

**Discourse and the oppression of nonhuman  
animals: a critical realist account.**

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## **Abstract**

This work examines the use of nonhuman animals in the farming industry and seeks to understand why this practice takes place and what supports its continuation. The research is approached from a critical realist perspective and after a description of past and current practices in the industry, it uses abduction and retroduction to determine the essential conditions for the continuation of the phenomenon of nonhuman animal farming.

One essential condition is found to be the existence of negative discourses relating to nonhuman animals and this aspect is examined in more detail by analyzing a corpus of texts from a farming magazine using Critical Discourse Analysis.

Major discourses which were found to be present were those of production, science and slavery which construct the nonhumans respectively as objects of scientific investigation, as production machines and as slaves. A minor discourse of achievement relating to the nonhumans was also present. Further analysis of linguistic features examined the way in which the nonhumans are socially constructed in the discourses.

Drawing on work in experimental psychology by Millgram, Zimbardo and Bandura it was found that the effects of these discourses fulfil many of the conditions for bringing about moral disengagement in people thus explaining why billions of people are able to support animal farming in various ways even though what happens in the phenomenon is contrary to their basic ethical and moral beliefs.

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## List of acronyms

ADG	Average Daily Gain
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BUAV	British Union Against Vivisection
CBB	Cattlemen's Beef Board
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DEFRA	United Kingdom Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
FARM	Farm Animal Rights Movement
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
GWP	Global Warming Potential
MLC	Meat and Livestock Commission
OVA	Ontario Veal Association
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
TRC	South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNFAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

## Preface

It has been a privilege to carry out this research and I count myself very fortunate to have been given the opportunity. Although there is only one author to this work it would not have been possible without the help of many people and I wish to thank them now.

Thanks to Pauline for persuading me that I needed to do this and for keeping faith in me, to Ruth and Emma for the support you always give so generously; for the space all of you liberally allowed me – and for the coffee. My thanks go to Olive and Bob for all that you have given me.

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Finally my thanks go to all those wonderful nonhumans who share and have shared their time with me; fellow travellers of this incredible universe, who teach us how we can become fully human, if we will only listen.

If this work represents more than an interesting academic enquiry, and I hope it does, then within it is an imperative for personal action and I trust those who read these pages will feel able to take up that challenge through whatever pathways they are led.

Dedicated to all those, nonhuman and human, whose lives have been stolen.



# Chapter 1

*In the olden days the voice of man, raised in reason, was confronted by the roar of the lion, the bellow of the bull. Man went to war with the lion and the bull, and after many generations won that war definitively. Today these creatures have no more power. Animals have only their silence left with which to confront us. Generation after generation our captives, heroically, refuse to speak to us.*

J. M. Coetzee. *The Lives of Animals*

*Man cannot and must not have more compassion than the Master of the universe. Yet he, Yoineh Meir was sick with pity. How could one pray for life for the coming year, or for a favorable writ in Heaven, when one was robbing others of the breath of life?*

*Yoineh Meir thought that the Messiah Himself could not redeem the world as long as injustice was done to beasts. By rights, everything should rise from the dead: every calf, fish, gnat, butterfly. Even in the worm that crawls in the earth there glows a divine spark. When you slaughter a creature you slaughter God...*

Isaac Bashevis Singer. *The Slaughterer*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. *Animals in society*

Animals saturate our world, our history and our mythology although we may often be only dimly aware of this, if we are aware of it at all. We use animals such as cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, mice, rats and dogs for food, consuming flesh, milk and eggs and using skins, bones, blood and fur. A range of animals including rats, mice, guinea pigs, birds, dogs, cats, horses, sheep, rabbits, hamsters, baboons, macaques, marmosets and chimpanzees have experiments carried out upon them (U.K. Home Office, 2005; BUAV, n.d.). Vivisection laboratories, working on an underlying assumption that valid scientific information can be gained in this way, test everything from floor cleaners to the latest cosmetics and drugs or seek to know more about, especially human, medical conditions, and some experiments are conducted simply out of curiosity (U.K. Home Office, 2005; BUAV, n.d).

In the past, animals such as pit ponies laboured long and hard and animals used for power still do today. Worldwide many animals are used to provide power to make human life easier in such activities as ploughing, planting, weeding, the transport of people and goods, the transport of water and fuel, the lifting of water, milling, logging, road building and excavation (UNFAO, n.d.).

In entertainment animals are seen on stage or in films or in circuses where they have been “trained” to perform tricks. In another form of “entertainment” they are taunted and killed in stadiums during bull fighting or are hunted down in a range of different types of activities, such as hunting with packs of dogs, hunting on foot or hunting in vehicles, using large bore rifles, crossbows or longbows to kill. Some people get enjoyment from hunting and killing animals and are willing to pay large sums of money for the “pleasure” of doing so. Other people are willing to receive large sums of money for facilitating this pleasure in a triangular relationship not dissimilar to that between the john, the pimp and the hooker except that there is no gain for the animal whatsoever and a violent death is the end result. Governments for the most part look on approvingly.

Animals in national parks and sanctuaries are a source of enjoyment for both local inhabitants and tourists as well as bringing in significant revenue. They also provide companionship for many millions of humans and in some instances even being used in forms of “animal therapy”.

The military have long had an interest in animals, from Hannibal using elephants in his campaigns, to the horses and mules used in many wars where they carried soldiers and hauled goods and weapons. Present military establishments test weapons such as nerve gas on animals. “Military experiments subject animals to the effects of poisonous gas, decompression sickness, blast wounds, burns and radiation as they assess new and existing weapons and surgical techniques 'in the field'”(BUAV, n.d.).

Gradually, over time, but especially during the last thousand years, our relationship with animals, particularly in the industrialised and industrialising world, has become one of total domination often combined with the most ruthless and vicious

exploitation imaginable (Spencer, 1995; Patterson, 2002; Hribal, 2003). Two questions arise from this. Why does this situation exist and how is it being sustained? It seems strange that in a global society which purports to value freedom, rights of the individual, compassion and caring, peaceful co-existence and love, the opposite is upheld in respect of animals and an ocean of captivity, loss, pain, suffering and death is their lot. Although there is a long history of prominent individuals, religious and secular, who have called for greater compassion towards animals, for their freedom and for them to have rights, there are relatively few voices today raised on behalf of the victims (Animal Rights History, 2007).

Taking into consideration the fact that the range of animals used by humans is very wide, I have restricted the research reported upon in this thesis to examining one area of that use: animal farming. Although animal farming is but one sector of the use of animals, it is the part in which by far the greatest number of land animals are involved.

When using the term “animal farming” in this thesis I am referring to commercial animal farming in general, unless stated otherwise or unless it is clear from the context that a different meaning is intended

## ***1.2. Animal farming today.***

Commentators have noted how animal farming today is inextricably linked with the exploitation of humans and increasing global environmental degradation (Schlosser, 2001; LeDuff, 2003; Nibert, 2007). Nibert provides this striking overview:

In Brazil, hundreds are murdered and thousands displaced every year by ranchers whose unending expansion, especially into Amazonian rainforests, is making the country the world's leading "beef" producer. Corporate soy producers there use similarly violent and destructive practices to supply feed for animals destined to become burgers in Europe. And few realise that the displacement and genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan are tied closely to the expropriation of new pasture by groups from northern Sudan who supply cow flesh to the affluent in northern Africa and the Middle East.

Continued use of other animals as food is inextricably intertwined with worker exploitation, environmental destruction, Third World repression and malnutrition, fresh water depletion, oil depletion (and warfare over control of remaining reserves), climate change and increasing levels of the diseases of the affluent. With the human population at 6.6 billion and growing, it is projected that by 2020 global "livestock" production will use 80 per cent of the world's agricultural land.

"Meat"-based diets are inherently inefficient, exploitative, cruel and ultimately unsustainable. For human beings concerned about the ongoing oppression of humans, cows and other animals becoming a vegan may be the most effective political action of a lifetime.

(Nibert, 2007:14)

Animal agriculture not only poses important ethical and moral problems of itself, but its practice is increasingly recognized as being instrumental in the ongoing global extinction of species and it has become a considerable threat to the continued existence of many life forms on earth.

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations outlines the immense impact of animal agriculture on the earth's life support systems in a report titled *Livestock's long shadow: Environmental issues and options* (Steinfeld *et al.*, 2006). One of the report's main points concerns the use of available arable land, 70% of which is being used for animal agriculture in some way or another.

The livestock sector is by far the single largest anthropogenic user of land. The total area occupied by grazing is equivalent to 26 percent of the ice-free terrestrial surface of the planet. In addition, the total area dedicated to feedcrop production amounts to 33 percent of total arable land. In all, livestock production accounts for 70 percent of all agricultural land and 30 percent of the land surface of the planet.

(Steinfeld *et al.*, 2006)

Not all land is suitable for arable agriculture but the use of land for the production of meat is recognized as an inefficient process. "On average, 10 g of vegetable protein are needed to generate 1 g of animal protein" (Pimental & Pimentel cited in Reijnders & Soret, 2003). According to Pimentel, "The amount of grains fed to U.S livestock is

sufficient to feed about 840 million people who follow a plant-based diet” (Pimentel cited in Pimentel & Pimentel, 2003).

Animal farming has a major impact on global warming via the direct emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide and the land use changes brought about by the continued expansion of the sector:

The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO<sub>2</sub> [sic] equivalent. This is a higher share than transport.

The livestock sector accounts for 9 percent of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The largest share of this derives from land-use changes – especially deforestation – caused by expansion of pastures and arable land for feedcrops. Livestock are responsible for much larger shares of some gases with far higher potential to warm the atmosphere. The sector emits 37 percent of anthropogenic methane (with 23 times the global warming potential (GWP) of CO<sub>2</sub>) most of that from enteric fermentation by ruminants. It emits 65 percent of anthropogenic nitrous oxide (with 296 times the GWP of CO<sub>2</sub>), the great majority from manure. Livestock are also responsible for almost two-thirds (64 percent) of anthropogenic ammonia emissions, which contribute significantly to acid rain and acidification of ecosystems.

(Steinfeld et al 2006)

Animal agriculture is also a major global user and polluter of water, with water being used for the irrigation of crops which are fed to farmed animals, as well as the consumption of water directly by the animal industry itself. Pollution comes in the form of, amongst other things, contamination by antibiotics, hormones, pesticides and fertilizers causing a whole spectrum of problems:

The world is moving towards increasing problems of freshwater shortage, scarcity and depletion, with 64 percent of the world’s population expected to live in water-stressed basins by 2025. The livestock sector is a key player in increasing water use, accounting for over 8 percent of global human water use, mostly for the irrigation of feedcrops. It is probably the largest sectoral source of water pollution, contributing to eutrophication, “dead” zones in coastal areas, degradation of coral reefs, human health problems, emergence of antibiotic resistance and many others. The major sources of pollution are from animal wastes, antibiotics and hormones, chemicals from tanneries, fertilizers and pesticides used

for feedcrops, and sediments from eroded pastures. Global figures are not available but in the United States, with the world's fourth largest land area, livestock are responsible for an estimated 55 percent of erosion and sediment, 37 percent of pesticide use, 50 percent of antibiotic use, and a third of the loads of nitrogen and phosphorus into freshwater resources.

Livestock also affect the replenishment of freshwater by compacting soil, reducing infiltration, degrading the banks of watercourses, drying up floodplains and lowering water tables. Livestock's contribution to deforestation also increases runoff and reduces dry season flows.

*(ibid)*

Animal farming is also having a major impact on global biodiversity and the report suggests that the industry might be the single major cause of the loss of biodiversity:

We are in an era of unprecedented threats to biodiversity. The loss of species is estimated to be running 50 to 500 times higher than background rates found in the fossil record. Fifteen out of 24 important ecosystem services are assessed to be in decline. Livestock now account for about 20 percent of the total terrestrial animal biomass, and the 30 percent of the earth's land surface that they now pre-empt was once habitat for wildlife. Indeed, the livestock sector may well be the leading player in the reduction of biodiversity, since it is the major driver of deforestation, as well as one of the leading drivers of land degradation, pollution, climate change, overfishing, sedimentation of coastal areas and facilitation of invasions by alien species. In addition, resource conflicts with pastoralists threaten species of wild predators and also protected areas close to pastures. Meanwhile in developed regions, especially Europe, pastures had become a location of diverse long-established types of ecosystem, many of which are now threatened by pasture abandonment.

*(ibid)*

That cattle farming even contributes to overfishing may seem strange but Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Foundation claims that the cow is now the "largest marine predator on Earth" as more than half of fish catches end up being fed to livestock (Watson, 2007).

The report recommends a range of actions to remedy land degradation, global warming, water pollution and biodiversity loss caused by animal agriculture (FAO,

2006). There is one glaring omission however. Although a change in people's diets from meat based to vegetarian or vegan would be a cheap, easy and a very effective solution to most, if not all of these problems, it is a course of action which is curiously absent from the list of recommendations (*ibid*).

### **1.3. Research focus, texts and sources**

My focus for the research underpinning this thesis is to ask the question, "What is it which supports the phenomenon of animal farming; what conditions cause society to allow, promote, sanction, perpetuate and excuse the present large scale, institutionalized oppression, abuse and killing of animals by humans?" In order to answer this question, I locate the research within a critical realist perspective and it is this ontology and the specific epistemology which is the focus of the next chapter.

In the pages which follow, I use photographs and one painting to help communicate, as clearly as possible, what I am attempting to describe and what others have observed. Language does not always convey to the reader the meanings intended by the author and often the brevity required means some things may receive less attention than they deserve or even no attention at all. Of course both photographs and art work are also open to a range of interpretation but they are included in this work in the hope of providing other channels, other texts, for the reader to use and so to gain as comprehensive an insight as possible given this work's limitations.

I also use a range of sources; some are from the academic mainstream but others are on the edge of it and some are outside it altogether. Sources include academic publications as well as those from the farming industry and from activist organizations.

There is a line of argument which asserts that sources from "pressure groups" should not be used in academic work as they will inevitably highlight the most extreme cases, they may be biased and they might also be inaccurate. A number of points need to be considered here. First, any pressure group which publishes information which is inaccurate has a lot to lose politically and risks having all of its published information tainted, thus giving ammunition to its political competitors. Secondly, specialist documents from established groups such as People For The Ethical Treatment Of

Animal (PETA) and Farm Sanctuary give full sets of references, the majority of which are from academic journals and publications by such bodies as the United Nations. However, they may also publish first hand investigative information, which is simply not available elsewhere and the critical importance of using sources from such “pressure groups” is that they document what many journals and official reports are silent about.

Publications concerned with meat production, for example, will not deal with the destruction of the family structure of animals or their experience of loss and pain, and will not display pictures of “downers” being dragged on to the backs of trucks. The descriptions in journals of experiments using vivisection will not deal with the pain and fear of a monkey in a restraint who has electrodes implanted in her head. These are of no scientific consequence to the scientists and not significant to the investigation as a whole (unless they compromise the results) and therefore are deemed as not being worthy of description. Thus there is a significant silence which exists in such sources, inevitably leading to an incomplete and thus distorted description of events. Such sources cannot be regarded as comprehensive and inevitably reflect their own inherent biases.

For the reasons outlined above I maintain it is important in a work of this nature, which examines and questions the status quo, to hear the different voices which are essential parts of the enquiry and it would be seriously deficient without them.

## Chapter 2

*Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.*

*Philip K. Dick.*

*Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.*

*John Lennon.*

*Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.*

*Albert Einstein*

### **2.1. Introduction**

I now describe the methods I use to explain why human animals behave towards nonhuman animals in so far as the animal farming industry is concerned in order to elucidate what conditions there are which allow, promote, sanction, perpetuate and excuse this large scale, institutionalized oppression, abuse and murder of animals by humans. In order to do this I describe the ontological position of critical realism which underpins this thesis and then go on to describe the methods I use to gain knowledge and insight into what I have defined as the problem.

