts humans on the other side of this threshold to problematise what or who counts as edible, huntable, trappable, containable for higher beings' use. To defy the nonhuman category “killable,” the

unkillable Agent Smith firmly stands with/for the nonhuman others—animals and environment—to overcome humans’ anthropocentrism and their false authority to acknowledge others as made killable and edible.

From the vegan perspective, as Morpheus and his crew continue the survival quest to overcome illusion of the notions of animal eating culture and human, *The Matrix* emphasises that the future of human species must now admit that to survive the climate catastrophe, human animals cannot be disentangled from the nonhuman others—no longer at the central or most important element of existence. By such reduction of the human-animal boundary and ethical conceptions, Sheryl Vint takes an openly accepting stance toward postmodernism in relation to posthumanism. In *After the Human*, she asserts “if so much of what is wrong with ‘the human’ lies in its claims to represent all while ignoring so much, it is fitting that approaches to posthumanism are multiple, even at times contradictory: what is required is a conversation, not a fixed concept” (Vint, 2020, p.2). Human beings are still trapped in our Anthropocentric morality. Thus what happens between Morpheus and Agent Smith is how we enter into a conversation with a nonhuman being. Such desire to communicate with another nonhuman being is usually reflected in sf more than in fiction. The reversal roles of human-nonhuman animals in *The Matrix*’s alternative reality enables us to grasp some understanding from the nonhuman’s point of view through having similar, relatable experiences via our imaginative capacities to recognise nonhuman beings with an empathetic stance. To equally converse with humans—both within and beyond the text, nonhumans like Agent Smith need to take the form and language of humans. Building on Vint’s suggestion on conversation, I argue that the kind of open conversation that science fiction leads to further discussion about human ethics is what we need to break away from the same old sets of morality in this multispecies community where humanising anthropocentric ethics offers a limited scope and is no longer applicable. Surely the same insight applies to Atwood’s *MaddAddam*, the hybridity of Crakers themselves and also the babies indicate that the separation between different species, such as humans and other forms of nonhuman others, should not be taken as fundamentally, but can live in ethical coexistence. But does that mean we need to question all of our existing social norms and morality too?

The hybrid children of male Crakers and female humans in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* negotiates the ethical perspective of anthropocentrism and examines a way of thinking about human nature beyond the division of human-animal boundary and its dualism. The anxiety about the hybridity of babies reveals a number of interesting things about the morality we construct. The moment Ren tells Toby that Amanda is pregnant, everyone is worried and the girls want to get rid of the baby as they believe the baby is the product of the evil Painballers who rape and plan to eat Amanda's liver after they have used and had enough of her. The idea of having a baby to a Painballer father Painballer dad to a baby even dehumanises Amanda's life to "like a zombie." When Toby recalls the situation in her mind, she thinks there can be another possibility that the child's father is one of the Crakers. The nature of these male humans and hybrid humans described by Toby is completely contrasting. Toby compares the two men as murderers, rapists and torturers, describing them as "the flowers, the signing and the enthusiastic tangle" (Atwood, 2014, p.264). Even though both of the different species force Amanda into sexual intercourse without her consent but Toby refers to the Crakers' sexual incident as "not as bad as you think" and "a cultural misunderstanding." But to Ren, as another victim of this cultural misunderstanding of rape as well, the male species to choose as fathers of children are either "an ultracriminal or some kind of gene-spliced weirdo monster" (Atwood, 2014, p.265) and that the child of Craker is a Frankenbaby. Such a description leads readers into thinking: what is better for them, carrying the child of a monstrous human being or the child of an innocent monster who is good at heart but not yet accepted in human society? Yet in striving for such thinking or rethinking, rather than critiquing the ethics of Crakers, the appropriate questions to ask in this context is: what organises human beings to certain norms such as the concept of consent, ending up reinforcing the human-nonhuman boundary, and why at the end of the story Atwood trusts that gene-spliced Frankenbabies are a new beginning for multispecies planet.

From a humanist point of view, according to Abby Hafer, sex is regarded as "a means of positive personal expression, pleasure, intimacy and/or bonding, and communication, as well as sometimes for reproduction" (Hafer, 2021). While humanism sees sex as meaningful and intimate "means," Crakers see it as an "act" for

reproduction purpose only. According to Glenn, the scientist who engineers Crakes: “Sex is no longer a mysterious rite, viewed with ambivalence or downright loathing, conducted in the dark and inspiring suicides and murders” (Atwood, 2013a, p.195). To Glenn, and from nonhuman’s perspective, sex and courtship can be seen as only a few first acts before reproduction process, just as some animals do; so simple like how male penguins present round stones or the male silverfish presents a sperm packet. Crake eliminates all unnecessary feelings such as jealousy and sexual competition because he sees them as the destructive root cause of many global violence and problems. So Crakers are created to not acknowledge the morality of consent as it is not against their culture—their practice involves mating four men with a single woman once every three years. Looking at the morality from this perspective, Toby seems right that this is “a cultural misunderstanding” after all. Readers may feel uncomfortable with Craker’s mating ritual because they come from different cultural settings and related values. Yet, these values are also what humankind applies and dehumanises nonhuman others outside the humanist morality and categorise those who are equipped with different ethics as less-than-human. Thus, uncomfortable feelings in us, readers, as well as in human characters in Atwood’s trilogy is how the sf texts push us to think beyond humanism to explore possibilities of new ethics for the cohabitational future of a multispecies planet that mutually respects difference. It is our responsibility to respect the morality and subjectivity of nonhuman others. Or as Vint puts it: “undoubtedly, new ethics are needed, but the work that remains is collectively to negotiate what they might be, from a perspective of solidarity that simultaneously leaves space for difference” (Vint, 2020, p.7). Human’s existing morality must give way to ethics of multispecies and being open to what “culture” means among different community practices of different species that no longer fit into any inherited cultural categories of humans.

When the humans in Atwood’s trilogy make first contact with the Crakers, they presume them to be an inferior species of a pre-human uncivilised era, with a hint of an innocent idyll, they look to be otherwise neither savage nor noble. Compared to the Pigoons who are equipped with human brains, the Crakers are not fitted to our current standard version of humanity—in terms of their thinking and morality. In contrast, Pigoons are seen as strong, heroic and ethical creatures who are

willing to fight and sacrifice themselves for their community. In the trilogy, it is clear to everyone in the pre-apocalypse that Pigeon meat is deemed undesirable for humans' appetite because they do not want to eat human cells. Pigeons are used to grow human organs; or as Atwood puts it, "an assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs in a transgenic knockout pig host—organs that would transplant smoothly and avoid rejections" (Atwood, 2013a, p.25). Although Pigeons are materialised for human's purpose, gene-editing techniques such as the CRISPR also used to grow human organs in live pigs in real life is seen as a progression of life. For Nadine Ehlers, a specialist on the socio-cultural study of the body, the thought about life in relation to posthumanism is a shift in the concept of life and a way that humans have pushed the possibilities of and for life beyond its perceived limits—"new forms of human-animal entanglements—chimeras—where animal material is replaced with human tissues and cells" (Vint, 2020, p.122). I am inclined to disagree with insights on gene-editing techniques that objectify nonhuman others as Ehlers suggest it is a shift of life. However, it is as if Pigeons are tasked by Atwood to humanise the animal subject to leverage nonhuman beings for anthropocentrism and serve as a workspace or reconsidering the ethical stance of human beings—dietary stance, especially. Pigeons, as a result, are new posthumans with existing morality and culture we can associate with, but more humble and noble in the form of nonhuman animals—ones that are no longer inferior but we can now see as equal.