In the thesis overall, the steps I use are as follows: after a description of critical realism, I present an empirical description of what happens to animals in the animal farming industry. I then use abduction to recontextualise and analyse the phenomenon followed by retroduction to establish its essential aspects. One of the essential mechanisms is found to be discourse and I analyse texts from a farming magazine using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to discover what discourses are present and how they construct farmed animals. Following this I propose a model which explains how these discourses contribute to the widespread oppression outlined above. This present chapter explicates the ontological point of departure for the research and describes the methods used.

## **2.2. Critical Realism**

### **2.2.1 Overview**

Critical realism takes a realist view of the world asserting that there is an objectively existing world, independent of human beliefs or knowledge and that this world is in principle knowable and to some extent changeable on the basis of that knowledge (Benton & Craib, 2001: 120). It does not employ the philosophical logic of immediacy where it is held that the truth is knowable immediately and can be recognised straight away (Cruickshank, 2003: 7). According to Cruickshank (*ibid*), the corollary of this point of view is that the truth can be known without any conceptual mediation. This view not only underpins foundationalist epistemologies such as empiricism but also relativist positions, where truth is made wholly relative to particular perspectives:

Both foundationalism and relativism are therefore anthropocentric in the sense that the world is ‘made for us’. In the former case the world is defined to fit a philosophy that explains how the mind will get knowledge and in the latter case, the world becomes socially constructed through the norms or concepts that constitute perspectives.

(Cruickshank, 2003: 7)

In foundationalism then, the data gained from the world is taken to be what the world actually is and so “ontology is reduced to epistemology” (*ibid*).

A critical realist perspective, however, recognises not only the existence of an independent reality but deeper layers of reality than those which we are able to experience. Knowledge is thus not seen as a mirror of reality but as concepts and ideas which allow us some understanding, and some insights, into the workings of reality, always bearing in mind that this knowledge is fallible and always open to revision and change.

Even if the knowledge produced is fallible it is believed that it can contribute to the making of a better, more egalitarian world. This is the Enlightenment hope. Some of the main claims of critical realism may be summed up as follows:

- Sense can be made of cognitive practices such as sciences only if they are about something which has an independent existence;
- The construction of knowledge is seen as a social process which may have different means of representation;
- The surface appearance of things may be misleading as to their true nature and work is needed to overcome this;
- Current beliefs are not the final say and will always be open to correction in the future through cognitive work.

(Benton & Craib, 2001: 120, 121)

### **2.2.2. The nature of reality**

Critical realism rejects both the relativist position that reality is nothing more or less than a social construction, a product of human minds and also the empirical position that reality is only what we are able to experience. It does however retain some elements of both positions.

The first case, that of relativism, must be rejected as our experience of reality does not always fit in with our ideas about it and this is what would be expected from a view which sees reality as totally socially constructed. Reality is what it is despite what might be our wishes to the contrary and it often thwarts and surprises us forcing us to rethink our ideas. Also if experiments are carried out it seems reasonable that there must be something, however dimly understood, which they are carried out upon.

On the other hand, the empirical view, which claims that what we are able to observe and experience of reality sufficiently accounts for reality itself, is also seen in critical realism as insufficient. Some things happen beyond our empirical ability to apprehend what is going on and it is clear that the world is not always, and in fact is seldom, what it seems; there are deeper layers of reality and in these deeper layers lie the causes of the effects we are able to experience (Bhaskar, 1978).

Scientific practice uses careful observation of events, comparisons of findings and various ways of disturbing the world so that new observations can be made which might give insights into the causes of whatever is being investigated and which can also lead to predictions about what might happen in future situations. Critical realism recognises that work has to be done to uncover the underlying nature of reality (Benton & Craib 2000: 120). For example, some observations which might be made in the world we live in are:

- when bread is left for some time it begins to take on a blue powdery appearance;
- earthquakes happen suddenly and change the landscape;
- suicide bombers kill thousands of individuals not involved in any conflict and
- people starve in countries where there is an ample food supply.

It is part of critical scientific thinking to ask what is happening in cases such as these, why they happen and what are the underlying causes and the mechanisms in action.

Critical realism recognises the crucial part that experimentation plays in producing scientific knowledge and experiments or, if these are not possible, specific observations, could be carried out in the above examples to find out more about the research problem. Some things which might be done are:

- some newly baked bread could be kept in a totally airtight container and some exposed to the air to see which turns blue;
- seismometer readings could be taken around earthquake zones and non earthquake zones;
- the life stories of suicide bombers could be examined and compared and

- data on the economic, political and social systems within a county might be examined to look for the causes of the starvation of some of its inhabitants.

The results of these experiments/investigations might point to a constant conjunction of events. In a Humean view of cause and effect, these constant conjunctions identify the causes (Morris, 2007). For example, experiments with the bread might find that in 95 out of the 100 times that the experiment is carried out the bread turns blue. In the Humean view of cause and effect these constant conjunctions identify the causes, so what happens to the bread could be explained in the form of a supposed causative relationship such as “bread turning blue is caused by it being left in the open air”. This could be viewed as a law and it would have a reasonably effective predictive success.

From a purely relativist point of view the bread and its change of colour are socially and discursively constructed descriptions of the world and scientific explanations are no more or less valid than other possible explanations which might be given to the observation. However from a critical realist or transcendental realist viewpoint “bread being left in the open air” is not recognised as a cause at all and the true cause or causes need to be sought at a deeper level of reality. The *cause* of the bread going blue is simply not explained by the *observation* that this happens when it is left in the open air, nor is the converse observation, that in 5 instances out of 100 the bread did not go blue at all explained. In our everyday world, away from any laboratory, we might well ask ourselves, “what is going on here, what is the underlying cause of this blue colouration” and this is precisely the question which would be posed by critical realism. The cause, in this context, of the bread turning blue might, after further investigation and using tools such as microscopes, be ascribed to the growth of *penicillium spp*, a common fungus which grows as a result of air borne spores falling onto a suitable medium. The blue appearance would thus not be ascribed to the bread being left in the open air. The five occasions when the bread did not go blue are not dismissed as simply erroneous results which can be discounted but require an explanation. I shall refer to this later.

### 2.2.3. Three domains of reality

In critical realism, reality is seen as having three domains or depths: the *empirical*, the *actual* and the *real*, although the use of these particular words is a little confusing as all levels are all real and all actually exist. The deepest level is the real and this is where the deep structures of reality exist which are able to generate events. The real is whatever exists, be it natural or social, whether it can be experienced or not and whether we understand it or not (Sayer, 2000: 11). Structures or mechanisms in the real have powers which can bring about events in the actual. Some of these events might lead to experiences in the empirical and others might not.

The empirical domain is what we experience directly or indirectly. It is separated from the actual domain where events happen whether we experience them or not. What happens in the world is not the same as that which is observed. But this domain is in its turn separated from the real domain. In this domain there is also that which can produce events in the world, that which metaphorically can be called mechanisms.

(Danermark *et al.* (citing Bhaskar), 2002: 20).

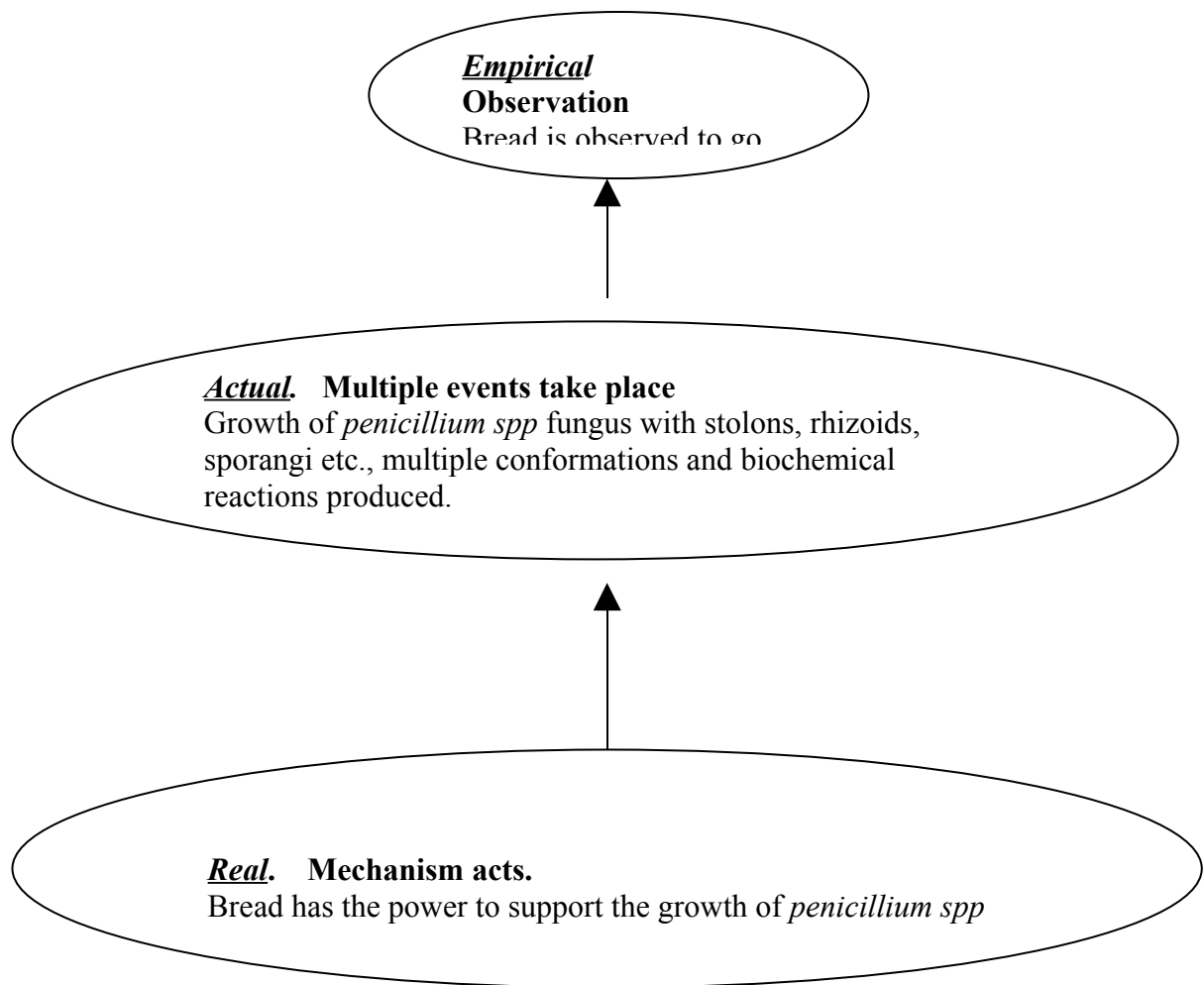
Fairclough *et al.* describe these domains as follows:

First, critical realists distinguish the real from the actual and the empirical. The 'real' refers to objects, their structures or natures and their causal powers and liabilities. The 'actual' refers to what happens when these powers and liabilities are activated and produce change. The 'empirical' is the subset of the real and the actual that is experienced by actors.

(Fairclough *et al.*, 2003).

According to Danermark *et al.*, the work of science is to "...investigate and identify relationships and non-relationships respectively between what we experience, what actually happens and the underlying mechanisms that produce the events in the world" (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 21).

Figure 1 below is a representation, using the bread and the fungus example, of how critical realism could view the bread turning blue and how the different levels of reality are involved.



**Figure 1: An example of the stratification of reality showing how a mechanism produces many events some of which may be observed on the empirical level.**

The power of mechanisms or structures to produce events may or may not be actualized. For example, an aeroplane has a structure which allows it the power to fly but that power is not actualized all the time. Similarly, a qualified doctor may choose not to practise although she has the power to do so. In the example above of the bread turning blue, sometimes the spores of *penicillium* may land on the bread but not germinate as the bread has become too dry. Although the spores have the power to germinate and grow, that power is not exercised continually. The bread has the power to support the germination of spores but, without spores being present, that power is also not actualised. Although structures may exercise powers, the final outcome of

those powers may in turn be affected by other powers which are also being exercised or not exercised. The power of the wings of an aeroplane to provide lift will only be realised if, and when, the engines provide thrust and move the aeroplane forward through the air. On the other hand, a university might have the power to provide for the education of a young woman from a township school but her extended family may exert a power motivating her to remain at home and care for her siblings. The result might be that she does neither but takes yet another course of action by leaving home or committing suicide. From these examples it might be apparent that critical realism proposes a far from simplistic, empirical explanation of cause and effect and this is indeed the case.

### **2.2.3. Cause and effect**

Sayer points out that realism does not subscribe to a simple one-to-one version of cause and effect but a more complex explanation based on the idea of causal powers with the explanation dependent upon the identification of causal mechanisms rather than the gathering of data on regularities (Sayer, 2000: 14). This contrasts markedly with a positivist viewpoint and, as Cruickshank points out, with the logical positivism and empiricism of the Vienna Circle<sup>1</sup> in particular:

From observing one event following another, it was assumed that one could derive a causal relationship of natural necessity. Scientific knowledge was based on the certainty that in observing regularities, causal laws, or relations of necessity, were being observed; while any proposition which could not be grounded in certainty was held to be meaningless.

(Cruickshank, 2003: 9)

In critical realism the gathering of data may act as a guide to the existence of causal mechanisms but this is no substitute to finding out what mechanisms actually exist, if they have been activated or not and under what conditions they are acting.

In natural science, experimentation is the standard way to investigate phenomena. In practice it is usual to try to hold constant a range of relevant variables within a closed

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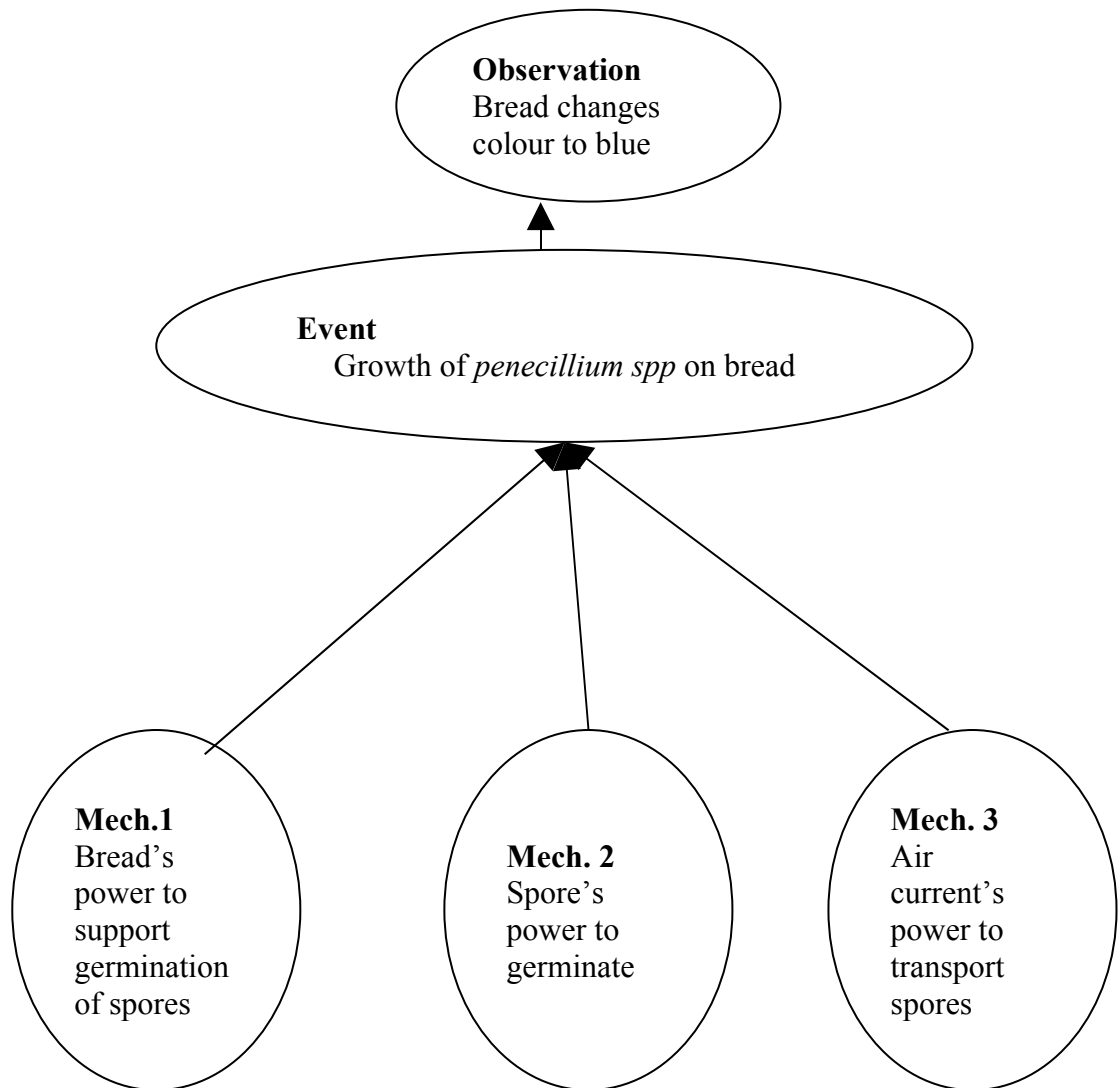
<sup>1</sup> A group of philosophers formed in the 1920s who generally took an empirical and positivist view of reality which may be described as a logical positivism.

system in order to investigate the mechanism being studied. Under these circumstances the mechanism might be expected to produce regular observable events. However it might not show this regularity when in an open system as it may be affected by other mechanisms which are also acting. Benton and Craib note that:

In Bhaskar's account, the laws discovered by experiments are 'tendencies' of the underlying mechanisms which may or may not issue in regular and observable event sequences when the mechanism is interacting with other mechanisms outside the artificial experimental situation.