If Pigeons are pushing the human-animal boundary through the process of humanisation, the Crakers should also be generally read as combining animalising and dehumanising forces as two complementary processes of post anthropocentrism to deconstruct hierarchies and exclusions of nonhuman species. The world consists of a vital web of complex multispecies interrelations and posthuman ethics humbly urges to embrace differences of nonhuman others by removing both the obstacle of anthropocentrism and its negativity. But to eliminate all the barriers, the posthuman ethics take time for humans to understand. Before the human characters accept the Crakers, they struggle with the concept of dualism constructed in human society, as reflected in Toby's mind:

Toby tries to think of something to say—something upbeat and soothing. Genes aren't a total destiny? Nature versus nurture, good can come of evil? There are the epigenetic switches to be considered, and maybe the Painballers just had very, very bad nurturing? Or how about: the Crakers may be more human than we think? But none of it sounds very convincing, even to her. (Atwood, 2014, p.265)

Thinking about nonhuman creatures from under the human perspective enables oppositional dualism mode of thinking, as Adams asserts. One is defined to be this or the other. Toby's thought clearly reflects the dualism of scientific (genes)/destiny, nature/nurture, good / evil. And one can presume that nonhuman beings are lower or worse than bad human beings, like Toby cannot convince herself that the Crakers may be "more human" than we think. This stresses the binary division of human-nonhuman beings. The dilemma in Toby's mind reflects how dualism should be overcome to open up new considerations of nonhuman agency and its identity and meaning beyond the Anthropocentric perspective. And Atwood aims to demonstrate whether it is possible for us to erase the separation between different species, such as humans and other forms of nonhuman others, so that we can live in ethical coexistence. According to Haraway, our constructs of nature/culture come with "with major consequences of life and death, health and illness, longevity and extinction are a setup that blocks peaceful cohabitation among species. She strongly suggests that the dualism must be seen as diversity, not binary:

There is only the chance for getting on together with some grace. The Great Divides of animal/human, nature/culture, organic/technical, and wild/domestic flatten into mundane differences—the kinds that have consequences and demand respect and response—rather than rising to sublime and final ends (Haraway, 2008, p.15)

At the end, after the battle, the girls become quite fond of the hybrid babies, even Amanda. While the human survivors also do not reject the babies, Toby also finds it is interesting to learn more about the hybrid babies and their environmental-friendly features inherited from the Crakers. Here Atwood leaves it

open for us to reconsider whether humanity can change the foundation of ideology to be more inclusive with the diverse species. And begging yet another question, or perhaps several questions at once. Should we stick to that ideology in the time of climate apocalypse? And what does it mean to be human, or “more human”?

Aiming to solve the ongoing moral and climate crisis, Glenn wants to wipe out the vast majority of the human race with a virus and creates a new race of genetically modified Crakers to replace *Homo sapiens* and its corrupted values. The Crakers are designed to be environmentally friendly and mutually connected to other organisms on earth—they listen and understand the beings in the natural world. The Crakers seem more associated with animality than human beings, regarding our ideological foundation. They are described as beautiful by their skin and equipped with features such as being immune to UV damage, which is useful for living in the catastrophic levels of warming. Their diet is compared to herbivores animals who enjoy meat-free, simple vegetation. For the Crakers, love and romance are entirely absent and the female’s reproductive organ would turn blue when it is time, like baboons, giving pheromone scent to lure many males at once to impregnate her once every three years. Like Agent Smith, one significant feature of the Crakers that humans can associate or distinguish the Crakers from nonhuman others is their ability to communicate in language that human beings understand. This way, Atwood’s the Crakers are constructed in an aesthetic production of posthumanist technique of consciousness and communication that stirs the unity of humanist subject, according to Bruce Clarke’s on the nonhuman within literature, in which he asserts that non and posthuman can be seen alongside—rather than just after the human (Clarke & Rossini (Eds.), 2016). Atwood does not provide us an answer to Toby’s doubt if the Crakers are “more human”, instead lets us witness the subjectivity of other nonhuman beings to encourage us to give up human exceptionalism. As a consequence, resistance to human exceptionalism requires resistance to humanisation and the embodiment of animalising the Crakers’ characteristic is deemed useful here for posthuman sf reading. The Crakers take human form—but go beyond the human’s boundaries—making them, and us, difficult to identify humanness or animalness. The posthuman body of the Crakers also challenges speciesist logic of domination of humanism and its definition on who is exploitable or killable by human beings. By inheriting both

traits of humans and the new human Crakers, Atwood's Crakers are here not to replace humanity entirely but to displace the reigning humanist biases within existing corrupted ideologies to promote better relations between humans and nonhumans. To overcome the Anthropocene, the Crakers remind us that new humanity needs a transformative co-evolution that breaks down humans and nonhuman categories, in order to successfully live in cohabitation on this interspecies planet.

The coevolution of the mixed organic–technological, cross-species and cross-culture hybrid breed for human race is brought here to explore how transhumanism can help us shape the future so that all beings can coexist and, if possible at all, prevent climate apocalypse. Yes, transcending humans' biological limitations is desirable, but are transhumans who come with different values like the Crakers acceptable in human society? Atwood seems to question our common sense morality if it is applicable for our survival against the environmental crisis. We may need more than evolving our bodies, but our minds too. Robert Ranisch asserts in *Post-and transhumanism: An introduction's* chapter on morality that genetic engineering offers new momentum to debates on moral enhancement and we might be able to directly influence human behaviour for the better:

This is necessary because human's biological and psychological nature is ill equipped to deal with the most serious and pressing problems of the 21st century. Our common-sense morality may have worked for a long period of our evolutionary history. But today we have to tackle global problems such as the climate change [...]. (Ranisch and Sorgner, 2014, p.164)

Crucial to Ranisch's suggestion on morality and transhumanism, climate change should not be just the physical change of the planet, but should require the change in our moral status, which has long prevented us from addressing the crisis adequately, because the climate crisis has become an existential crisis for human species. The Crakers already question the ethics of humans and the cultural representations of animals that tell us so little about the real identity of animals but too much about animal representations in human ideology. Yet, before the human characters in Atwood's trilogy come to any acceptance about the new human race in

their social group of human circle, the hybrid babies even further the debate and our struggle to accept the borderless possibilities of human-animal relations in human's body and morality.

The hybrid babies pose a particular problem in the world of Atwood's story as they are at first remarked by Toby as "Frankenbaby", a name invoking the famous first sf monster and their place in social relations with humans; us and them. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explores quasi-human creations, and some other big questions about humanity such as human's prejudice of nonhuman creatures. The appearance of the Frankenstein creature is deemed so horrifying to human's sight that the creator abandons him, and is also rejected by human society in general. Looking beyond its physical look and its tragic life, Frankenstein's otherness—looking like a human, with a mind of a human, but not "perfect" enough to be a human—blurs such distinctions of biological and cultural differences by including animality within its moral codes, but deeply seeking to be included within the moral codes of humanity. The becoming-human of the Frankenstein beast is violently rejected and discriminated against by human's society. The almost similar situation arises again in Atwood's trilogy as the Crakers are also created to be more like animals, physically and morally, and also discriminated by humanity, although not violently like the fate of Frankenstein's monster but in a way that readers feel is normal enough to exclude them from our race. The human circle is drawn in such a way that both the Crakers and the other animals are naturally excluded from it. However, as Atwood makes clear, the real threat at that time is not the otherness the Crakers bring but the corrupted human individuals that are causing harm to all beings in this interspecies community. In this way, the interspecies hybrid of the MaddAddam's realm from a transhumanist perspective shines a better opportunity for cohabitation against speciesism of humans. Ranisch observes that interspecies hybrids are indication that "no clear line can be drawn between human beings, nonhuman beings, and possible artificial life forms that could justify discrimination in moral status" (Ranisch and Sorgner, 2014, p.156). This new interspecies and our new moral status thereby, hopefully, create a more equitable and livable world for all beings, especially a new ethical stance on eating animals.