(Benton & Craib 2001: 124)

In the example related to bread and mould, other mechanisms would play a part in producing the empirical observation of the colour change. One simple system is shown in Figure 2. In this system all of the mechanisms are enabling ones but it is easy to imagine a constraining mechanism, such as the power of hot air to rapidly desiccate bread, leading to an empirical observation where the bread does not change colour despite all the other mechanisms being present.



**Figure 2: Mechanisms interact to produce events and an empirical observation.**

In social systems it is not possible to isolate mechanisms. This then means that other mechanisms may influence the one under study and different mechanisms may even give rise to the same results (Sayer 2000: 15). Even in natural systems the number of mechanisms which can be truly isolated may, in reality, be very few. Also, the possibility of experiments on social systems is extremely limited and fraught with problems as people's knowledge of the experimental situation would be likely to change the outcomes.

Sayer suggests three basic questions which can assist in identifying causal responsibility in open systems:

- What does the existence of this object or practice presuppose?
- Is it possible for object A to exist without object B?
- What is it about this object which enables it to do the things which it does?

(Sayer, 2000: 16)

These and similar questions are explored in greater detail later in the section on epistemology.

#### **2.2.4. Stratified reality: emergence and autonomy**

In critical realism, reality is seen as stratified with each lower level making possible the one above it. For example, the properties of atoms allow the formation of complex biological molecules. These, in turn, allow the formation of physiological systems which, in turn, allow the formation of organisms, and so on. In the social world, individual people may have the power to form an advocacy organization which, in turn, becomes part of a coalition which then might be represented on international bodies.

The scientific disciplines can be looked upon in a general way as showing this form of stratification. The mechanisms of subatomic physics give rise to the atoms and molecules of chemistry and the mechanisms of chemistry in turn give rise to the complex biological molecules of biochemistry with their special characteristics and so on.

This scheme of a stratified reality might lead to a reductionist approach to reality where it could be suggested that, if the powers of each level can be explained in terms of the mechanisms of the level beneath it, then everything, eventually, can be reduced to the laws of physics, including life, social life, personality, who wins the Premier Football League and so on. While, of course, this begs the very interesting question of what might be underlying the laws of physics themselves, this reductionism is rejected by critical realism for three reasons. Benton and Craib (2001: 126) describe them as

follows. Firstly it is only the *constitution* of mechanisms of the upper layer of reality which are explained by the lower layer. This says nothing about the powers flowing from those mechanisms, how they will be exercised or when they will be exercised. Secondly, the higher level mechanisms can have effects on the lower level ones. For example psychological stress may lead to lowered resistance to infection, intestinal problems or an inability to conceive. Thirdly, the lower level mechanisms produce properties and powers, at the higher level, which are not predicable from the properties of those mechanisms alone. These are described as emergent properties.

An example of emergence is seen in enzyme synthesis in cells. The mechanism which is active is the chemical bonding of one amino acid to another, linking them in the form of a chain of a specific sequence coded for by a strand of mRNA. The molecule which is produced may have no special properties but simply be a chain of amino acids. Once it is transferred to a specific chemical environment it will coil and fold so as to produce a specific three dimensional form which allows it to catalyse the synthesis and breakdown of thousands of substrate molecules every second - a property which would not have been predicted from knowing the mere sequence of amino acids or their individual chemical make-up. It is not a property of the individual atoms nor individual molecules and would not be a property of such molecules joined together in a different sequence or even if they were in a different chemical environment.

On the social side it is even more complex. It is hardly likely that anyone studying the nation of Germany in 1930 and the personal qualities of a particular Austrian housepainter would have been able to predict that their interaction would lead to the death of six million Jewish people, a world plunged into war and a nuclear arms race which would take humanity to the verge of extinction.

The concept of emergent properties has profound philosophical implications. One example is that the mind can be seen as being non determinate; that is, it is not possible to predict the actions of the mind from knowing the composition and structure of its fundamental components and their original states. It might be argued that given the laws of physics and a comprehensive knowledge of the original state of

a system i.e. the universe, all thought would theoretically be explainable and predictable. However, Ellis, a cosmologist, suggests instead, the possibility of the “contextual emergence of complexity” rather than the total predetermination of everything and describes how the laws of physics combined with the original data of the early universe have actually led to minds that are autonomously effective:

With this view, the higher levels in the hierarchy of complexity have autonomous causal powers that are functionally independent of lower-level processes. Top-down causation takes place as well as bottom-up action, with the higher-level contexts determining the outcomes of the lower level, and even modifying the nature of lower level constituents.

(Ellis, 2005: 743)

Benton and Craib sum up as follows:

So causality can flow down the hierarchy as well as up it. It follows (on the critical realist equation of “being real” with “having effects”) that the mechanisms constituted at each level have their own specific reality. It also follows that sciences of the lower-level mechanisms can *contribute* to explaining but never *completely* explain the behaviour of the higher level mechanisms.

(Benton & Craib, 2001: 127 emphasis in the original)

It is important to note that stratified reality does not refer to different types of *things* existing in different strata but a stratification of mechanisms:

...the predicates “natural”, “social”, “human”, “physical”, “chemical”, “aerodynamic”, “biological”, “economic”, etc. ought not to be regarded as differentiating distinct kinds of events, but rather as differentiating distinct kinds of *mechanisms*.

(Bhaskar, 1978: 119 emphasis in original)

Sayer points out that, in the social world, the powers available to individuals or institutions depend partly upon their relations to others and partly on their relations to their context (Sayer, 200:12). For example, it makes no sense to look at the powers of a woman who has given birth to a child as an isolated person because she exists in a complex social environment. Socially, she has the power to make decisions about her

children's lives, where they live, what they eat, what they do. She has the power to claim a child support grant from a government institution and she may also enjoy special decision making power in her culture because of her status as a mother.

The naming of each level of reality applies to the investigation which is going on at the time. In the mouldy bread example above, the empirical observation of the bread becoming blue is explained by the mechanism of spores to germinate or bread to support the growth of penicillium. However, an investigation into the cause of the blue colour itself would be likely to look at the biochemistry of the production of the pigment from chemical substrates. So, the deeper level of one stratum can become the empirical level of another investigation given that the means for observation have become, or are, available.

The world in this ontology exists independently of human thought or existence and it is a stratified world. It is also a world overflowing with possibilities and the promise of hope and change for the better, a world where we are not prisoners of the past or a pre-determined future:

A crucial implication of this ontology is the recognition of the possibility that powers may exist unexercised, and hence that what has happened or been known to have happened does not exhaust what could happen or have happened. The nature of the real objects present at a given time constrains and enables what can happen but does not pre-determine what will happen. Realist ontology therefore makes it possible to understand how we could be or become many things which currently we are not...

(Sayer, 2002: 12)

### **2.2.5. Intransitive and Transitive Objects of Knowledge**

According to Bhaskar, there is a central paradox in the philosophy of science which needs to be addressed. He describes it this way.

...that men in their social activity produce knowledge which is a social product much like any other, which is no more independent of its production and the men who produce it than motor cars, armchairs or books, which has its own craftsmen, technicians, publicists, standards and skills and which is no less subject to

change than any other commodity. This is one side of 'knowledge'. The other is that knowledge is 'of' things which are not produced by men at all: the specific gravity of mercury, the process of electrolysis, the mechanism of light propagation. None of these 'objects of knowledge' depend upon human activity. If men ceased to exist sound would still travel and heavy bodies fall to the earth in exactly the same way, though *ex hypothesi* there would be no-one to know it.

(Bhaskar, 1998c: 16)

Bhaskar describes two types of objects of knowledge: the intransitive and the transitive (*ibid*). The transitive objects are those things made into items of knowledge by the theories, facts, paradigms, models and techniques of enquiry at the time:

They include the antecedently established facts and theories, paradigms and models, methods and techniques of enquiry available to a particular scientific school or worker.

(*ibid*)

The intransitive objects are those which are the enduring objects of investigation. The intransitive dimension includes social phenomena, such as unemployment, crime and violence in society as well as natural scientific phenomena such as the pressure of a gas, enzyme kinetics or phagocytosis in cells. The transitive dimension includes theories, concepts and discourses about the intransitive objects, although these transitive objects can, under some circumstances, also become themselves the objects of study (Sayer 2000:10). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:32) maintain that the intransitive object of social science is the actual practices it is analyzing with the transitive object being the proto-theories produced as part of those practices.

Although changes in the transitive objects of natural science do not have an effect on its intransitive objects, in the social world, knowledge itself is part of the world studied and changing knowledge may change the intransitive social objects even if only to a small degree:

Whereas the objects of the natural science researcher are naturally produced but socially defined, the objects of the social scientist are both socially produced and socially defined.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2002:16)

For a single intransitive object of knowledge, such as the phenomenon of depression, there may be a number of transitive objects of knowledge. These would be the different theories individuals or groups of people hold about depression, what it is and its causes.

### **2.2.5.1. Scientific knowledge as socially constructed**

Science is a social activity and the scientific product, knowledge, is the transitive object of critical realism. It is affected not only by situations within science itself - equipment, recent experiments, current theories and so on, but also by factors within society:

Beside the state of art in science, which on all occasions must be the raw material of research, science is also produced by mechanisms outside the knowledge-seeking process such as economical, political and cultural conditions etc. of our time.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2003: 24)

As described earlier, the simple act of observation will not allow penetration to the deeper layers of reality since this requires experimentation and/or scientific thinking and the outcome, the knowledge product, will depend upon what experiments are done, how they are done, what things are measured, how they are measured and so on. Danermark *et al.* (*ibid*) note that facts, whether in the social or natural sciences, rather than being totally objective indicators of some kind, are ideologically and or theoretically conditioned:

Facts are relative to the conceptions we initially form of the phenomena we are interested in, and the tools we develop on the basis of these conceptions to enable a study of the phenomena will have a decisive influence on what we are going to see.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2003: 31)

Bhaskar claims that facts "...are not what we apprehend in sense-perception, but results of the theories in terms of which our apprehension of things is organized". He also goes on to assert that they are real and are "historically specific social realities" (Bhaskar, 1989: 60, 61).

So knowledge is, to a certain degree, socially determined and facts are generally theory laden, drawing upon earlier understanding and conceptualisations, all of which leads to the conclusion that a totally objective science, a naive objectivism is not possible. This may lead to a relativist position where all possible explanations and conceptualisations are seen as being equally valid but critical realism rejects this. Not all explanations and conceptualisations are equally valid and some may be clearly shown to be false. Overall this means it is possible to gain useful and worthwhile knowledge even though it is understood it will inevitably be fallible and incomplete to some degree.

In the natural sciences the intransitive objects are not affected by any form of motivation or meaning-making processes but in the social sciences the situation is very different. Individuals and groups in society assign meaning to the world they live in and this has profound effects upon how they act.

### **2.2.5.2. Meaning**

Meaning is important because it is the meanings people make, which allow them to form reasons and reasons are instrumental in causing change (Fairclough *et al.*, 2001: 3). Collier maintains that people may act on unconscious reasons as well as conscious ones (Collier, 1994: 152). It is the everyday knowledge and understandings which people have about their world which are so important:

Social worlds are inherently meaningful. It is necessary to understand the meaning people assign to their actions in order to understand their actions. The actions in their turn mediate everyday social phenomena as well as deeper underlying structural relations, which are constitutive of the society under study.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 36)

It is not the correctness or otherwise of the concepts which people hold which makes them significant to the scientific investigation of social phenomena but the fact that people have these concepts and that these concepts are capable of affecting their actions at some time or other and to a greater or lesser degree. If reasons, as well as natural physical powers, can be the causes of events, then reasons must also be seen as real entities and not simply abstract constructions.

Concepts are often constitutive of the social phenomenon under examination and many phenomena can be described as concept dependent, the social practices being what they are because of the meanings ascribed to them. However, a social phenomenon does not exist discretely and in isolation but is part of a great complex of social phenomena. It thus cannot exist without the meanings assigned to it and its relationships within that complex. Some concepts are particularly significant in that they are constitutive of the whole of the society in which they are found (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 34).

Concepts are related to the existing structured social totality of society and it is when members of society act in accordance with their concepts of reality that social structures are reproduced or transformed (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 34, 35). Bhaskar maintains that social structure is always ready made and it is agents who reproduce or transform it:

It is still true to say that society would not exist without human activity, so that reification remains an error. And it is still true to say that such activity would not occur unless the agents engaging in it had some conception of what they were doing (which is of course the fundamental insight of the hermeneutical tradition). But it is no longer true to say that agents *create* it. Rather one must say: they *reproduce* or *transform* it. That is, if society is already made, then any concrete

human praxis, or, if you like, act of objectivation can only modify it; and the totality of such acts sustain or change it.

(Bhaskar, 1998a: 214 emphasis in the original)

These conceptions lead on to the idea of the duality of structure and the duality of praxis. In the first, society is an ever present, material cause which is continually

changed by agency and, in the second, the dual character of agency is highlighted as both conscious and at times unconscious (Cruikshank, 2003: 104).

The formation of concepts about the world and the way it works informs the reasons people have for the actions they take. However it is not clear what fundamental nature reasons have or how they bring about action and Fairclough *et al.* (2001: 4) suggest that reasons might be thought of as "...emergent elements in more extensive networks of concepts, beliefs, symbols and texts..." and that they presuppose "... languages, intentionality, particular concepts and prior understandings and interests, intertextuality, conventions of inference, and evidence and so on".

The same authors also point out that other things apart from reasons may bring about changes in behaviour including, for example, the expressive qualities of communications such as the tone of speech or imagery used (*ibid*).

Social phenomena normally have a material aspect as well as one which deals with meaning and, according to Sayer (2000: 17), "[m]eanings are related to material circumstances and practical contexts in which communication takes place and to which reference is made".

### **2.2.5.3. The double hermeneutic**

Meaning is conveyed in society via language, amongst other things, but language is not a set of fixed meanings understood by all who use it. It is dynamic, with meanings shifting through time and from one group to another in society and even from one person to another within a group. As Sayer notes, it is dependent upon what has gone before; what others have said and the concepts that have previously been used:

We are accustomed to thinking of language as something which we as users speak with and through. But there is a sense in which the reverse applies too; I am not the sole author of this book: the structure of the language and narrative forms, such as those of academic texts, of which I am only partially aware, speak through me. At one level we might say that this is analogous to any act of production, such as the construction of a house, for the nature of the materials, as well as the work of the builder, determine the properties of the result. But the effects of language are not fixed like those of bricks and steel. New interpretations are always possible; they can never be foreclosed.