Adams argues in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* that Frankenstein's monster is a vegetarian and his vegetarianism restores the absent referent of animals in meat eating that humanity ignores. By drawing a connection between the vegetarianism of Frankenstein's monster and how Toby refers to the hybrid babies as "Frankenbaby", the meat-free dietary principle of human animals and companionship of nonhuman animals, I argue, are how Atwood demonstrates that multispecies can live in mutual consumption and dependency without reducing some species to objects under some discriminating ethics. The Frankenstein creature claims: "My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid, to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment" and by adding his vision to have a partner who joins his vegetarianism and live a life peacefully and equally to all beings, among animals as companions. "My companion will be of the same nature as myself, and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human" (Shelley, 2010, p.128-9). With vegetarianism as his ethics, animals' parts will not be used for their bed or their food. Living under the sun, the creature proposes that himself and other life forms should be recognised as equal as man, not as separated. Throughout the story, the vegetarian monster emphasises that his existence is unfulfilling without a companion. The desire for love and relationship is what draws the distinction between us and others. From a humanist point of view, to be in love means to be worldly, to be in connection with significant otherness and signifying others. And that is what the creature yearns for —a connection. Acquiring an intercourse with a female partner, therefore, enables the creature to mend the broken relationship between nonhumans and humans—but it is one-sided and not returned by humans. But the mission to unite us and them seems to be successful for the Crakers. In Atwood's trilogy, women and nonhuman animals are united through sexual intercourse. From this perspective, the Crakers and their veganism establish new relations among humans and nonhumans alike and perhaps improve human existence by erasing human subjectivity and moral status, not human existence, for the future generation to become a posthuman subject. As if that was the only way to demonstrate that human and nonhuman others are companions and deserve mutual

respect. However, there is one thing that is clear—a cross-species connection is made possible.



Chapter 4

Mouth and Meat:

Discourse and Transforming Climate Activism

In *The Matrix*, before Neo is debugged, Trinity reminds him, “You know that road. You know exactly where it ends. And I know that’s not where you want to be” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., p.25). Trinity is warning Neo that the road that leads back to the Matrix, living under the illusion and the control of the machine, is a wrong route. Neo must walk on a new road to break free from the false ideology. As I have raised previously in the Introduction and the previous chapters, the existing animal-eating dominant has been constructed through ideology and discourse to justify exploitation and commodification of nonhuman others. As if to counter this oppressive narrative of meat culture that worsens the climate crisis, Atwood imagines vegan discourse in her MaddAddam trilogy in order to present the possibilities of a new discourse created in a vegan society that include nonhuman animals as sentient subjects with consciousness, and as more than simply food produced by the meat industry. In the previous chapter, I explored Atwood’s representation of the third stage of Baudrillard’s simulacrum in the MaddAddam trilogy and investigated the simulacra symptoms of capitalist consumerism under the corporate regime that commodify nonhuman lives into objects of consumption—to the point that the planet is driven to climate apocalypse. In this chapter, my focus turns to how Atwood, under veganism, imagines possibilities of how today’s society can be different if we change the discourse that oppresses animals to a more inclusive one. Like the texts discussed in the previous chapter, such discourse and ideology of animals as the object of consumption has fueled human exceptionalism and the violent and exploitative treatment of animals and the natural world that worsen the climate crisis. With this new narrative of Atwood’s that breaks away from the dominant narrative of animal oppression, I argue that it is Atwood’s activism, based on the production of alternative discourses, that takes place in literary works outside of social movement with an intention to influence a positive change in the real world.

It is essential to note that science fiction is an effective medium for articulating and exploring the relationship between discourse and social values in language and social practices, as critics are inclined to suggest. Sherryl Vint asserts that “speculative fiction critiques and rethinks the discourses by which we understand commonplace reality. It is thus not merely a fiction about the difference between the fictional world and our own, but one in which the ontology of “reality” itself is unstable (Vint, 2014, p.90). Another scholar of science-fiction studies Veronica Hollinger also briefly undertakes literary analysis of science fiction and suggests that “the fictional discourses of sf can literalize, unconfined by the generic limitations of realism” (James & Mendlesohn (ed.), 2004, p.131). And this is, in turn, followed by how the whole trilogy has been created to cope and warn about the anthropogenic climate doom and solutions to bend the relationship of human-nonhuman beings before the point of no return. The function of discourse within science fiction, especially in Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy, is provided with a special role—to directly challenge the comfortable assumptions of the dominant ideology. Throughout the trilogy, we are repeatedly reminded of how much this world has indeed changed within a small society of *God’s Gardeners* and their counter discourse. Milner and Burgmann note that: “in climate fiction the range of points of view is not simply a matter of eutopia or dystopia, but also of different responses to climate change. Here, the range runs roughly parallel to options available in various kinds of real-world discourse” (Milner & Burgmann, 2020, p.43). Beyond dystopia view of the future, all possible depictions of alternative discourse in science fiction can be viewed as a literary genre that works in harmony with approaches that aim to deconstruct the rigidity of binary opposition, such as human/nature and human/animal in order to invalidate fixed identities and radically construct a new and perhaps to better discourse to make the world better for all lives.

Discourse is viewed as a concrete version of ideology. And because discourse is a social practice that transmits ideology, it also reflects a distorted view of reality, if any, and the power relationship within that society. Being a community member, we all take part in producing and receiving discourse in the society that reassures us about notions and ideas that we can recognise ourselves. However, as Wolfgang Teubert, a scholar of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis highlights it in

his book *Meaning, Discourse and Society*: “In principle, everyone has a voice in the discourse. But in reality we find that our modern society is neatly divided into those who are commissioned to produce texts for the media and the rest of us who consume them” (Teubert, 2010, p.1). I depend on a simple assumption: under patriarchy and capitalism, there are parallel common oppressions of lesser status of women and animals in the meat-eating world. Once we explore the layers of meat ideology, I intend to start the analysis by considering innovations in discourse in Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy along with its representation as the embodiment of meaning to see to what extent Atwood sets out to rebrand and counter the discourse of the oppressed—women and nonhuman others—with a new perspective on animals, food and climate justice. The alternative discursive formulations are common in speculative fiction that imagines new social and cultural ways of being. Or as Sherryl Vint simply puts it, speculative fiction critiques and rethinks the discourses of our world that we know; the world which “the ontology of ‘reality’ itself is unstable” (Vint, 2014, p. 90). The similar thinking, as I observe, may serve as a mode for Atwood to reimagine the unstable and unjust discourse for the oppressed too.

Atwood reveals one of her beliefs that “unless environmentalism becomes a religion it’s not going to work” (qtd. in Wagner, 2009). Religion, as a social ideology, shapes and guides social and political behaviour of people in society. Thus, Atwood’s opinion of how environmentalism must become a religion is, I assert, the construct of her imagined discourse is aimed to rewrite the ideology of human exceptionalism undergirded by religions that privileged the human subject. Adam One and the God’s Gardeners constitute perhaps the most significant foundation of discourse circulated in the MaddAddam trilogy that attempts to alter the animal-eating system both in the fictional and the real world. In the trilogy, the religion of God’s Gardeners constitutes a combination of biblical texts, environmentalism, and veganism. In other words, according to Bouson, “Atwood mixes together science, religion and environmentalism as she imagines the eco-religion of the pacifist and vegetarian God’s Gardeners” (Bouson, 2011, p.18). From God’s Gardeners’ sermons, hymns to everyday conversations, I aim to explore the consequences of the alternative discourse against meat ideology on characters’ verbal and behavioural practices and reactions to see to what extent Atwood sets out to rebrand and counter the discourse

of the oppressed—women and nonhuman others. Above all, I argue that Atwood utilises these texts as her activism by rewriting the discourse of vegan dietary stance and a call to action from a vegan and ecofeminist perspective to shift people's mindset and response in our world with a new perspective on animals, food and climate justice.

To rethink the lives of nonhuman others more seriously and respectfully, this chapter will use the method of Michel Foucault's discourse analysis to look closely on Atwood's manipulation of dominant discourse, alongside with the forms of talk and texts produced and consumed by people in the animal-eating society. According to Foucault, discourses are produced by effects of power within a social order. As a result, discourses of human-animal boundary and gender are overlapping within the patriarchal discourse of men's superiority that links humans more closely with male and female more closely with inhumanness. It is crucial here to explore intersectional questions of specism, anthropocentrism, global capitalism and gendering that lead to intersectional oppression of women and nonhuman others. With this assertion, I argue that creates new discourse to challenge the dominant one of meat culture that encourages men's superiority while oppresses human-animal boundary, and later shifts the point of view from Jimmy to Toby and then to a nonhuman creature respectively in the second and the last book of the trilogy, I argue, are the ways Atwood engages with the idea of shifting narrative and discourse as an climate activism from the perspective of veganism to establish new relations among humans and nonhumans in resisting the power of the dominant animal-eating culture to avoid the climate apocalypse.

This chapter begins with an overview of Michel Foucault's perspective on discourse and in order to situate Atwood's characters' words and conversations that are different to the common perception will be discussed. It may serve as equally important to discuss corporate communication, focusing specifically on discursive strategies of meat discourse that corporations employ to legitimise their actions. At the same time, Atwood's created discourse from the perspective of vegan environmentalism provides resistances or ways of counteracting them through social and political reforms. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the practical and ethical consequences that arise when Atwood applies the counter

discourse and its ideology to the imagined society before outlining some of the benefits and opportunities that the new discourse can bring to a climate solution.

The meat industry is responsible for the single largest anthropogenic use of land on the planet, causing sufferings to countless animal lives and harms to human health, planetary health and fueling the climate crisis throughout the supply chain. Crucially, animal meat has long been normalised and widely regarded as a natural human resource that is necessary to feed the world and to the current global food systems. Discursive constructs are processes of normalisation—by distinguishing commodifying animals as the normal while obscuring other practices such as veganism as the abnormal. Animal meats are often described by the meat industry with words such as fresh, high-quality meat at the best price. This discourse allows producers and consumers to dissociate meat from its animal origins along with nonhuman suffering and the environmental cost to keep global appetite for meat. By becoming merely the protein resource, animal lives and bodies are materialised as livestock. Ruth Harrison coined the phrase “animal machines” in her book in 1964 of the same name to illustrate the intensive factory farming at that time, which the situation has today become even worse. The visualisation of the animal production is vividly represented, as discussed previously, in *The Matrix* as the movie establishes humanity’s fate the same way as animals in the factory farm being used as energy for the superior beings. Our World in Data calculates that “hundreds of millions of animals get killed for meat every day” and among them are 140,000 slaughtered chickens for every minute (Roser, 2023). Harrison asked, “Have we the right to treat living creatures solely as food converting machines?” (Harrison, 2013, p.37). Harrison’s choice of word and the meat discursive frames as elaborated here clearly show how factory farming has commodified and reduced nonhuman to units of productivity. The discourse dissociates meat from its animal origins while justifying the endless continuation of activities known to be tremendously contributing to the climate culprit while at the same time deframing and standing in the way of an alternative solution of a better food system for a livable future for all lives, not just human beings.

Foucault straightforwardly claims about his study on power that his objective is “to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 1982, p.777), however, scholars, including Sherryl Vint, assert that Foucault never “directly addressed questions of animal agency” (Vint, 2010, p. 445), or the power relationships between humans and nonhuman animals. A few Foucault critics have noticed Foucault’s accounts of power that are applicable to human-nonhuman animal relations in the meat industry. I argue that Foucault’s concept of normalisation of power plays an important role in the analysis of discourse here in this chapter. The dominant discourses around animal consumption and production are currently obstructing the subjectivity of animals and normalising commodification and machine-like uses of animals to meet the demand of growing animal consumption for the meat industry. Clare Palmer analyses Foucault’s thought about animality in *Madness and Civilization*, saying that Foucault’s work on “the repressive and creative effects of power on bodies offers a range of tools for thinking through just these kinds of human/animal relations” (Calarco & Atterton (ed.), 2004, p.83). Another critic Matthew Cole asserts in accordance that “Recently, those tools have been taken up in respect of ‘farmed’ animals” (Cole, 2011) to consider the dominant discourse of meat. By considering Foucault’s conception of power with the politics of animal agriculture whose ontological position in that reality is socially constructed, I argue that a shift in the dominant discourse towards the subjectivity of animals can challenge the dominant human-centric framings of industrial food systems and the regimes that sustain it and reinforce solutions towards solving climate crisis and this is what, as I assert, Atwood exercises in the imagined discourse if it can resist and move away from the existing dominant discourse and power that is destructive for nonhuman beings and the planet.

Foucault emphasises that “[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Power and resistance may suggest two sides of the same coin and resistance is crucial to understanding how power is performed. As the chapter will illustrate, I argue that by stating that the resistance “is never in a position of exteriority”, this enables human individuals, as the ones within power positions over nonhuman animals, to resist the dominant power of meat

discourse and create a new power relation that bring forth power relations of animal's subjectivity in vegan discourse. Or as expressed in Foucault's theory "The Subject and Power":

I would like to suggest another way to go further toward a new economy of power relations, a way that is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and one that implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. (Foucault, 1982, 780)

As power is frequently exercised and enacted through language and within discourse, so indeed the forms of resistance against different forms of power, especially the dominant discourse of meat, may involve language as a medium to bring change from the inside within power positions over nonhuman animals and applying the counter discourse to manifest power and magnify the voices of the voiceless. Language is therefore critical both in regard to the discourse or the politics of meat in general and also in relation to Foucault's conception of power. Carol J. Adams also strongly voices in her *The Sexual Politics of Meat* about the subjectivity of animals in discourse that "[b]y my own silencing, I endorsed the dominant discourse that I was seeking to deconstruct" (Adams, 2015, p.xi). Adams asserts that nonhuman animals are made absent twice: once in the act of meat eating and again in language:

Language can make animals absent from a discussion of meat because the acts of slaughtering and butchering have already rendered the animal as absent through death and dismemberment. Through language we apply to animals' names the principles we have already enacted on their bodies. (Adams, 2015, p.50)

Adams suggests that, through language, thoughts about animals are separated from the concept of meat when animals are replaced with new words to refer to their meat; such as pork for pig meat and beef for cows, but generally append the word “meat” to an animal’s name only when that form of meat is not culturally and usually consumed. With her intention to restore the absent referent of animals, Adams declares her determination that “[a]nimals may be an absent referent point in discourse but this need not continue” (Adams, 2015, p.42).