(Sayer, 1992: 20)

The shifting meanings contained in language complicate research, particularly in the social sciences. In the natural sciences, research involves the construction of concepts via the language of the researchers and the research community. Often this language is highly specialized and controlled. With research in the social sciences the situation is more complex; there is again, the language of the research community but additionally, and crucially, the language of those who form the object of the research. They also use language to create meaning and conceptualise the world, thus creating a situation where social science researchers have to work in both language worlds; a situation often described as the double hermeneutic. The researchers must understand the meanings made by those who form part of the study in order to truly investigate it and at the same time interpret their findings to the scientific community in the terms of its own language and concept systems.

The difficulties of this search for truth in the hermeneutic tradition are neatly summed up by How (2003:118,199), who describes the possible derivation of the term hermeneutic from the name of the Greek god Hermes. Hermes was an entity able to appear or disappear at will, a trickster and god of thieves and highway robbers, the god of boundaries who also led the dead into the underworld. Hermes's Latin name was Mercury, which makes clearer his slippery character but he was also a communicator to humans:

Hermes was the god that mediated or interpreted the truth of the world in a form that would resonate with people in the conditions of their ordinary lives. True to his character, the knowledge that

Hermes brought would always be subtle, partial and tacit; it would enlighten people, but resist completion.

(How, 2003: 119)

Interpretation of meaning is not the only complicating factor. Groups which are dominant in society define the way language is used, what is acceptable and what is not, the words with which reality itself is described. In the end they create the dominant conceptualizations of reality. Sayer observes that, systems of domination:

...are maintained not only through the appropriation, control and allocation of essential material requirements by the dominant class, race or gender but also through the reproduction of particular systems of meaning which support them... The relevant constitutive meanings (e.g. concerning what it is to be a boss, master race, untouchable, husband or wife) are certainly not neutral or indifferent to their associated practices and different groups have very different or even contradictory material stakes in their reproduction or transformation.

(Sayer, cited in Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 37)

However, socially constructing the world is not a once and forever act but a continuous struggle often with very high stakes:

An essential aspect of social life is the very existence of conflicts and power struggles over whose concepts will be valid and who will consequently have the power to define reality...

(Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 29)

I will return to this theme later when exploring power, language and ideology.

### **2.2.6. Emancipation, explanatory critique and critical theory**

According to Benton and Craib, Bhaskar's critical realism is necessarily connected to emancipatory politics by way of knowledge of self and society which they note is similar to the theme of Habermas's social theory (Benton & Craib, 2001:136). This derives from the Enlightenment view that knowledge of the truth will eventually lead to a better life and freedom from oppressive practices. Critical theory may be seen as an extension of the Enlightenment philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Marx (van Heerden, 1994:305). According to van Heerden critical theory attempts to do the following:

- follow the development of reason through history;
- suggest steps for the attainment of freedom given the prevailing level and mode of production;
- through analysis and critique, identify the problems in society at present and open up possibilities for transformation;
- lead to a form of life which does not have any unnecessary relations of domination.

(van Heerden, 1994: 306)

It might be suggested that a scientific philosophy such as critical realism must be value free and can say nothing about what is good or bad, right or wrong in any meaningful way. However, Collier (1994:170,171) describes how it is possible, with critical realism, to move from facts to values. His argument points out that arguments from facts which lead to values are more like evidentiary or scientific arguments than pure deduction. Values, which exist in open systems and value judgments, need to carry the rider “all things being equal” as there could be special cases where this particular value might be overridden by other considerations. For example, an accepted value might be that it is wrong to hurt people. However in a situation where a young child gets a thorn deeply embedded in her foot it might be justified to hurt her in removing it so as to prevent the possibility of life-threatening infection later on.

Social science presents ideas which are claimed to be true about society and society itself is reproduced by and transformed by human beings. Humans also act upon, amongst other things, ideas in society. So, although the ideas in a society form an important part of investigating and understanding it, some of the most significant ideas in society are about society itself. Should a social scientist encounter a demonstrably false belief, she will want to explain it and part of this explanation might be that some institution or group of people is responsible for promoting that false belief. The relevant part of the explanation then forms a value judgment:

To say that some institution causes false beliefs is to criticize it. Given that (other things being equal) it is better to believe what is true than what is false, it is better (other things being equal) that institutions that cause false beliefs should be replaced by, or transformed into, those that cause true ones.

(Collier, 1994: 172)

If, for example, a particular institution promoted the idea that it is essential to human health and wellbeing to eat animal flesh at least three times a week, people might be persuaded that if they do not do this they risk illness and even death. Mothers might feel morally bound to feed their children on such a diet. Therefore, animals will be killed and parts of their bodies eaten with the above reasons for justification.

If research is actually carried out which shows that it is quite possible to live a full and healthy life without consuming any animal flesh at all, these results would, on the one hand, be useful for people in deciding what to eat for a healthy diet and, on the other hand, show that the institution is proclaiming a totally false proposition and misleading people. Given that, all things being equal, it is better to tell the truth than to lie, the research inevitably criticises the institution and its untruthfulness and brings pressure for its change or abolition.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough put forward a similar argument using the concept of ideology and domination:

In so far as proto-theories are shown through critical analysis to be working ideologically – to be helping the practices sustain relations of domination – critical social science may subvert the practices it analyses, by showing proto-theories to be to be miscognitions, and producing scientific theories which may be taken up within (and enter struggles within) the practices.

(Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 32, 33)

Bhaskar, looking at the implications of critical realism for socialism, maintains the following:

From the critical realist perspective, contrary to the tradition of contemporary social democracy, socialist emancipation depends on the transformation of structures, not the amelioration of states of affairs. Indeed in present and foreseeable circumstances, the transformation of structures may be a practically necessary condition for more humane states of affairs. But this transformation does not involve a magic transportation into a realm free of determination as imagined by utopian and so called 'scientific' socialists. Rather, it consists in the move or transition from unneeded, unwanted and oppressive to needed, wanted and empowering sources of determination.

(Bhaskar, 1989: 6)

## **2.3. Epistemological strategies**

### **2.3.1. Methods of constructing knowledge**

The fact that humans continually make meaning and change previously made meanings is one reason why social science, unlike natural science, is unable, in general, to carry out experiments in the traditional sense. If people were part of an experiment it would very likely lead to changes in their concepts and ideas about what was happening as well as their motivation and so their actions and the social phenomena under investigation would also change. Another reason is that it is almost impossible to structure anything in social science like the closed system of natural scientific enquiry. However there are a number of ways in which knowledge can be gained from observations in the sciences.

Deduction involves the logical and rigorous drawing of conclusions from a given statement or observation. A simple example would be as follows. In football the rules state that a goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick. If a goal kick is taken and goes directly into the opposition's goal the conclusion must be that this is not counted as a goal. Deduction has nothing more to say. If the general rule (premise) is true and the observation is true the conclusion must also be true.

Induction, on the other hand, takes a particular finding and moves on to generalisation. For example, a number of different types of cat might be observed and from these observations the proposition put forward that all cats have tails. This might possibly be true and the more observations taken showing that all observed cats have

tails, the greater the likelihood of it being correct. However it is never a logical certainty. Indeed the process of induction does pose a problem for science and social life in general and this is essentially the question of why it should be reasonable to propose that what happens in the particular might also happen in a general situation and even that what happened yesterday will also happen today (Bhaskar 1978, 216). What justification do we have for expecting the density of pure water to be the same today as it was yesterday, or that it will be the same in Liverpool as it is in Dar-Es-Salaam? Why does it seem reasonable to expect that solar cells can be used to produce electrical energy anywhere in the world or that, if we could not start a fire by rubbing two blocks of ice together yesterday, then the same process will not produce fire today either? Bhaskar points out that it is possible to imagine worlds which are counter inductive or even capricious but that the fact that induction does sometimes work tells us something about the world (Bhaskar, 1998a: 91, 92). His explanation focuses on the differences between structures and patterns of events:

Now a belief in the uniformity of nature is quite misplaced if it is a belief in the invariance of patterns of *events* (or experiences)... A belief in the uniformity of nature is only rational if it is a belief in the invariance of *structures*. The eventsequential past is an unreliable guide to the future. Instead what we require, and in small measure actually possess, is a knowledge of the invariant tendencies and natures of things (though this does not legitimate predictions)... It is the possibility of an adequate explanation, in terms of real invariances, from which the behaviour concerned can, normically, be understood, be deduced that must justify any piece of inductive reasoning in science.

(Bhaskar, 1998a: 92,93)

Although deduction and induction are valid forms of inference used to great effect in science and everyday life, they are not necessarily able to answer questions about the deeper nature of reality. For this reason other investigative strategies must be employed which draw on the ontology of critical realism.

In this work I start with a description of the practices of animal farming, which is taken as the empirical level of critical realism for this enquiry i.e. the observed phenomenon. This forms the base for the investigations which follow. Then, drawing

on work by Danermark *et al.* (2002), I use abduction to clarify, analyse and re-conceptualise the phenomenon of animal farming and retroduction to discover the necessary conditions/mechanisms/powers supporting the phenomenon's continued existence (Danermark *et al.*, 2002). These authors give a comprehensive description of the use of both abduction and retroduction in the social sciences and I draw upon their work extensively below.

Following these processes, one of the mechanisms which I find to be necessary in supporting and perpetuating the phenomenon, i.e. particular discourses about farmed animals, is investigated in greater depth.

### **2.3.2 Abduction – seeing things differently**

Abduction is unlike deduction, which is logically rigorous, and unlike induction, which is an empirical generalization (Collins, cited in Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 90). It may be classed as re-description or re-contextualisation and is a way of gaining a new insight or a new perspective on a familiar phenomenon by viewing it through a different frame of interpretation:

The revolution of recontextualizations is that they give new meaning to already known phenomena... What is discovered is connections and relations, not directly observable, by which one can understand and explain already known occurrences in a novel way.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 91)

In order to understand more fully the empirical observations/descriptions of animal farming and to place this in a context which might lead to greater insight, I have re-described and re-conceptualised what happens during the interactions between humans and farm animals during this phenomenon. This has also entailed providing a theoretical framework for the situation and interpreting what is happening.

Umberto Eco distinguishes three forms of abduction: overcoded, undercoded and creative (Eco, cited in Danermark *et al.*, 20002 : 93). Overcoded abduction refers to the everyday inferences we make automatically. These may be described as natural

interpretations although, in other social and cultural contexts, they may be highly contested. Undercoded abduction describes the choice of one particular frame of reference from amongst a number of others and creative abduction occurs when an observer interprets a phenomenon in a totally new way or at least a way which opposes the conventional interpretation. I believe my analysis falls into the latter two categories.

### **2.3.3. Retroduction - asking what the world must be like**

Retroduction uses transcendental arguments to move from empirical observation towards a conceptualization of transfactual conditions (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 96). Transcendental argumentation goes beyond empirical observation in seeking to describe what must be the case for a particular phenomenon to exist; what supports it, what relationships it must have and what other conditions must exist. It attempts to differentiate which conditions are essential and which are contingent. Bhaskar observes that:

When a stratum of reality has been adequately described the next step consists in the discovery of the mechanisms responsible for behavior at that level. The key move in this is the postulation of hypothetical entities and mechanisms whose reality can then be ascertained.

(Bhaskar, 1998b: 66)

If a phenomenon is described and that description is essentially acceptable, the question can be asked how must the world be for this to be possible? Benton describes this process for phenomenon  $p$  which has first been empirically described:

‘What must be the case for  $p$  to be possible?’ Let us suppose that some condition or state of affairs,  $c$  can be identified a necessary condition for  $p$ . Since we have already accepted that  $p$  is *actual* then it must be possible, and so the conditions which make it possible must be satisfied. So  $c$  must be the case.

(Benton & Craib, 2001: 122)

Although both the real and the actual may be observable to some degree the world must contain unobservable entities too. The existence of observable entities may require the postulation of unobservable ones if observable effects can only be explained as the product of the unobservable entity (Collier, cited in Sayer, 2000: 12). For example, it is only possible to be picked as the England football striker if there is a place called England, a game of football, a football team called England, other football teams to play against, a position of striker and much more besides. The first is impossible without the others. This is a form of transfactual argumentation where objects or structures are understood to exist, not because they have actually been observed to exist but because, given our present understanding, they must exist if something else, in this case the position of England striker, also exists. This does not exhaust what might possibly exist. There might be objects which exert powers intermittently or which are not able to be detected or inferred from our empirical observations.

Using this form of inference, I again pose the question, “What is it in the world, what conditions are there, that allow, promote, sanction, perpetuate and excuse the present large scale, institutionalized oppression, abuse and killing of animals by humans in nonhuman animal farming?” The question is a complex one and nonhuman animal farming is a very a familiar practice to everyone, although this familiarity is mostly in a displaced form such as pictures, stories or the viewing of animals from a distance.

Although the re-contextualisation of animal farming that I present may not be acceptable to everyone at this present moment in our history, I show that it is a valid perspective and therefore use it as the basis for my retroduction. However, before engaging in transfactual argumentation I take another route by looking at what might be described as different circumstances but similar terrain. This is rather like a geologist who visits places where similar strata to the ones being investigated are more clearly exposed and may have been subjected to extreme conditions thus giving her a better understanding of their fundamental nature.

Danermark *et al.*, (2002) propose that greater insight into the structures, mechanisms and powers necessary for certain phenomena can be obtained by, amongst other things, examining similar situations to the one under scrutiny and searching for essential similarities, and also by looking at pathological situations where the underlying processes may be more clearly exposed than under “normal” conditions (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 104-106).

I use both of these processes and they provide useful input into the transfactual argumentation which follows. One problem which arises is that there is nothing directly akin, in human society today or in human history, to the oppression and mass annihilation of nonhuman animals by humans – neither in scale nor duration. Despite this, I maintain that it is useful to examine a particular group of events in human history which have some commonality with this phenomenon and which may also be described as pathological.

For this reason I survey examples of genocide with special emphasis on the Holocaust, searching for the essential causative and sustaining features of these events and looking for resonance with animal farming. I do not maintain that these two phenomena, genocide and animal farming, are exactly the same, although they do have significant similarities, or that all the essential conditions of one are present in the other. I do maintain, however, that such a comparison is able to assist in the identification of some of the essential conditions supporting animal farming.

One of the essential conditions I identify is the presence in society of particular discourses about animals which socially construct them in various ways. In order to investigate this aspect in greater depth I use a form of critical discourse analysis to analyse articles appearing in a popular South African farming magazine over a six month period.

#### **2.3.4. Language and the construction of reality**

Social constructionism is a term with many shades of meaning. Jorgensen and Phillips, drawing upon work by Burr (1995), outline the main premises as follows:

- reality is accessible to us through categorization so the knowledge and representations we make are not reflections of reality but products of discourse;
- our views and knowledge are historically and culturally specific as well as our identities;
- knowledge is created through social interaction where truth is constructed;
- different social views of the world lead to different understandings and different social actions which in turn produce their own consequences.

(Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 5,6).

They further point out that:

With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse.

(Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 8, 9)

These authors see language as a machine generating and constituting the social world including social identities and social relations. Language is not just a neutral mechanism for communicating objective information from one person to another. Its use has consequences far beyond this simplistic scenario. A sobering account of the inherent power of language is given in this extract from the South African Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearings:

It is common place to treat language as mere words, not deeds, therefore language is taken to play a minimal role in understanding violence. The Commission wishes to take a different view here. Language, discourse and rhetoric does things: it constructs social categories, it gives orders, it persuades us, it justifies, it explains, gives reasons, excuses. It constructs reality. It moves certain people against other people.

(TRC, 1998:294)

### **2.3.4.1. Discourse**

The construct of discourse analysis, or Neo Gramscian theory, comes out of the Marxist tradition but seeks to be more relevant in the analysis of modern societies than traditional Marxism in that it allows for concepts of greater complexity which are not derived from a rigid analysis of class (Thomsen & Andersen, 2000:161,162).