Significantly Adams raises about writing and vegetarianism or veganism, especially from the perspective of women writers with the intertwined oppressions in sexual violence and meat eating as we explored in the Introduction earlier, and their point of intersection in the absent referent that: “When women writers include vegetarianism in a novel it will represent a complex layering of respect for the literal and an acknowledgment of the structure of the absent referent” (Adams, 2015, p.90). To a degree, Adams, perhaps not so surprisingly, analyses that many novels of Atwood, before the MaddAddam trilogy, also expressed the politics of mythmaking and by doing so the author wields the power to “control the stories, control memory and the future” (Adams, 2015, p.169) as shown in Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye*, *Surfacing* and *The Edible Woman*. One clear sample that Adams asserts is in *Surfacing* and Atwood’s observation on meat eating and how she reconnects animal lives to meat discourse :

In *Surfacing*, Margaret Atwood offers this observation about eating animals: “The animals die that we may live, they are substitute people [...] And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ-flesh resurrecting inside us, granting us life.” Vegetarian activities counter patriarchal consumption and challenge the consumption of death. Feminist-vegetarian activity declares that an alternative worldview exists, one which celebrates life rather than consuming death; one which does not rely on resurrected animals but empowered people. (Adams, 2015, p.175)

The intersections between discourses of human-animal boundary and gender are overlapping within the patriarchal discourse of men’s superiority that links

human more closely with male and female more closely with inhumanness. Similar to Adams' claim, the traces of language, as Derrida evokes in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2008), mark the constitution of "man" via the human-animal boundary and his superiority over animals, or those in "the grand territory of the beasts", of which Adams argues in *Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990) that there is a structural relation of oppression toward animals and women in our meat-eating culture. Throughout the first book in the trilogy, *Oryx and Crake*, Oryx has been merely an object of abuse for sexual desire and her name is left unknown in the novel. The name "Oryx" was created by Crake, the scientist who resembles God/creator and a man of power. Prorokova-Konrad stresses that both the name equating her to an animal and a herbivore who is slaughtered by slitting her throat by Crake and her life parallel violence inflicted on animals (Prorokova-Konrad, 2021, p.81). This vividly matches Adams' argument of the sexual politics of meat and violence, especially to pornography and prostitution. With all this assertion, how the second and the last book of the trilogy shift the point of views from Jimmy to Toby, and later to a nonhuman creature, I argue, is the way Atwood engages with the idea of shifting narrative and discourse to redefine the relationship between the human-animal boundary and the Western cultural construction of women as closer to the being of nonhuman animals within the current context and the threat of climate crisis.

Just as Adams suggests that vegetarianism or veganism in literary works is a powerful tool to control a discourse for the future, Foucault intuitively considers discourse as a critical tool to bring change in individuals and to transform society and history. As Branca Falabella Fabricio and Luiz Paulo Moita-Lopes argue on discourse and history,

As the philosopher of power-resistance, Foucault was also drawing attention to where action is and to how we are acting. By operating on the capillarity of power, he contended that we act through discourse in the world (Foucault [1972]1984). In discursive practices, the nanoscale, or microphysics of power, is where we can resist solidified meanings. It is where history is transformed. (De Fina & Georgakopoulou (ed.), 2020, p. 75)

Foucault once stated that: “We have to know the historical conditions which motivate our conceptualization. We need a historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 1982, p.778). According to Foucault’s perception of discourse, it is a force to influence the citizens to see the social realities around them, or to make someone follow certain rules. According to Gunther Kress, who synthesises ideas from Marx and Foucault with literary studies on power, ideology and discourse, the transformation of one wording necessarily involves a transformation from one reality to another. Kress argues in his account of Halliday’s theory of language that language does not merely mimic meanings, instead it creates meaning. Roger Power importantly poses Kress’s radical questions about the state of the art and discourse analysis saying that:

Having established that texts are everywhere and inescapably ideologically structured, and that the ideological structuring of both language and texts can be related readily enough to the social structures and processes of the origins of particular texts, where do we go from here? (Kress, 1985a: p.65). The context makes it clear that the motives for posing this question are essentially strategic: how are we to go ahead and use this model as an instrument of social change? (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard (ed.), 2003, p.6)

As Power directly voices Kress and asks, discourse can be used as an instrument of social change and I argue that the experiments with discourse strategies for change can be seen in Atwood’s utilisation of discourse in the MaddAddam series.

Discourse analysis with a critical edge offers a useful analytical framework to reveal discursive devices and strategies that influential entities such as corporates and government employ to construct and control mindsets and actions of people, socially and environmentally. Discourse plays an important role, in both our everyday discourse and the MaddAddam’s world, in mediating the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman and limits our understanding of our social world. Significant emphasis is put upon language and social customs. This means refusing or disrupting an anthropocentrism that normalises nonhuman animal oppression. Gabriele Griffin explains that language can control public perception and

understanding ideological assumptions can lead to possibilities of resistance (Gabriele Griffin, 2013, pp.99-100). In the MaddAddam trilogy, The Gardeners' teaching and culture are principally concerned with the role of language that shapes the thoughts, behaviours and actions of human beings toward other beings on earth, exclusively for consumption that may lead to the apocalypse. Gardeners' small act is seen as the attempt to deal with the climate crisis, "the waterless flood" that is coined by them with the obvious reference to the biblical flood of Genesis. Atwood uses the language of the God's Gardeners to fictionally construct the accounts of the social world of environmentally concerned citizens based on veganism to counter the discourse of powerful institutions such as the government, the corporations, scientists, media or consumerism and their animal-eating discourse. All discourse connects and supports one another. Discourse is perceived as a social practice of using language and discursive practices can shape, and at the same time, be shaped by the social. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the society depicted in the MaddAddam trilogy is constructed by fabricated truths and values shaped by industrial giants of the food and pharmaceutical industry that eventually terminate in climate dystopia.

In *The Year of the Flood*, the hymns or the religious songs are not used to praise God and lift us above the earthy, Atwood's hymns are devoted to nature and all nonhuman lives such as birds, pollination and rainforest, while preaching on the real climate impacts and extreme weather events such as dead zones in the oceans and strong typhoons that cause climate refugees. At each beginning of Adam One's speeches, he does not address only human beings as the audience but equally says: "Dear Friends, dear Fellow Mammals, dear Fellow Creatures" (Atwood, 2013b, p.191). This approach of an imagined discourse emphasises the active role of human-nonhuman social relations in the world and materialises the discursive practice in order to build a foundation of how plants, nonhuman animals and ecosystems become active and equal partners in the emergence of human social practices. Yet Atwood does not merely stop at the equal human-animal relationship within the words but she also replaces the biblical saints to honour environmentalists in the real world like Rachel Carson, a scientist in a men's world and an activist who ignites the contemporary environmental movement by, through her *Silent Spring* (1962), exposing the devastating threat of chemical pesticides such as DDT to all beings,

human and nonhuman alike, and challenge the supremacy notion of humans over nature. As also discussed briefly in the Introduction, Carson is not only a gender pioneer but she dedicatedly challenges the corporate greed of Big Agribusiness and the meat industry that poison the world, literally and figuratively. The God's Gardeners remember Carson and keep her legacy continued in their chantings:

Saint Rachel dedicated her life to the Feathered Ones, and thus to the welfare of the entire Planet—for as the Birds sickened and died out [...]. Saint Rachel was attacked by the powerful chemical corps of her day, and scorned and pilloried for her truth-telling, but her campaign did at last prevail. Sadly, the anti-Happicuppa campaign did not meet with equal success. (Atwood, 2013b, pp.444-445)

Atwood does more than acknowledge Carson and her heroic fight in the real world and, through a religious method of chanting, suggests that the world of *MaddAddam* needs a similar kind of climate action based on veganism's values. Atwood even decides to express it clearly by saying that: "According to Adam One, the Fall of Man was multidimensional. The ancestral primates fell out of the trees; then they fell from vegetarianism into meat-eating" (Atwood, 2013b, p.224). Historically, religion has been an important driving force of ideology and belief in a society. Yet at the same time, Atwood creates a counter narrative against the religious hierarchical structure of all matter and life or the great chain of being that puts God, angels and demons above men, as in gender choice specific, then animals and plants. The existing religious discourse serves as a foundation for sexism and speciesism which support never-ending animal oppression in our daily lives and a worsening climate situation. Atwood thus states a new order of equality under God that "we—like the other Animals—were blessed" (Atwood, 2013b, p.63):

He created us through the long and complex process of Natural and Sexual Selection, which is none other than His ingenious device for instilling humility in Man. He made us "a little lower than the Angels," but in other ways—and Science bears this out—we are closely related to our fellow Primates. (Atwood, 2013b, p.62)

Or, even providing a more challenging rearrangement of the chain of being to put insects and microbiome such as bacteria and viruses further above humans as “God’s tiniest Angels” (Atwood, 2013b, p.192). Moreover, another remark at the end of the chant as if to state a strong scientific evidence to debunk the oldest religious belief that “the knots of DNA and RNA that tie us to our many fellow Creatures” (Atwood, 2013b, p.64), and with this fact “we may not fall into the error of pride by considering ourselves as exceptional, alone in all Creation in having Souls; and that we will not vainly imagine that we are set above all other Life, and may destroy it at our pleasure” (Atwood, 2013b, p.63). Atwood makes sure as well here to put capital C for both “Creatures” and “Creation” the same way as the word God is capitalised to represent the almighty god of Judaeo-Christianity. The current dominant ideology, as in the novels and the real world, that reinforces justification for eating meat is: humans are at the top of the food chain, which is amplified strongly by religious belief. Animal consumption and exploitation for humans’ pleasure are normal; the orders of things as are supposed to be. This chant, in particular, challenges the ideology of absolute separation between human and nonhuman animals, with its consequences of an attitude of human/nature dualism that commodifies nonhuman beings into human consumption.

Foucault’s poststructural strategies in relation to discourse, language and power archaeological strategies associated with poststructuralism are useful in exploring power relations and debunking the false ideology of dominant discourses. In doing so, the normalisation within discourse is exposed, like the way Atwood cites scientific thinking to counter the discourse originated from religion’s illusive ideology. Atwood may take this advantage of how our real world religion operates and spreads her ecological consciousness through discourse and behavioural practice of the characters. Science fiction here is used as a tool for a systemic change by revisioning of religions. Linguistic scholars have already noticed that, based on ethnographically informed studies, religious literacies and group members are tightly associated and the teachings are the tool for the experienced group members for socialising and bonding with apprenticed new members into the culturally and socially appropriate languages and literacies of the group: “the intertwining of language and literacy practices associated with faith with broader repertoires of

everyday social and cultural practices and the breadth and scope of faith as a force for learning, socialisation and belonging for individuals and communities” (Lytra 2020, p.136). Through a new set of discourse originated in a new religion, Atwood similarly redefines the history of religions based on God and humans by constructing the foundation of moral belief and values based on our relation to the nonhuman and environmentalism to act upon. Fabricio and Moita-Lopes also assert about Foucault’s discourse analysis on discursive formations and historicity that “By drawing attention to historicity, power, resistance and discursive formations, Foucault is emphasising the relevance of the discourse practices within which we act. In this sense, he broke away from a view of history that moves from an original point to a well-defined end” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou (ed.), 2020, p. 75). Language then, for both Atwood and Foucault, has become an ongoing social action and Atwood demonstrates this by exploring some ideas of consequences that comes along with a view of language as a situated sociohistorical practice interlaced with discourse. When Bernice and Ren have a fight, their choices of words reflect their thoughts as being influenced by the God’s Gardeners’ discourse in their community:

“Yours is a vegetable!” I said. “Vegetable” shouldn’t have been an insult among the Gardeners, but it was. “Veena the Vegetable!”

I added.

“Meat-breath!” said Bernice. (Atwood, 2013b, p. 85)

And also another example in an argument:

“Pig-eater!” said Oates.

“Oates, that is enough language out of you,” said Toby.

(Atwood, 2013b, p.208)

Atwood thus reinforces a consequence of perceptions derived from veganism in the Gardeners’ discourse and practice, and this emphasises the values associated with the construction of new discourse against the existing ones that commodifies nonhuman beings to the point of climate doom. Atwood offers another example of how veganism in discourse can be a powerful ideology countering meat culture, leading from individual behaviour change towards systemic change. One significant scene is The God’s Gardeners’ protest in front of SecretBurgers, a

restaurant chain associated with the CorpSeCorps where the protesters call out “No Meat! Don’t eat death!” to advocate on how our meat consumption and production is out of control. The Gardeners take an action, the same way that Carson speaks truth to power against Big Agribusiness, to demand for broader social and political reforms that are necessary to limit climate chaos.

By degrees, the story conveys ideological processes in which meaning and practices are reproduced within discursive formations that can almost certainly result in individual lifestyle changes. Atwood suggests a possible way for a transformed society as we might see the daily ecological practices of the God’s Gardeners and their connection to nonhuman animals. The Adams and Eves of the God’s Gardeners follow the values in their chantings by developing and maintaining their lives in ecologically self-reliant vegetarian communities where they grow plants for food and medicine with little waste and even less interference with nature, while avoiding the processed food and medications connected with corporations. As Adam One clearly states in one of his sermons early in *The Year of the Flood*:

“By covering such barren rooftops with greenery we are doing our small part in the redemption of God’s Creation from the decay and sterility that lies all around us, and feeding ourselves with unpolluted food into the bargain. Some would term our efforts futile, but if all were to follow our example, what a change would be wrought on our beloved Planet!” (Atwood, 2013b, p.13)

Seizing back the means of food production, Atwood’s indication of “unpolluted food” makes explicit between the critique of the polluted industrial food system and her activism to call for a just food revolution, the one that resonates the real world’s community movement starting from cutting meat consumption and transform the agricultural system with rooftop gardens or urban farms. Additionally, Atwood seems to insist that if we turn this discourse into actions by following the God’s Gardeners’ lead, it will bring a positive change to the planet. Through Adam One’s words, Atwood passes the seed of social change planted via discourse and its action. I argue that Atwood attempts to show the consequences shaped by discursive practices of the God’s Gardeners to the point that Atwood may suggest that this

imagined religion can benefit mainstream environmental activism that is still lacking the “practice of care” or an ethic of care, also recognised as one of veganism’s values, towards bringing empathy between both humans and the rest of the non-human lives.