According to Thomsen & Andersen, discourse analysis makes the following claims:

- ideology, language and symbols are as important as material considerations in the explanation of historical developments;
- material relations cannot be understood without consideration of the ideological and linguistic conditions existing;
- social reality is constructed with language and symbols;
- political conflict and dominance bring about changes in social organization.

(Thomsen & Andersen, 2000: 61)

There are many descriptions of what is meant by discourse. Laclau & Mouffe (cited in Thomsen & Andersen, 2000:164) describe discourse as “an actively constructed horizon of meaning and action, that is, as referring to concrete relations established amongst certain objects, language codes and types of behaviour”. For Fairclough

(2001: 16), discourse is, “language as a form of social practice”. Gee (1999:7) sees it as “personal language in use as well as language combined with material aspects such as ways of behaving, clothes, believing, valuing, objects etc.” and for Jorgensen & Phillips (2002:1), it is “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of it)”.

According to Chouariki and Fairclough (1999:4), an important characteristic of the social, economic and cultural changes of late modernity is the existence of these changes as discourses. Although these changes are also processes which take place outside discourses, they are, in turn, substantively shaped by discourses. They further point out that:

Advances in information technology, mainly communications media, underlie both economic and cultural transformations, opening up new forms of experience and knowledge and new possibilities of relationships with faraway others via television or the internet. Postmodernist theory has fixed on the consequential economic and cultural centrality of signs detached from specific material locations and circulating across the boundaries of space and time.

(Chouariki & Fairclough, 1999: 3)

As mentioned already, some conceptions of discourse include the material as well as the linguistic elements of the world. Gee (1999: 6, 7) describes discourse written with a small, uncapitalised, “d” as “language-in-use” but Discourse written with a big, capitalised “D” as that language in use together with the other things that go with it such as clothes, body language, technology, values and so on.

Chouariki and Fairclough (1999: 6, 21), drawing on Harvey’s proposal of the dialectical nature of social processes, recognize discourse as being one moment amongst others, which include power, social relations, material practices, institutions/rituals and beliefs/values/desires. Each moment internalizes the others without it being reducible to them.

Discourse is also seen as being socially constitutive. “Discourse is a practice of not just representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (Fairclough 1992: 64). Gee sees the importance of non-language components in this process:

We continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language, but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling and believing. Sometimes what we build is quite similar to what we have built before; sometimes it is not. But language-in-action is always and everywhere an active building process.

(Gee, 1999: 11)

He also maintains that language use, written and spoken allows us to construct/construe seven areas of reality (Gee, 2005:11-13). The seven areas of reality below are quoted from Gee although the examples in the bullet points are mine:

- Significance. Language is used to give meaning and value to different aspects of the material world. An ordinary room becomes a study, an old piece of furniture is an antique, a part of a pig’s corpse becomes a pork chop.
- Activities. Language is used to recognise particular activities. A head master gives a formal address at a prize giving or a football manager gives a team talk at half time.
- Identities. Speaking in a particular way may signify status such as that of being a boss or a parent.
- Relationships. Relationships such as formal and informal, doctor and patient or sexual and nonsexual are enacted in language.
- Politics. This concerns the distribution of social goods such as who is valued and who is not, the allocation of blame, what is normal or abnormal or what motives may be in play.

- Connections. Language is used to try connect certain things or to attempt to disconnect them. A person might try to make a connection between the way women dress and the high incidence of rape or claim that, because the constitution is too liberal, this will lead to a breakdown of morals in the country. On the other hand it might be said that the system of apartheid in the past has nothing to do with the present level of violence in South African society.
- Sign systems and knowledge. Some languages, some forms of a particular language and some sign systems may be valued over others thus privileging the knowledge and values of those systems over others. For example a scientific/instrumental semiotic system may be valued over a system of traditional knowledge and ethics.

#### **2.3.4.2. Ideology**

For Marx, society is predicated on the material conditions which prevail at the time and it is these which determine the consciousness of its members:

The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.

(Marx, cited in Martin, 1994: 82)

People have material needs which are satisfied by productive activity on nature. The means of production consist of the object or whatever is to be worked upon and the purpose, plus the instruments which will be used (Martin, 1994: 83). With these go the labouring activity itself, in total giving rise to the labour process (Martin, 1994: 82, 83) The forces of production refer to the combinations of the means of production and human labour and are historically and geographically variable (Martin 1994:84) People enter into social relations of production, including cooperation and division of labour to produce what they need to survive.

According to Marx, the forces of production and the relations of production, which are dependent upon them, form the base of society. This base then gives rise to the superstructure of ideas, consciousness and institutions (Martin, 1994: 87, 88). The totality of the relations of production constitutes society's economic structure which serves as the base for a politico-legal and ideological superstructure (Manson, 1994: 23). So, according to this view, the material base of society is a key determinant in the production of human consciousness or ideological reality.

Althusser (cited in Phillips and Joergensen 2002: 15) defines ideology as “a system of representations masking true relationships to one another in society by constructing imaginary relations between people and between them and the social formation”. Ideology in this sense represents a distortion of the truth about how the world really is which is essentially the false consciousness described by Marx.

Althusser also sees ideologies as fixed to material practices and embedded in social institutions (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 261). Further, he describes a process of interpellation which constructs a social position for the individual and makes them into an ideological subject. According to this point of view, careful analysis should make it possible to look behind this false representation of the world to the truth and to see how the individual is ideologically positioned.

This determinist position of Althusser is countered firstly by research suggesting that subjects interpret messages encoded in text differently from those intended by the originator, secondly by the idea that different discourses often compete and thirdly by a rejection altogether of the theory of ideology as false consciousness using a Foucaultian view that truth is created in discourse and nothing “more true” is masked by any particular ideology (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002: 17, 18). This latter proposal however, leads to a relativist position where there are many truths of equal validity. From a critical realist point of view we can only ever know the world through conceptualisations and these are understood to be fallible and always open to modification, to new experience and insight. This means that a claim of knowing ultimate truth about something is not one that can be supported by critical realism.

Notwithstanding this, it is clear that not all conceptualisations are equally valid and it is legitimate to claim that epistemic gain, rather than absolute truth, is an outcome of critical social scientific enquiry (Choulariki & Fairclough, 1999: 33, 34). Although epistemic gain may or may not have the status of absolute truth, it does allow for further argumentation and the testing of its findings (*ibid*). Yet another possibility is to replace the concept of truth with the idea of “practical adequacy” (Sayer, 1984: 66).

Discourses are not neutral but ideological in nature; ideology being another term with various shades of meaning. Fairclough maintains that:

Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation.

(Fairclough 2003: 9)

Gee describes ideologies as social theories involving beliefs and claims about the ways in which goods are distributed in society, a social theory being one which “crucially involves human relationships” (Gee, 1996: 16, 21). These theories may be tacit, where a person is unaware or only dimly aware of the grounding generalisations and theories for the claims they make or, at the other end of the scale, overt, where they have a high degree of awareness and can explicate those grounding theories. He identifies the job of explicating such tacit theories as the work of discourse analysis but also gives this warning:

We must infer from the person’s beliefs, actions and words what theory the person is tacitly using. We must spell out more completely and explicitly the generalizations the person can only partially express. We can never be sure that we are ‘right’ here. We can never be sure of this even in our own case, thanks to various sorts of self deception.

(Gee 1996: 17)

In turn these theories may derive from first hand experience and research which Gee terms “primary” theories but alternatively, they may be based on reports by other people who hold primary theories, in which case they are classed as “removed”

theories. Thirdly there are “deferred” theories where the person simply believes that experts have made sufficient generalizations to ground their belief (Gee, 1996: 17, 18).

The research which forms the basis of this thesis is located in a position which understands discourse as language in action as well as social structures, practices, values and physical objects. This is best captured in Gee’s construct of “big D Discourse”. Implicit in this is the idea of ideology as a personal and collective view of how the world is, how the world should be and how the world works. It is ideology which, through the tool of language, shapes conceptions of reality and via human actions produces artefacts such as committees, working groups, institutional hierarchies, prison cells, bank cards, clothes and cattle trucks. These are all part of the discourse, products of ideology or what might be termed ideological artefacts.

A rather simplistic example of this viewpoint is that the anti-Semitic discourse and ideology of Nazism gave rise to ways of describing and constructing Jewish people and eventually produced a whole administrative system to identify and monitor Jews. Later it brought into being a further, major, physical expression of this ideology in the form of the concentration camps and the gas chambers. All of these manifestations, and more, form part of the ideology of anti-Semitism under Nazi domination and the ideology is expressed in the form of physical and social artefacts.

On a more mundane level, a discarded cool drink bottle might suggest a society which values conspicuous consumption rather than conservation. With artefacts such as electric cattle prods, gas chambers and vivisection restraints, objects made for very specific purposes, certain aspects of the underlying ideology are much more clearly defined.

Ideology and discourse bring about real physical changes in the world producing dams, cities, aircraft carriers, universities and wars, reinforcing the status quo or changing the world. It is not to say that other contextual and physical factors do not play a part in influencing events, they must, but discourse with its inherent ideology is pervasive, ever present, extremely subtle and very powerful.

### 2.3.4.3. Power

Ideologies are intimately connected to power, with implicit assumptions and justifications supporting unequal power relations:

Ideologies are closely linked to power, because the nature of the ideological assumptions embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of the conventions themselves, depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions; and because they are a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power, simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted.

(Fairclough 2001: 2)

We frequently take the familiar to be the way the world is supposed to be and we subtly understand that the world is ordered in this way because it *must* be like this; that for the most part, our everyday world is inevitably the way it is because it could not be otherwise.

For example, it seems that it is the natural way of the world that some people get very rich while others have nothing, that a woman's duties are to cook and clean in the home or that when learners are deemed to have failed in education it must be their own fault for not working hard enough. Animal farming is another example and is looked upon as being a natural and therefore normal and an acceptable part of life – how the world is *meant to be*. This makes the idea extremely resistant to challenge.

Not only does ideology allow us to practice unequal and oppressive power relations but it conveniently absolves us of any guilt that we may feel. Gee explains:

Ideologies are important because since theories ground beliefs and beliefs lead to actions and actions create social worlds (“reality”), ideologies simultaneously explain, often exonerate, and always partially create, in interaction with history and the material bases of society, the distribution of goods... To the extent that ideologies are tacit, removed or deferred and self-advantaging they are the root of human evil and leave us complicit with and thus responsible for the

evil in the world.

(Gee 1996: 21)

Another extract from the final report of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 1998), contextualises the above descriptions in recent political history:

In the South African context it is important to understand how multiple discourses combined, intersected and intertwined to create climates of violence. In this respect the ideologies of racism, patriarchy, religions, capitalism, apartheid and militarism all intertwined to “manufacture” people capable of violence. Ideologies in these sorts of combinations provide the means and grounds for people to act violently and yet, ironically, believe they are acting in terms of worthy, noble and morally righteous principles.

(TRC,1998: 297)

Fairclough describes how some dominant discourses can become naturalized to the point where they are no longer questioned and, quoting Bourdieu, lead to the “... recognition of legitimacy through the misrecognition of arbitrariness” (Fairclough, 2001: 76). The associated ideologies come to be taken as common sense and opposing views are simply unthinkable.

This relationship between common sense and ideology may be described as a practical activity in which “philosophy is contained as an implicit theoretical premise and a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life” (Gramsci, 1971 cited in Fairclough 2001:70). This form of ideological common sense has powerful implications for domination. Domination might be coercive but can also result from the manufacture of consent in a process which has become known as “hegemony” (Gramsci, 1971). Hegemony thus makes people complicit in their own oppression and occurs when “the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will...” (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, *et al.*, 1977 cited in van Dijk, 1993: 110). Van Dijk

(*ibid*) further asserts that power and dominance are usually organized and institutionalised.

Resistance to power is always possible in human society as texts are interpreted differently and discourses compete. Nor is ideological common sense monolithic or static. It may be seen as containing a number of competing elements which are the results of the negotiation of meaning. This means that hegemony is never stable but changing and incomplete; an unstable equilibrium (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002: 75, 76, drawing on work by Gramsci and Fairclough).

Of course for animals the hegemonic relationship as outlined above is not possible and by far the most important aspect of ideological dominance, with respect to animals, is that it facilitates human complicity in their physical domination and oppression. It does this by portraying practices, such as farming, as normal, natural and ethical. In other words it manufactures ideological common sense leading to the domination of animals by humans.

Garner describes the prevailing ideology in the west concerning animals and the power structure it reveals thus:

Moral standing is not equivalent to moral status, however, and the conventional position, in the West at least, remains that, whilst having important interests, animals are inferior to humans. The dominance of anthropocentrism in ideological discourse is a reminder of the fact that ideologies are a reflection of power structures in society and, in this case, the pre-eminence of human beings.

(Garner, 2003: 233)

The domination by humans of animals is hardly ever mentioned in discourse literature, according to Stibbe, who also claims that animals are oppressed coercively by a relatively small number of people but that coercion has the consent of the population (Stibbe, 2001: 146, 147).

#### 2.3.4.4. Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough maintains that texts can bring about change in our knowledge, beliefs and attitudes and even, over time, contribute to shaping a person's identity. They may also inculcate, sustain or change ideologies (Fairclough 2003: 8, 9).

In the production of meaning three entities are recognised. The object itself, known as the referent, the signifier, which could be words or images standing for the referent and the signified, which are concepts about the referent (Sayer, 2001: 36). The signifiers do not have a simple one to one relationship with the signified and signifiers only gain meaning in relation to other signifiers across a network. The word bus has no meaning alone but other words such as car, bicycle, boat are “not bus” and so give meaning to the word bus as a particular concept. However “...semiosis cannot be reduced to the play of differences among networks of signs... and it cannot be understood without identifying and exploring the extra-semiotic conditions that make semiosis possible and secure its effectivity” (Fairclough *et al.*, 2002:4). The same authors also go on to describe how scant is our understanding of how texts may bring about actions.

While texts are, perhaps, principally thought of as the written word, the description can also include transcripts of the spoken word and such things as web pages and visual images (Fairclough, 2003: 3). So it is not only linguistic vehicles which are semiotic. For example, actions can also be instrumental in generating meaning and when a mother hugs her child, there is a world of meaning although no words are operational. The repeated use in education of corporal punishment on children i.e. physical assault by a trusted adult on a minor, may contribute to the creation of many different meanings. It may generate the belief by the child (and also reinforce the belief by the adult, who was beaten as a child himself) that the child must be beaten when they are “bad” (bad having a whole range of fairly arbitrary and even contradictory descriptions). Another possibility is the subtle, probably unconscious, understanding by the child that when a problem arises the best method of “solving” it is by using violence. After all, an adult is an older person who has more experience of life and greater knowledge and is normally seen to be acting within the law or at least

within accepted cultural and institutional norms. The child may even construct the meaning that physical violence is an expression of love and caring.

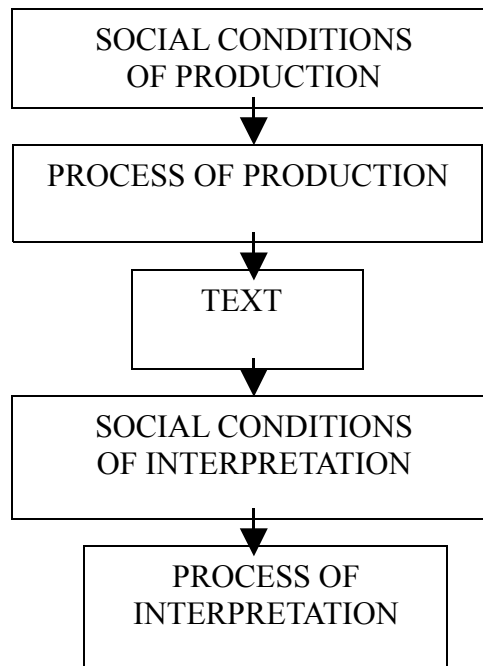
Of course some children will make totally different meanings from these actions but the point is that actions, especially repeated and sanctioned actions, can and do contribute significantly to the creation of meaning. This has important implications for the phenomenon of animal farming and its apprehension as acceptable and normal.