Through language use, practice of discourse can produce real social effects with the aim to transform the social structures. One clear sample of how discourse influences and triggers social change is the feminist movement and the goal to denounce patriarchy and its unequal social practices by creating a counter discourse as strategies for resistance and change, or a tool for activism. Patriarchy has long established female inferiority, biologically and politically, at the same time constructed social mechanisms to maintain male dominance. Jean Bethke Elshtain argues about feminism and discourse in “Feminist Discourse and Its Discontents: Language, Power, and Meaning” that “feminist commitment to a particular account of human speech interdicts by definition any possibility that speech might serve liberatory purposes” (Elshtain, 1982, p. 607). As Elshtain states, a political discourse that is directed toward the construction of new meaning is a political act, and what Atwood’s imagined discourse in the MaddAddam trilogy can be a work of a political discourse towards a real change of the dominant discourse of meat in the real world. One particular branch of feminism, which resonates more with the trilogy with how it combines the intersectionality of feminist political ecology and environmental justice, is ecofeminism and its discourse is applied in practice to expose the logic underpinning domination of women and degradation of environment as the consequences of patriarchy and commodification of nonhuman others originated deep in historical, cultural and social roots. Elshtain further asserts that “to imagine an ideal speech situation is to envisage a way of life” (Elshtain, 1982, p. 620). Elshtain suggests a similar act in Atwood’s feminism and her expression of the use of discourse and Elshtain quotes one of Atwood’s poem in her book *Power Politics* saying: “Language, the fist proclaims by squeezing is for the weak only” (qtd. in Elshtain, 1982, p. 604). Significant emphasis is put on language and power, of which Atwood is already aware and has been applying as a political tool in her writings. Like the way feminists create a feminist discourse that rejects patriarchy, Atwood’s imagined discourse and a way of life in the MaddAddam trilogy also rejects the domination of meat discourse by moving towards a new one and reversing the

oppressed nonhuman others to a more subjectivity to be one emancipatory window into the alternative future of a better world to sustain all lives and the climate of the planet.

Literary works are recognised by discourse critics as an object of study for different kinds of discourse or culture. Terry Eagleton remarks that:

It is most useful to see 'literature' as a name which people give from time to time for different reasons to certain kinds of writing within a whole field of what Michel Foucault has called 'discursive practices', and the if anything is to be an object of study it is this whole field of practices rather than just those sometimes rather obscurely labelled 'literature'. (Eagleton, 1996, p.178)

More importantly, Eagleton asserts that the imagined discourse in literature that is different from one to another is not simply ontological or methodological but strategic: "the reinvention of rhetoric that I have proposed (though it might equally as well be called 'discourse theory' or 'cultural studies' or whatever) might contribute to making us all better people" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 183). It is unsurprising then, that Atwood explores and test a counter discourse of veganism in the MaddAddam trilogy to rethink the dominant meat discourse and at the same time, to promote a solution of humanity's relations with other nonhuman beings for a better future to avoid a world of ever increasing climate chaos.

A significant role of discourse in the hymns of Adam One in the MaddAddam trilogy is obviously intended to extend and challenge the logic of human subjectivity as reinforced by the human-animal boundary that causes anthropogenic climate change in the first place. At the same time the hymns also point out beyond the emphasis of nonhuman beings subjectivity as equal to human beings, however, Atwood's discourse points that humanity cannot survive without nonhuman beings. Like hymns that glorifies God, hymns and worship songs to praise God, Atwood's hymns emphasis that these creatures' existence must be respected, even beyond that be "praised":

We praise the tiny perfect Moles That garden underground;
The Ant, the Worm, the Nematode, Wherever they are found. [...]

Let us today give joyful thanks (Atwood, 2013b, p.194)

Another hymn also makes clear that the roles of pollinators, insects that people usually ignore and disgust, must not be neglected as we eat every piece of food:

When next you eat a golden Peach
And lightly throw away the pit,
Consider how it shines with Life—
God dwelling in the midst of it. (Atwood, 2013b, p.331)

The texts of the MaddAddam trilogy's hymns rather highlight the roles of food producers in nonhuman beings, not companies in agribusiness, whose works are most of the time made invisible by agribusiness itself. Through the tool of writing by seizing language, identifying gaps and silences, Adams argues that "[a]s opposed to the brokenness and violence characteristic of the fall into patriarchal culture, vegetarianism in women's writings signifies a different way of relating to the world. [...] Feminist use of story telling often conveys the importance of this metaphorical relationship" (Adams, 2015, p.173). By reconnecting and doing something different when it comes to meat eating and choices of food, the texts of Atwood, like others writings of women and veganism, as Adams calls it and I agree, is an act of activism through literature.

As often emphasised in this thesis, food choices can also be linked to political acts of power and resistance. Atwood's use of food choices here, of vegetables over meat, is to reconnect the broken relationship of humans and the source of food production and the animals or the natural world that humans rely on. The hymns also take some opportunities to stress the values of meat-free diet: to avoid meat, unless in a complete lack of access to other choices of food. And this is a vow to God.

We cherish other Creatures' lives;
And so we do not eat their flesh
Unless dread Famine drives.
And if dread Famine drives us on,
And if we yield to tempting Meat,

May God forgive our broken Vows,
And bless the Life we eat. (Atwood, 2013b, p.417)

By being in control of food choices, the necessity of ethical and political consciousness in making choices of veganism is represented here in the novel as a commitment to break away from the meat-eating culture and the food system under the corporate control. Adams argues that literary consciousness is paradigmatic for vegetarian consciousness: “the connection between meat on the table and a living animal; between ourselves and the other animals; between our ethics and our diet; and the recognition of the needless violence of meat eating” (Adams, 2015, p.167). As we have discovered from the previous chapter, Atwood takes opportunity to point out the environmental and ethical destruction of the industrial meat production in the food system by giant corporations like the CorpSeCorps who materialises nonhuman animals to the point that there is no resemblance of the original and this thus drives the society towards the climate catastrophe. The industrial meat, genetically engineered meat and intensive manufactured food that the characters in the Compound feed on do not nourish their bodies and mind, but instead allow them to endure and enjoy the distanced sufferings of both marginalised humans and nonhuman animals. However, in *The Year of the Flood* after Toby is rescued by the God’s Gardeners, Toby has become noticeably more alive and healed physically and spiritually when she follows the guidance from their discourse, especially the vegetarian diet. Toby has transformed into “Her new self. Her skin smelled like honey and salt. And earth” (Atwood, 2013b, p. 121).

The God’s Gardeners’ hymns urge us to rethink and change our relationship with other species and live more ethically according to this new eco-religion. Words in chantings and teachings of Adam One remain important in the trilogy and in the life of characters who are associated with the God’s Gardeners. Especially during the post-Flood, there are significant multiple ethical encounters with food choices and other life forms that Toby, under food scarcity and severe famine, Toby still tries to keep the meat-free routes even the time when she takes the life of a Pigeon:

Toby's hands are shaking. You've snuffed a life, she tells herself. You've acted rashly and from anger. You ought to feel guilty. Still, she thinks of going out with one of the kitchen knives and sawing off a ham. She'd taken the Vegivows when she joined the Gardeners, but the prospect of a bacon sandwich is a great temptation right now. She resists it, however: animal protein should be the last resort. (Atwood, 2013b, p.22)

Not long after until the world is rejuvenated with more reproduction of wild animals, Toby accepts meat protein again from wild deers. Near the end of the trilogy, Blackbeard, a young humanoid Craker, narrates that "Deer are proliferating: they are an acceptable source of animal protein" (Atwood, 2014, p.458). It is as though it is Atwood's intention that the God's Gardeners' discourse and action on refusal to consume the meat produced by corporate entities along with their pseudo-medical supplies enable them to survive the apocalypse.

Yet despite the language of veganism of new eco-religion to challenge the discourses of meat culture, Atwood may imply that religion is a way forward for a system-level change but a mere faith is not entirely a solution to solve the anthropogenic climate crisis. However, I argue that Atwood's texts are her activism to suggest ways in which discourse can inspire us to form new relationships with nonhuman species who we share the planet with, and this can bring us better opportunities to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all beings under climate catastrophe. Atwood's texts offer an exploration of an alternative discourse that deeply challenges human exceptionalism that has forever fueled the violent and exploitative treatment of nonhuman animals and the natural world. As we have already outlined discourses around our relation to the nonhuman, Atwood's imagined vegan discourse in the MaddAddam trilogy also explores imagined possibilities of how today's society can be different if we change the discourse that oppresses animals to a more inclusive one. Here the emerging posthumanism and its relevance for discourse studies, with a particular focus on human–nonhuman entanglements, can push readers to consider how discourse beyond human boundaries acknowledges nonhuman subjectivity as actors in their own right. By doing so, I assert that Atwood

applies a posthumanist stance, in the times of climate crisis, to dethrone human exceptionalism and shifting the point of narratives in three books for the roles of less dominant beings to nonhuman agency. Most fundamentally, the structure of the three books is as follows: Jimmy, a male character who tells the story of the corrupted world under the control of mega corporations; then the last two books shift the perspective to two female survivors, Toby and Ren and then the trilogy ends with a hope to pass the story to the hand of a young Craker Blackbeard. Atwood's choice of shifting the narrators and allows readers to hear the story from the nonhuman being who can understand nonhuman animals is how Atwood shines the light on the nonhuman agency, who has long been reduced to meat, and at the same time, giving the voice to the voiceless, through the force of language for its ability to reinforce and disrupt the status quo that the dominant discourse has long circulated.

The story's final line eventually serves as a last reminder from Atwood to readers of how important discourse is and the discourse of non-anthropocentric values is the one that we should pass on to the next generation in order to act upon the climate emergency. "Now we will sing" (Atwood, 2014, p.474). As if to respond to Atwood's last word of the trilogy, the MaddAddam readers in the real world and treat the hymns in Atwood's trilogy in excitement to put words into practice, or singing. Doom and gloom does not always inspire people to climate actions, but Atwood's hymns for nonhuman beings and their climate defenders have moved from fictional performances to factual ones. Atwood also describes her intention clearly in Acknowledgements section of the e-book version of *The Year of the Flood*:

Singer and musician Orville Stoeber of Venice, California, began composing the music to several of these hymns to see what might happen, and then got swept away. The extraordinary results can be heard on the CD, *Hymns of the God's Gardeners*. Anyone who wishes to use any of these hymns for amateur devotional or environmental purposes is more than welcome to do so. (Atwood, 2010)

This is the result of when Atwood was asked by readers about the tunes of the hymns as they would prefer to sing it. Kendra Leonard vividly retells the outcome of performances of Atwood's hymns in her essay "Survival Through Song".

Shortly after the book was published, Atwood found that readers as well as religious institutions wanted to know what tunes went with the hymns so they could sing her new words to the old melodies. At the same time, the composer Orville Stoeber asked her if he could write new music for the lyrics, and she agreed. Conservation groups, churches, and bookstores were all equally enthusiastic about the new music and began performing it as part of meetings, services, and book readings, lectures, and signings. (Leonard, 2020)

Music is a way to contextualise a discourse and proves to be a power tool for change. Mark Kaufman asserts in "Climate change songs rock: Music born from a relentlessly warming planet" along with contemporary music that adds climate issues at the heart of the song, insisting that "Climate scientists should connect with people, especially younger people, in more poignant, human ways" (Kaufman, n.d.). And this is exactly what Atwood has contributed to bring climate activism through her discourse that aims to influence and inspire the ripple effect of change. Science fiction gives writers and readers the opportunity to explore possibilities and the power to reimagine the world and so to transform it beyond today's dominant ethics and norms. Drawing on the work of Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, what is striking about her climate apocalyptic writing is that her fictions are deeply rooted in the relationship of human-nonhuman and vegan agenda for the solution to humanity's action towards the climate emergency—to end Anthropocene. Climate discourse, for Atwood as I have examined throughout this chapter, is a catalyst for change. Eventually when Atwood insists that "Now we will sing", it is perhaps how Atwood asks us readers to start singing and talking about the climate emergency. And you are the voice for climate action.

CONCLUSION

“Tomorrow is another day. [...] And that is a thing of hope” (Atwood, 2014, p. 474). Science fiction, combining veganism, extends its endless possibilities to allow us to see the destructive consequences of the dominant meat-eating ideology to society and the planet, and also the hope of humanity to change for the better future. The question often raised in science fiction is how we become better humans and what political and personal action we can make. And this question is even more crucial in the times of climate emergency. Humanity needs to recognise the hope and activism for change, as the texts explored throughout this book have demonstrated, to decentralise the human subject and ask human culture to seriously question the exclusive tradition of humanism, similar to how posthumanist literature and veganism challenge the meaning of being human, and to imagine new ways of being and living respectfully among other species.

So where does this leave us? Food choices can also be linked to political acts of power and resistance. One can either choose “Ignorance is bliss” to deny the revealed truth, like Cypher’s decision to remain in the comfortable illusion in the Matrix for the absent referent of the juicy beef even though “this steak doesn’t exist” (Wachowski, L., & Wachowski, L., 1999). Or, sing and practise with the God’s Gardeners to resist the realm of the meat industry and powerful corporations. To avoid anthropocentric apocalyptic climate destruction in the future, humanity’s anthropocentrism must be terminated. As Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy demonstrates, to ethically recognise nonhuman others as equal to cope with the climate emergency present, humanity needs to be evolved to a just and ethical plant-based food system that respects all beings.

Not everyone may agree with the arguments from me and other vegan scholars in my thesis. But given that human impacts have pushed our planet into the Anthropocene and climate crisis, it is our responsibility to debate and act upon it carefully and consistently. For my conclusion and for the study as a whole, the most important consequence I can only hope from this research will reconnect readers with animals, recognising them as fellow species on this shared planet so that we can be

more ecologically healthy. As Vint puts it: science fiction “can stage the problems that confront us in rich, concrete detail and thus potentially enable its readers to perceive the world and other species in new ways” (Vint, 2010, p.211). Science fiction enables humans to reshape living beings in radical ways. It is high time we change how we think about food, about animals/nonhuman others, and take into account our roles on this planet as human beings. And maybe, just maybe, one day when someone asks you what inspires you to fight for climate justice, you can say “science fiction”.



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