Given the overwhelming communicative powers in society today, there can be little doubt about the centrality of texts in the form of words, pictures, advertising, clothes etc in the creation of meaning in our world.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has its roots in Western Marxism and describes the critical analysis of language (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258). Choulariki & Fairclough (2003: 33) see CDA as a form of what Bhaskar describes as explanatory critique. Fairclough and Wodak have outlined a wide range of approaches presently used to analyse language discursively (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 262-268).

In CDA discourse is seen as constituting the social world and in turn being constituted by other social practices (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002: 61). Discourse "... constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of, and relationships between, people and groups of people" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258).

Texts do not stand in isolation, there is process of production and that process takes place in particular social conditions. A text does not "speak" until it is interpreted and that process of interpretation also takes place within particular social conditions and is carried out by a person with their own particular history, education, affiliations resources etc. or what Fairclough describes as "member's resources" (Fairclough, 2001: 118) The process may be simply represented as follows:



**Figure 3: Processes of production and interpretation of texts. (adapted from Fairclough, 2001: 21)**

An order of discourse is a complex configuration of discourses and genres in the same social field (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002: 141). One of the mechanisms identified in the retroduction section of my investigation contributing to the phenomenon of animal farming is the presence in society of supporting discourses. For this reason I examine a corpus of texts concerning animal farming and focus on the order of discourse “animal farming”, as evidenced in *Farmers Weekly*, a popular farming information and interest magazine published in South Africa with a readership of 135,000 (Michley, *pers.com.*, September 21, 2004). Articles in the publication cover a wide range of subjects as well as reports from different geographical locations, especially in Southern Africa but also further afield.

The articles generally take the form of farmers, or others working with farm animals such as breeders, being interviewed and their ideas and thoughts represented to the reader in their own words or the words of the interviewing journalist. This means there are two interfaces in the system: the interviewee – journalist interface and the journalist – reader interface both with the potential for miscommunication. Given that

11 journalists are responsible for the 22 articles which form the corpus for the study and that there were many individuals interviewed, it can be expected that, if significant miscommunication is happening, there will be multiple and very diverse discourses apparent. If this is the case then only the most dominant discourses will survive the process and be repeated again and again by the different participants. On the other hand if communication is very effective the most dominant discourses will be clearly defined. In either case the most dominant discourses will be recoverable using CDA.

## **2.4. Data Collection**

### **2.4.1 Source of texts**

I analysed major articles relating to animals in Farmers Weekly over a six month period from 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005. The 22 articles contain a total of over 22 000 words and are written by 11 authors.

In most issues of the publication, there is a major article on animal farming and this was the text selected for analysis. If there was no such article a minor article on animal farming was selected if there was one. Sometimes there were two major articles on animal farming in one issue and these were both analysed. The only criterion for selection of any of these articles was that they were about animal farming. They ranged from articles on sheep, cattle, dairy and chicken farming practices to articles on breeding and the financial efficiency of dairy farms. A list of texts analysed may be found in appendix I.

In examining texts I was searching for traces of the ideological roots of ideas, assertions and practices. I drew upon methods of analysis described by Fairclough (2001, 2003), Janks (1997, 2000), van Dijk (1993) and McKee (2003), and used a form of CDA.

### **2.4.2. Analysis**

To begin with it was not clear what linguistic features might be the most effective in highlighting the different discourses present. Janks outlines a range of specific linguistic characteristics which can be helpful (Janks, 1997, drawing on work by

Halliday and Fairclough). In order to establish a working methodology for the greater part of the analysis, the first four articles in the sample were analysed in some depth linguistically, looking at a range of linguistic features. This not only gave information about the discourses present but also allowed identification of those linguistic features which would be the most efficient in flagging the presence of discourses for the research described in this thesis. In other words, those features which would alert me to the possible presence of a particular discourse.

After this preliminary work the main linguistic feature I decided to use for flagging the discourses was lexicalisation or lexical selection but I also found the need to look at structured silence and, later, to use transitivity to assist in the examination of the social construction of the animals. Although these were the main linguistic features used, others, such as the use of personal pronouns, euphemism and metonymy also gave valuable insight and were used as the analysis demanded.

#### **2.4.2.1. Lexical selection**

Different words may be used to describe the same thing but the words chosen give an insight into how the writer sees and constructs their world. “The most obvious distinguishing features of a discourse are likely to be features of vocabulary - discourses ‘word’ or ‘lexicalize’ the world in particular ways” (Fairclough, 2003: 129). Naming the world is a prerogative of power and Janks points out that, “[d]ifferent lexical selections can signal different discourses...” (Janks, 1997: 335). While words are appropriated into, and lost from, discourses continually, it is possible to identify some words as belonging to what might be termed a mainstream discourse. For example, brick, cross-member, supporting wall, strut, cement, trowel, damp course and gutter might be described as being parts of a “building discourse”. Coming across one or more of those words or phrases in a text might signal the presence of a “building discourse”.

#### **2.4.2.2. Structured Silence**

While lexicalisation is used to indicate the presence of different discourses I use structured silence to identify one discourse in particular which displays little in the

way of lexicalisation indicators because it is so deeply embedded in ideological common sense. “What is ‘said’ in a text always rests upon ‘unsaid’ assumptions, so part of the analysis of texts is trying to identify what is assumed” (Fairclough, 2003: 11). This structured silence reflects an expected shared understanding between the writer and the reader of what is supposedly true about the world, what does not need to be stated or explained. In other words, it reflects the writer’s common sense and accepted view of reality. For this part of the analysis I needed to step outside the comfortable relationship between writer and reader and to be as much of an outsider as possible, in an attempt to understand what had already been said and understood; what was so obvious it did not need to be said at all. My not being part of an animal farming culture may have helped in this but it cannot be denied that I also came to the texts with my own social and cultural baggage, some of which I am aware of but some of which might well remain buried.

### **2.4.2.3. Transitivity**

Transitivity was used in the examination of the social construction of the farm animals. According to Halliday (1985: 101), our most powerful conception of reality is made up of things which happen, and transitivity specifies the “different types of process that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed”. Verbs build a picture of how individuals act but may also imply limits to the capabilities of some actors. Janks feels that transitivity is not easily visible to producers or consumers of text due to the complexity of its encoding: “I would argue that because transitivity is less obvious, deeper in the syntax, it suggests less conscious control by the writer and it requires more conscious effort for the reader to analyse it” (Janks, 1997: 338).

Following the preliminary analysis of the first four articles, the remaining 18 were analysed using the NVivo computer program (NVivo version 2.0.161, 1999-2002). The original magazine articles were scanned electronically. Each scan produced some errors in the text which were corrected manually before the article was added to the NVivo database for analysis. Each article was then examined and coded for the

different discourses identified but in addition other coding was used for a range of linguistic features which were found to be present.

This process involved reading through each of the texts and coding particular sections. For example a sentence such as, “The slaughter lambs were fed on tetracycline to increase overall productivity” would have *slaughter lambs* coded for metonymy, *tetracycline* coded to signal scientific discourse and *productivity* coded to signal a production discourse. The computer program then stored those identified words and phrases under the named sets for further analysis. It is important to note that this was not a once-off process but required reading and re-reading to understand the sense of the meaning of the words and phrases and how they performed in each particular context. NVivo also incorporates a word search function but once again it was not sufficient to simply find the numbers of particular words *per se* but the number relating to a particular concept. For example, in a search for the word “pain” in relation to animals with a view to finding out how much attention is given to the suffering of animals, it was not sufficient to simply count the number of times the word appeared or even appeared collocated with the word animal. Two phrases such as “...due to this practice many animals have pain in their joints” and “moving animals can be a real pain but if it is done properly...” have the word “pain” denoting two totally different meanings, so once again it was necessary to examine lengths of text and isolated individual words or phrases. Examples of reports generated by the NVivo program are in Appendix 3

### **2.4.3. CDA and animals**

Critical discourse analysis is not a neutral activity as it is interpretative and ultimately seen through the frame of the analyst. Van Dijk (1993:103) asserts that it is a political activity and should, if possible, take the perspective of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. To claim to do this might leave this research open to criticisms of anthropomorphism as it is clearly, at present, not possible to represent the wishes, ideas and feelings of animals from first hand communication. This does not invalidate the position however. Whilst we must accept we can never truly know what any another being is experiencing, we live our lives on the tacit understanding

that a particular behaviour is likely to signal similar mental states and experiences in all who exhibit it. Whilst we might never be completely correct in our assumptions, society acts on the belief that in the majority of instances we are correct. It seems reasonable then to presume that the puppy whose leg is broken with a hammer suffers pain and distress from the action (this is also the assertion of vivisectors). The cow, who calls for days after her calf is taken away, might reasonably be construed as suffering loss. Any other explanations must be less than parsimonious.

In the research described in this thesis animals are viewed as an oppressed group, devoid of rights, powerless and having no part in their own social construction. As the methodology used was to some degree interpretive, I wish to make it clear that my own position concerning the moral status of animals is essentially the same as that proposed by Regan which regards animals as having inherent value (Regan, 1988). I also wish to make clear that I am an advocate for the granting of rights to animals.

Notwithstanding the above, by taking a critical realist position and using epistemological tools such as examining lexical selection and transitivity in the texts, data was produced without significant interpretation which militates against the imposition of unsupported conclusions concerning the nature of the discourses present. I maintain that possible interpretations from the data are both limited and verifiable and that those which I have outlined represent the clearest and most cohesive.

## Chapter 3

*You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughterhouse is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Fate*.

*In fact, if one person is unkind to an animal it is considered to be cruelty, but where a lot of people are unkind to animals, especially in the name of commerce, the cruelty is condoned and, once large sums of money are at stake, will be defended to the last by otherwise intelligent people.*

Ruth Harrison, *Animal Machines*.

*But for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy.*

Plutarch (c. AD 46 – c. 120)

### 3.1. Introduction

Having briefly looked already at how animals are used in human society, I now wish to focus on one section of that use spectrum. In this chapter I describe the phenomenon of animal farming in general terms. It would be impossible to describe all individual types of this farming as practised in all countries of the world and I do not claim to do any such thing. However, I believe that the description I present is essentially a middle-ground description of non-subsistence, organized and institutionalized animal farming practices. There are bound to be differences in perception of what happens in this activity. For example, some say veal farming is cruel but others disagree. There are differences in the methods used in different places: veal farming may be done in a number of ways, individual slaughterhouses might use different systems from each other and so on but overall the picture I present, I argue, is valid and generally acceptable.

I have confined the descriptions to farming concerned with the larger ungulates: sheep, goats and cattle and included birds – chickens and turkeys - as well. The

voices in this chapter come from the writers of animal husbandry and animal genetics textbooks, from the animal farming industry, from animal rights activists, and from historical observers and social commentators.

Animal farming is such an everyday part of life and society it might be asked why it is necessary to describe it at all. Firstly, it is possible that many of us are aware of only a very small part of what animal farming entails; after all, almost all of what happens takes place away from the everyday lives of most people and it is helpful to look at the phenomenon as a totality to better understand it. Secondly, any familiarity we do have may have an amnesic component to it, there being some things we might prefer not to consider but rather to repress or to rationalize.

## **3.2. *Animal Farming***

### **3.2.1 Overview**

The animal farming industry produces a wide range of what it describes as “products”. These include the flesh of animals, commonly from cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and chickens as well as milk, eggs, skins, bone, blood, gelatine and many other “by-products”. The flesh is processed in different ways, such as freezing, canning, the addition of spices, mincing, drying and so on, both to preserve it and to make it more appetizing for people. Milk and other dairy products such as yoghurt and cheese form a significant part of the diet in many countries. World production of milk in 1997 was 467 000 million kg and beef and veal production is approaching, or may have already passed, 50 000 million kg per year (Fries & Ruvinsky, 1999: vii). In 2006, 55 billion (55 000 000 000) land-based animals were killed in the farming industry worldwide and this does not account for the millions who died in the farming process itself (UNFAO cited in FARM 2006).

Today animal farming is a massive, worldwide industry but before examining it in more detail I wish to start by describing something of its genesis, a story which begins many thousands of years ago.

### 3.2.2 History

The earliest fossils of artiodactyls or even-toed ungulates are 50-60 million years old and this order presently includes cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and camels (Lenstra & Bradley, 1999:2). Interestingly, genetic and morphological studies suggest the artiodactyls and cetations share a common ancestor and it is possible that "...cattle may be more closely related to whales than to horses" (Lenstra & Bradley, 1999:2). The ancestors of today's cattle evolved on the Indian sub continent around 25 000 years ago following the Great Ice Age and spread from there to North Africa, Asia and Europe (Phillips, 2001:1). They were first domesticated around 10 000 years ago and the number of cattle in the world today exceeds 1 200 million (Fries & Ruvinsky, 1999:vii). It is possible that at least two distinct domestication events took place, one for common cattle (*B. taurus*) and one for zebu (*B. indicus*) (Lenstra & Bradley, 1999:9). The last wild cattle, aurochs, from which common cattle and zebu are both descended, were killed in 1627 on a hunting reserve in Poland (Phillips, 2001:1). The chicken used in present day farming is a descendant of the Red Jungle Fowl (Appleby & Hughes, 1991 cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. b.)

### 3.2.3 Domestication

The first domesticated wild animals were dogs, sheep, cattle, pigs and goats, although the form of their domestication, what they were used for, and by whom in early society, is unclear (Spencer, 1996: 28, 29). This process seems to have taken place first around the Middle East and with sheep and goat hunters it may have taken the form of them attaching themselves to a particular herd and exploiting it (Patterson, 2002: 6, 7). Smith observes that:

Wild sheep are found throughout the highland areas of Asia, but only one group, *Ovis orientalis*, from southwestern Iran and Turkey, has the same number of chromosomes (forty-six) as domestic sheep. Goats are probably derived from the wild *Capra aegagrus* also found in Iran and Turkey, although the ibex (*Capra ibex*) can produce viable offspring when crossed with domestic goats, as they both have the same number of chromosomes. Both sheep and goats were domesticated in

south western Asia by 7000 B.C.

(Smith 1996)

Early domesticated cattle were used for milk, meat and power but also had a religious significance in some cultures with the bull representing both power and fertility (Phillips, 2001: 1). It is not clear how much meat or milk would have been consumed by those early farmers. Milk may not have been used at all and meat only consumed on ceremonial occasions (Spencer, 1996: 28). Periodic invasions of nomadic herdsmen from the Eurasian Steppes, from as long ago as 4000 B.C., did much to spread cattle farming into Asia and Europe with these warriors also moving into India where the cow became a very important religious symbol (Phillips, 2001: 2).

Despite the association of the word “domestication” with homeliness and contented bliss, the process is likely to have been a brutal one. Patterson, citing work by Mason, points out that:

Since it is easier to capture and domesticate young animals, the first herders killed protective adults so they could capture and keep the young animals away from their natural living area and breeding community. In the process of killing animals for their meat and exploiting them for their milk, hides or labor, herders learned how to control the animals’ mobility, diet, growth, and reproductive lives through the use of castration, hobbling, branding, ear cropping, and such devices as leather aprons, whips, prods and eventually chains and collars.

(Patterson, 2002: 7)

On the other hand, to some extent, domestication may have depended on the sociability of the animals themselves and their preference to be close to humans:

Reindeer have been intensively hunted in both the Old and the New Worlds since the Upper Pleistocene. Closer attachments can now be seen with the Saami of Scandinavia and the Tungus of Siberia, but many of the animals are not in any way modified by human intervention (i.e., the animals are basically wild and run free, but seem to like human company, and therefore are easily available when they are needed)....

Such examples of sociable animals becoming closely involved with human settlements have led researchers to believe that this was how animal domestication began. This has a degree of casualness about it, with bonds between animals and humans being gradually strengthened over time.

(Smith 1996)

In early societies which did not domesticate animals and use them for food, there may have been a different perception of them, of what animals are and their place in the universe. Nash describes how Luther Standing Bear of the Lakotas or Sioux in 1933 spoke of a great unifying force in nature, that all things were kindred and brought together by the Great Mystery and how for Native Americans:

Ownership of nature appeared in their eyes morally wrong, a form of slavery. Standing Bear made the connection explicit with regard to domesticating and keeping animals. It was better to hunt wild creatures, he wrote, because herding “enslaved the animal” and deprived it of its basic rights: the right to live, the right to multiply, the right to freedom.

(Nash, 1989:118)

### **3.2.4 Eating flesh**

Hribal describes how the word *meat*, before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, simply meant some form of food, with green meats being vegetables, white meats milk-based dishes, sweet meats candied fruits or other sweet tasting dishes, and baked meats referring to a baked form of food which may or may not have contained flesh (Hribal, 2003: 438). The Oxford English Dictionary Online gives the meaning of meat as ‘food for humans and animals as opposed to drink’, a meaning going back to at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century (“meat” 2005).

The flesh of animals has not always made up as large part of the human diet as it does in many countries today. Even in societies which have traditionally kept cattle, eating meat may have been a relatively rare occurrence although milk or blood may have been consumed. The everyday nature, in many societies, of eating animal flesh means that this practice is often essentially unquestioned and looked upon as being normal,

natural and even essential for good health. Yet Plutarch, two thousand years ago found it a strange enough practice to write:

I for my part do much admire in what humor, with what soul or reason, the first man with his mouth touched slaughter, and reached to his lips the flesh of a dead animal, and having set before people courses of ghastly corpses and ghosts, could give those parts the names of meat and victuals, that but a little time before lowed, cried, moved and saw; how his sight could endure the blood of the slaughtered, flayed and mangled bodies; how his smell could bear their scent; and how the very nastiness happened not to offend the taste, while it chewed the sores of others, and participated of the sap and juices of deadly wounds.

(Plutarch, 1976: 111)

There are even claims, from time to time, that it is meat eating which has set humans aside from other animals and that it is this which has led to our larger brains. These claims seem to find wide acceptance although they fail to explain why carnivores, from hedgehogs to lions, do not have massively increased neocortexes and are not running or overrunning the world.

But flesh consumption does not come without a price, physical for the victim and psychological and/or spiritual for killer. The taking of a life is always a serious matter and one where guilt of some kind must be felt except perhaps only for the most sociopathic or psychopathic of personalities. For the consumption of flesh to continue, this guilt must be allayed in some way and the taking of a life needs to be justified or at least rationalised. In the first creation story of Genesis in the Bible, all creatures, including humans, are vegetarian. God says:

Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the surface of the earth and all the trees with seed bearing-fruit; this will be your food. And all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven, and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage of the plants as their food.

(New Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 1: 29, 30)

But later, after the flood, mankind is given permission by God to eat flesh:

Be the terror and dread of all the animals on land and all the birds in heaven, of everything that moves on land and all the fish of the sea; they are placed in your hands. Every living thing that moves will be yours to eat, no less than the foliage of the plants

(New Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 9: 2, 3)

Yet there is a proviso: "...with this exception: you must not eat flesh with life, that is to say blood, in it" (New Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 9: 4). According to Linzey (1985: 14), many scholars understand that this permission signifies a concession from God to human sinfulness. Baker claims that the early Hebrews were so distressed at the apparent violence and strife in the natural order that they saw it as a sign of the fall from God's original design (Baker, cited in Linzey, 1985). This fits in well with the great vision of Isaiah and the hope of a return to the way things were before the Fall (Linzey, 1985: 14):

The wolf will live with the lamb, the panther lie down with the kid, calf, lion and fat-stock beast together, with a little boy to lead them.

The cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like the ox. The infant will play over the den of the adder; the baby will put his hand into the viper's lair.

No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain, for the country will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.

(New Jerusalem Bible, Isaiah 11: 6-9)

However it is also at this point that the line between humans and animals is clearly drawn. The death of a man will require a reckoning in the form of the death of the perpetrator, be they man or animal, because man is made "in the image of God" but there no penalty laid down for the taking of an animal's life by a man (New Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 9:5, 6).

Spencer, drawing on the writings of Porphyry, explains that in the Greece of Homer, the first animal to be sacrificed was a pig, the act being carried out by Clymenes (Spencer, 1995: 36). The oracle at Delphi declares it permissible to sacrifice an

animal but, rather cunningly, places the burden of consent upon the sacrificial animal itself (*ibid*). The animal is sprinkled with holy water during the libation and, if it shakes its head (and what animal would not?) it has indicated consent to its own killing (*ibid*). The killer can then proceed with a clear conscience.

### **3.2.5. Growing control and increasing numbers**

Today's mass exploitation of animals really began about a thousand years ago and, in this section, drawing widely on the work of Hribal, (2003) and Patterson (2002), I describe its growth, automation and spread.

The ownership of animals has, from long ago, reflected status and power in society. In some parts of the world this is still the case today, whether it is cattle owners in Africa or race horse owners in Europe. Human control over every aspect of the animal's life gives a sense of power to the owner (Spencer, 1995: 29). It also reflects the status of the person owning the animals. The word "cattle" derives from "catel", meaning a principal sum of money or capital or personal goods, and, under feudalism, applied to movable personal property and became more and more identified with a "beast held in possession or live stock" ("cattle" 2005). The words "chattel" and "capital" are also related to the word "cattle" (*ibid*).

It was during the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the term "farm" came to mean a site of agricultural production with the verb form originally meaning to lease out something (Hribal, 2003: 435). For thousands of years animals have been forced to work for the benefit of humans both in the sense of providing labour in one form or another such as ploughing, carrying people or grinding grains and in the sense of providing the products of their own bodies, including flesh. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, however, large numbers of animals have been put to work (Hribal, 2003: 436). Hribal describes animals as part of the working class under a capitalist system and has written an account of the part played by animals in both the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe. The account compares animals to others who lived and still live, under similar conditions, such as human slaves, some children, home workers and sex workers (Hribal, 2003). The unspoken "right" to use animals for labour and the exploitation of animals for various products such as milk and wool is seldom

questioned seriously and animals are often portrayed as being willing partners in these processes.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Smithfield, in the city of London, already had a long history in the slaughtering of animals which had been taking place, five days a week, since AD 950 (Hribal, 2003: 438). Other sites were St Nicholas and Rother Street, known as Red Rose Street, because of the permanent red stain of blood (Hribal, 2003: 438). The number of cattle and sheep sold at Smithfield would almost double over the next one hundred years but that would be nothing compared to later slaughter rates (Hribal, 2003: 438).

The English, or at least some of them, consumed large amounts of all kinds of flesh at this time and the habit was exported across the Atlantic with the new settlers who, after early difficult times, took to slaughtering, curing, salting and packing pork (Patterson, 2002: 84). The Dutch too were moving into the large-scale slaughter and preservation business. The Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam (later to become New York) saw large numbers of slaughterhouses and cattle pens grow up. A small stream straddled by slaughterhouses became known as the “Bloody Run” and the palisade at the site later became Wall Street (Patterson, 2002: 55). By 1656 the number of animals being slaughtered had reached such proportions that permits were required and the slaughterhouses began to be moved away from the area to spare people the sounds, sights and smells of slaughter (Patterson, 2002: 55). In 1657/58 a large area of land known as the “Pettaquamscut purchase” (presently South Rhode Island) was acquired by five Englishmen and became “New England’s first ever large scale production site for sheep and cattle” (Hribal, 2003: 438).

The trade in animals and slaughter grew steadily. Pig carcasses were particularly good for preservation and hams, sides, shoulders and ribs were rubbed in salt-containing compounds and packed in large barrels known as hogsheads (Patterson, 2002: 55).

By 1847, Cincinnati had 40 slaughterhouses with the city being a centre for the booming pork trade (Patterson, 2002: 56). Some farmers killed the pigs where they kept them, dragging their carcasses to the meat packing plant, while others drove the animals to the plant and killed them there. Patterson (2002:56) cites Skaggs concerning this description of the practices of the time. The workers packed the pigs into a large pen next to the plant and “literally walked on their backs striking each one a killing blow on the head with a hammer especially designed for the purpose”, after this the pigs were hung up, dead or stunned, in the sticking room where their throats were slashed with “...the blood running onto sawdust-covered floors that became coagulated bogs” (Skaggs as cited in Patterson, 2002:56). Entrails, body parts, body fluids and sawdust were collected and dumped in the Ohio River. So successful was this industry that the town came to be known as “Porkopolis” before changing to its present name (Hribal, 2003: 439).

This process of mass slaughter was very far from traditional animal-keeping practices of the time where the poorer people living on the land would often share their lives with the animals. In Ireland the pig would eat with the family, perhaps sharing a meal of potatoes, and even sleep with the family in the same room (Cobbett, cited in Hribal, 2003:439).

Although the killing of animals on this scale had been unheard of before, the slaughter was about to move to a totally unimagined level as technological changes provided a growing capitalist system with the means to reach wider markets, produce more of its “product” and, in the process, make huge profits. The railways were making the transport of animals over long distances possible along with the transport of animal flesh and other products in the opposite direction. This, combined with increasing automation of the slaughtering, dismembering, preserving and packing of animal parts caused huge growth. Patterson describes how the Union Stockyards in Chicago, which officially opened on Christmas Day 1865, “... turned meatpacking into a major industry and made Chicago the slaughter capital of America” (Patterson, 2002: 57). The system involved 2 300 animal pens, saloons, hotels and offices with the yards covering an area of more than one square mile and employing thousands. It was the largest such operation in the world (Patterson, 2002: 57) and grew and

prospered with new companies starting up to make use of items such as blood, bone and hooves, which had previously been discarded. Along with this, meat consumption was becoming more and more a sign of status. In the 35 years from 1865 to 1900, an estimated 400 million animals were slaughtered, a huge number for the time although only two week's work for today's American slaughterers (Barrett, cited in Patterson, 2002:58).

The burgeoning trade in flesh was devastating to the animals concerned and also took its toll on other animals and on human communities. As Nibert observes:

Increased animal suffering of this sort was made possible by the conquest, murder and displacement of indigenous peoples in most of Latin America, as continuous expropriation of land built huge ranching empires, and the increasing need for pasture led to greater violence against Native Americans. The same occurred in North America, where the "cattle kings" of the Midwest used tenant ranchers to cultivate their lands and control their cows, in a 19th-century arrangement that resembled the feudal manorial systems of the Middle Ages. The fates of animals and humans were closely intertwined.

(Nibert, 2007: 14)

The trade in flesh contributed to conflict in the southern United States and Mexico as more and more land was taken up for ranching and the inconvenient fact that the land was already occupied by humans and nonhumans needed government intervention to rectify:

But first, the US military had to kill or further displace countless Native Americans, while millions of buffalo and thousands of wolves, bears and other animals had to be slaughtered. With indigenous peoples and other "pests" removed, the number of captive cows in the West grew from an estimated 5 million in 1870 to 26.5 million in 1890.

(*ibid*)

Even in the 1850's the production line system, which is so important to today's slaughterhouses, was advancing rapidly. Frederick Law Olmsted visited a processing plant and was amazed:

No iron cog-wheels could work with more regular motion. Plump falls the hog upon the table, chop, chop; chop, chop; chop, chop, fall the cleavers. All is over. But, before you can say so, plump, chop, chop; chop, chop; chop, chop, sound again. There is no pause for admiration. By a skilled sleight of hand, hams, shoulders, clear, mess, and prime fly off, each squarely cut to its own place, where attendants, aided by trucks and dumb-waiters, dispatch each to its separate destiny—the ham for Mexico, its loin for Bordeaux. Amazed beyond all expectation at the celerity, we took out our watches and counted thirty-five seconds, from the moment when one hog touched the table until the next occupied it [sic] place. The number of blows required I regret we did not count.

(Olmsted as cited in Hribal, 2003: 440)

In 1905, a bill to introduce meat inspection standards was blocked in Congress by the meat industry lobby. A socialist newspaper called *Appeal to Reason* asked Upton Sinclair to investigate the Chicago meatpacking industry and the eventual result of his investigation was a book titled *The Jungle* (Patterson, 2002:59). Each day for seven weeks Sinclair went to the yards dressed in rags and took with him a worker's pail seeking out experience and information. The main character of his book, Rudkus, describes being given a tour of the yards and how hog after hog is caught by a hind leg which is then chained to a great rotating wheel and how she is then hoisted up into the air and carried terrified and shrieking down the room to where her throat is cut:

It was pork-making by machinery, pork-making by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests—and so perfectly within their rights! They had done nothing to deserve it; and it was adding insult to injury, as the thing was done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded, impersonal way, without a pretense at apology, without the homage of a tear. Now and then a visitor wept, to be sure; but this slaughtering-machine ran on, visitors or no visitors.

(Sinclair as cited in Hribal, 2003:440)

The historian James Barrett writes of early 20<sup>th</sup> century slaughterhouses as being "... dominated by the sight, sound and smell of death on a monumental scale" (Barrett cited in Patterson, 2002: 60). Rudkus feels it is like "...some horrible crime

committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and out of memory” (Sinclair cited in Patterson, 2002: 61). In *The Jungle*, Rudkus eventually embraces socialism, seeing the meat industry as “...the incarnation of blind insensate Greed...a monster devouring with a thousand mouths ... the Great Butcher” and “... the spirit of Capitalism made flesh” (Sinclair in Patterson, 2002: 63). Although the book apparently missed its aim of converting many to socialism, it did alert people to the awful conditions under which their food was being produced. One particular passage describes the making of sausages which include, as ingredients;

... spoiled meat returned to the plant; meat dropped on the floor and mixed with dirt, sawdust and workers’ spit; stale water, dirt, rust and even nails from the waste barrels; rat feces deposited on the meat overnight; poisoned bread put out to kill the rats and every so often... a dead rat.

(Sinclair as cited in Patterson, 2002:63, 64)

It is claimed that reading this passage caused President Roosevelt to throw his breakfast sausages out of the White House window (Elliot cited in Patterson, 2002: 64).

Health risks are still a concern today but in places such as the USA meat is very big business and the industry goes to lengths to ensure it has substantial political influence (Schlosser: 2001).

Henry Ford was very impressed with what he saw in a Chicago slaughterhouse and claimed it gave him the inspiration for the production line system he developed to make motor cars. Others would say that it was the slaughterhouses that did the real pioneering work and the automobile industry followed suit (Patterson 2002: 72-73).

### **3.3. The industry today**

#### **3.3.1. State of the art killing**

Today’s slaughterhouses are more mechanized and faster than ever, pushing the kill and process rate to the limit. They have to be. In the United States alone over ten thousand million land based animals die in the farming industry every year (FARM

2006). This represents an average of about 27 million a day. Schlosser records visiting a slaughterhouse and watching a “sticker”, working on an eight and a half hour shift, cutting the carotid artery of steers at a rate of about one slash every 10 seconds (Schlosser, 2001: 171). This plant, on the High Plains of the United States, kills about five thousand animals a day. The cattle are driven up a ramp to be met by the *knocker*, a man wearing safety glasses and a hardhat whose face is splattered with grey brain matter and blood and who will fire a bolt into their brains. This stuns the animals, although two shots might be needed, and the huge animals are shackled by one leg and hauled up into the air. Schlosser describes what happens down the line:

I see a man reach inside cattle and pull out their kidneys with his bare hands, then drop the kidneys down a metal chute, over and over again, as each animal passes by him; a stainless steel rack of tongues; Whizzards peeling meat of decapitated heads, picking them almost as clean as the white skulls painted by Georgia O’Keeffe. We wade through blood that’s ankle deep and pours down drains into huge vats below.

(Schlosser, 2001: 171)

But things on the killing floor do not always go as planned and Schlosser watches as one animal, still alive, falls from the chain and gets trapped in the machinery. Even approaching the area, panic can set in as the cattle smell blood and start to react. They may be forced forward with electric shocks, often in the anus or be hit with shovels, hoes or chains, sometimes in the face, and whipped or stabbed (Dunayer, 2001: 136). Another problem is that stunning may require repeated shots to the head and cattle may be conscious as they travel down the line and suffer even more abusive treatment:

Numerous cattle feel repeated slams of the rod. Many are conscious when shackled by one rear leg and hoisted into the air. Often a cow’s shackled leg dislocates or breaks under the strain. To end a hoisted cow’s frantic kicking, slaughterhouse employees sometimes cut off the lower part of their front legs. Cattle are commonly knifed in a way that fails to slit their throat. In any case, the line moves too quickly for blood loss to render cattle unconscious. Within seconds – conscious or not they’re being skinned. Even when the lower third of each leg is cut off, many cattle are conscious.

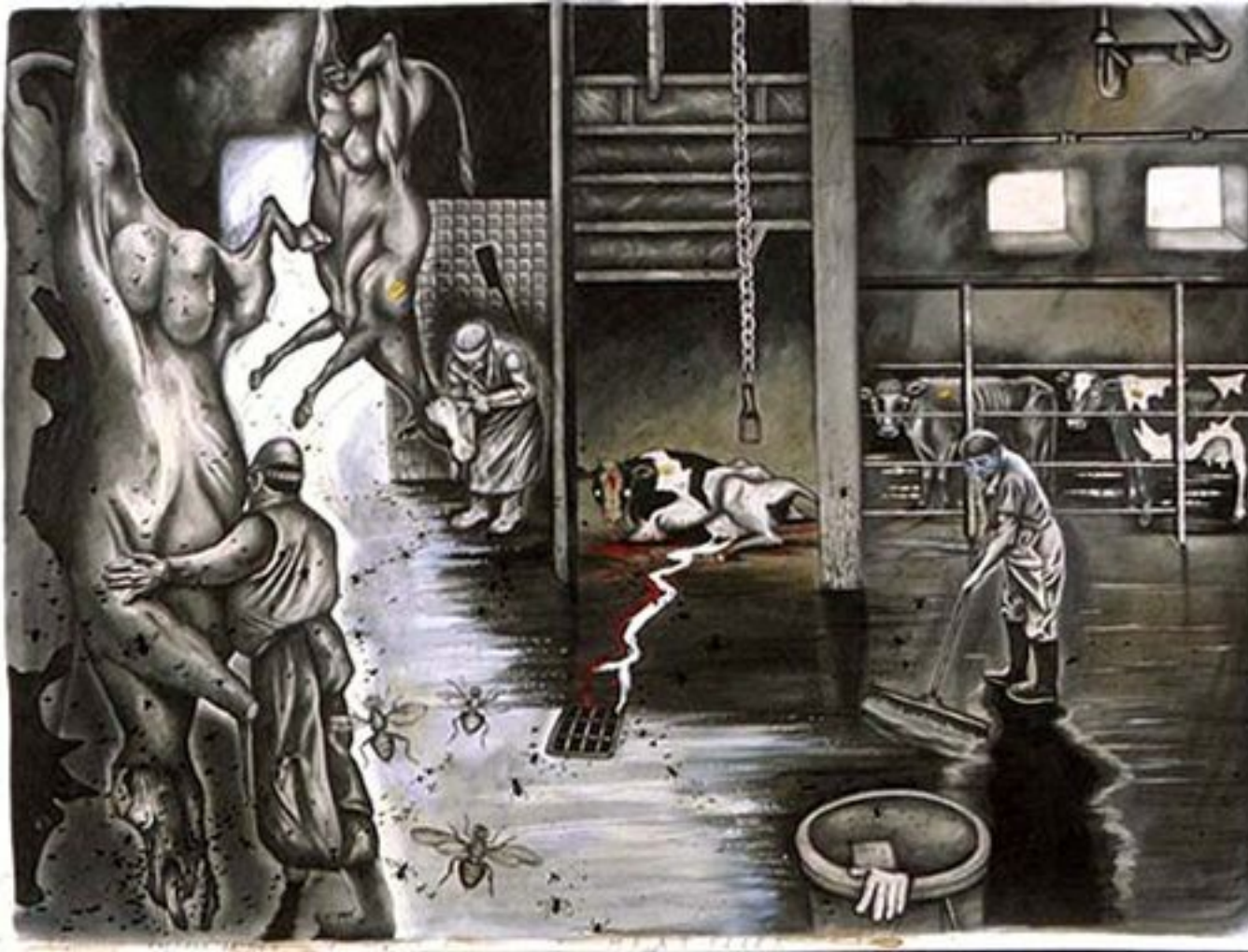
(Eisnitz as cited in Dunayer 2001: 136)

It is not only in the big plants that animals endure added hardships. Sue Coe, an artist, who spent years travelling around slaughterhouses, describes visiting a small family slaughterhouse in Pennsylvania (Coe as cited in Patterson, 2002: 66, 67). The place is filthy, flies are everywhere, the walls covered with blood and dead cattle are hanging from chains. She walks onto the kill floor with her sketchbook but the lunch break hooter sounds and she is left with, “six dripping decapitated corpses”. It is then she notices a movement in the knocking pen.

Inside is a cow. She has not been stunned and has slipped and fallen in the blood. The men have gone to lunch and left her. Time passes. Occasionally she struggles banging the sides of the steel enclosure with her hooves. As this is metal it becomes a loud hammering, then silence, then hammering. Once she raises her head enough to look outside the box, but seeing the hanging corpses falls back again. The sounds of blood dripping and FM radio playing over a loudspeaker. It's the Doors, a complete album side.

(Coe cited in Patterson, 2002: 66, 67)

Later Coe sees that milk is flowing from the cow's udders and mixing with the blood. It is clear she is still young. The workers come back from the lunch break and eventually another employee comes along and kicks the injured cow hard three or four times trying to get her to stand. She cannot stand so the bolt is fired into her head where she lies and she is hauled, struggling and kicking up into the air (Coe cited in Patterson, 2002: 67).



**Figure 4: “Meatflies” by Sue Coe (Coe, 1991)**

Cattle, pigs, sheep and goats are far from being the only animals slaughtered. Coe visited the Dallas Crown Packing plant in Texas which kills 1500 horses a day for export to Europe and describes what happened to a pregnant mare, who was already in labour but waiting to go onto the killing floor:

Two workers use a six-foot whip on the horse as she gives birth, to get her to speed up and go onto the killing floor. The foal is thrown into a spare parts bucket. The boss in his cowboy hat observes from the overhead walkway.

(Coe as cited in Patterson, 2002: 116)

For kosher slaughter, the animals must be fully conscious when their throats are slit and so are shackled and hung up without stunning (Eisnitz as cited in Dunayer 2001: 233). Pigs often fare very badly in slaughterhouses:

Pigs scream in fear and pain as electric shocks (in the anus, the throat, the eye) force them to slaughter chutes. Commonly they're whipped, kicked, and beaten with boards or pipes. Often pigs who escape restraint are stabbed with a hook in the anus, face or roof of the mouth and dragged back to the kill area.

(Eisnitz as cited in Dunayer, 2001: 136)

Inevitably the endless violence of the slaughterhouse affects the employees too. This excerpt gives some insight into how slaughterhouse workers can become hideously sadistic.



**Figure 5: Pigs may fare very badly in slaughter houses (PETA, n.d. b)**

One worker describes what pigs may face on the killing floor: "[I]t is in the stick pit, you are going to kill it. Only you don't just kill it, you go in hard, push hard, blow the windpipe, make it drown in its own blood. Split its nose. A live hog would be running around the pit. It would just be looking up at me and I'd be sticking, and I would just take my knife and—eerk—cut its eye out while it was just sitting there ... One time I took my knife—it's sharp enough—and I sliced off the end of a hog's nose, just like a piece of bologna ... I took a handful of salt brine and ground it into his nose ... I stuck the salt right up the hog's ass ... It's not anything anyone should be proud of ... It was my way of taking out frustration.

(Eisnitz as cited in PETA n.d. b)

The pigs are supposed to be stunned by an electric shock but may receive three or more shocks and still remain conscious as they are hoisted up and sent down the chain: “[r]ushed along to the scalding tank many pigs are conscious when they enter the boiling water” (Eisnitz as cited in Dunayer, 2001: 136).

Chickens and turkeys are shackled by their feet and hang upside down, “[f]lapping, urinating, defecating and crying out,” before their heads reach the electrified bath of saline (Dunayer, 2001: 138). They are shocked and paralysed but leave conscious to have their throats cut. Some evade the blade and the line moves so quickly in any case that many others enter the scalding tank fully conscious (Eisnitz as cited in Dunayer, 2001: 138).

These slaughter plants have given rise to their own special lexicon reflecting the violence of the industry. The lexicon includes words such as “kill floor”, “kill alley”, “Stairway to Heaven”, “Tunnel of Death” and specialized job assignments such as “Feed Kill Chain”, “Knocker”, “Sticker”, “Shackler”, “Rumper”, “First Legger”, “Knuckle Dropper”, “Navel Boner”, “Splitter”, “Top Butt” and “Bottom Butt” (Schlosser, 2001: 172, Patterson, 2002: 112). The killing plants work at high speeds and any slight hold up or down time represents a threat to profits. Schlosser has documented the appalling conditions in many slaughterhouses in the USA where workers (many of them migrants or illegal immigrants) are paid low wages, have little

or no medical assistance, no union protection and work in extremely hazardous situations (Schlosser, 2001: 169-190).

LeDuff describes it thus:

It is called the picnic line: eighteen workers lined up on both sides of a belt, carving meat from bone. Up to 16 million shoulders a year come down that line here at the Smithfield Packing Co., the largest pork production plant in the world. That works out to about 32 000 a shift, sixty three a minute, one every seventeen seconds for each worker for eight and a half hours a day. The first time you stare down at that belt you know your body is going to give in way before the machine ever will.

(LeDuff, 2003: 183)

Inspectors are often impotent against the power of the giant meat packing companies and may risk losing their jobs by intervening when problems occur or regulations are not followed. Any animals who hold up the line are viciously abused.

All drivers use pipes to kill the hogs that can't go through the chutes. Or if you get a hog that refuses to go into the chutes and is stopping production you beat him to death. Then push him off to the side and hang him up later.

(Eisnitz as cited in Patterson, 2002: 111)

### **3.3.2 Transportation**

Those destined for slaughter often arrive at the killing plants after a journey of hours or days crowded into trucks or railway wagons in weather ranging from scorching heat to freezing cold. They may or may not receive water along the way. Some animals endure journeys by ship where they are packed into holds and have to survive the rolling of the ship, the fetid atmosphere and the heat. "Live exports", as they are known, may be to supply meat to communities who wish to practise a particular type of religious slaughter or perhaps to circumvent local regulations such as exporting calves to countries which have less stringent laws concerning their use in veal production. Singer describes the deaths of animals during transportation:

Animals that die in transit do not die easy deaths. They freeze to death in winter and collapse from thirst and heat exhaustion in summer. They die, lying unattended in stock-yards from injuries sustained in falling off a slippery loading ramp. They suffocate when other animals pile on top of them in an overcrowded, badly loaded truck. They die from thirst or starve when careless stockmen forget to give them water or food. And they die from the sheer stress of the whole terrifying experience, for which nothing in their life has given them the slightest preparation.

(Singer 1975: 151)

Chickens for slaughter are captured and put into crates for transportation to the slaughterhouse; each worker catches a thousand birds an hour and in this process many of the birds end up with broken bones (Nutt cited in PETA, n.d. a).

Any animals who are dead on arrival or, due to weakness, broken limbs or broken backs are unable to walk, are known as “Downers”.



**Figure 6: “Downed” cow with a broken neck (Farm Sanctuary, n.d. d; Peta, n.d. c)**

“A downed cow with a broken neck is left to suffer at a Texas stockyard. Her neck was broken when she was forcibly separated from her calf in the marketing process”. (Farm Sanctuary, n.d. d).

Many calves simply never make it to the slaughterhouse, dying in the harsh conditions of transit. Some are unable to walk and die on the floor after offloading.



**Figure 7: “Downed” calves (PETA, n.d. d)**

The “Downer”, if still alive, becomes a “Hauler” when it is eventually dragged through the “kill alley” to the “knocking box” (Patterson, 2002: 115). Animals such as veal calves and piglets, because they have been kept in confined spaces for the whole of their lives and often have developed joint problems, are likely to fare very badly on the journey to their deaths, both from the crowded conditions as well as the brutal treatment of workers (Patterson, 2002: 115).



**Figure 8: A “downed” cow is hauled on to a truck to be taken for slaughter (Farm Sanctuary, n.d. e)**

Animals who are unable to move are usually left where they are, or dragged out of the way, being put onto a “dead pile” if they look dead, being hauled and killed later if found to be alive (Patterson, 2002: 115).

Non-ambulatory animals are frequently subjected to unnecessary pain and distress when they are dragged onto or off of trucks by the use of ropes or chains, or moved from one location to another by being scooped up with bucket loaders or forklifts.

(Farm Sanctuary 2005: 16)



**Figure 9: Dead pile (PETA, n.d. e)**

An inspector who worked at a Midwest “distress kill plant” for sick, crippled and worn out pigs says,

Most of these animals aren’t that old, they’re just abused – malnourished, frostbitten, injured. Lot of DOAs [dead on arrivals]. Sows with broken pelvises who pull themselves around with their front legs, scooting along on their rumps for so long they get emaciated. They call them “scooters”.

(Eisnitz in Patterson, 2002: 111)



**Figure 10: Emaciated pig left to die (PETA, n.d. f)**

Unable to move or stand on her own, this pig has been left to die. Her gaunt body indicates that she is starving to death. When pigs who are unable to walk (called “downers”) arrive at the slaughterhouse, they have no protection from the most unthinkable cruelty. These sick and injured animals will be kicked, shocked with electric prods, and finally dragged off the trucks to their deaths.

(PETA, n.d. f).

Killing young animals, babies, may be a problem for even veteran slaughterhouse workers; for some it may be young goats that “cry like babies” or it may be taking three day old calves to the shooting box and killing them (Tyler cited in Patterson 2002: 117). Long describes how, “sometimes a ewe will give birth in the slaughterhouse and they won’t slaughter the baby lamb; they’ll feed it, make a pet of it” (Long cited in Patterson, 2002: 118). Eventually, though, they give it to a farmer and some time in the future it returns, unrecognized, for slaughter.

The brutality of the slaughterhouse marks the end of a life journey for these animals whose whole existence, from the moment of birth or even conception, has been in the hands of others. This is how some of them will have lived.

### **3.4. The lives of farmed animals**

#### **3.4.1 Milk**

It is not only in large scale production that various methods have been found by humans to get the milk intended for a mother's young. Patterson describes a large number of traditional ways which are used (Patterson, 2002: 8, 9). For example, the Nuer, Basuto and Tuareg allow the calf to start suckling and then remove it and take the milk, some herders may simply use the skin of the dead calf to set off the milk production reflex in the mother and in East Africa the reflex may be produced by stimulating the genital tract or inflating the vagina with air (Patterson, 2002: 8, 9). To prevent the young animal suckling or to make suckling too painful the Tuareg put a stick into the back of the calf's mouth to prevent it drinking or pierce the nasal septum with a forked stick or cut the nose of the animal (Patterson, 2002: 8, 9). In other places calves have their tongues split to wean them (Nibert 2007: 14).

Large scale milk production has a long history and by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century cows were being selected for milk production and selective breeding. They were made pregnant each year, separated from the young and the "cow house" became a production site (Hribal, 2003: 441, 442). Even in those days the cow had to meet certain targets of milk production or face death. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century some distillers realised that their waste products could be used to feed cows and started the practice of keeping cows with between 400 to 700 animals at a time confined on site to produce milk (Hribal, 2003:442).

Milk is, of course, only produced by animals when they are pregnant or have given birth, so the first step in the milk industry is getting the cow pregnant. This may be done by allowing a chosen breeding animal to mate with her but it is much more likely it will be done by artificial insemination and this will happen shortly after her first birthday (Winston cited in PETA, n.d. m.). After the cow has given birth, her calf is taken away. She lactates for 10 months and is then made pregnant again (PETA, n.d. m.). According to Phillips (2001: 11), for milk production, the cow's calf is weaned between 12 to 24 hours after birth. This period is allowed for the calf to suckle so that it can obtain the benefits of its mother's colostrum. A longer period

together would very likely benefit the calf but it is not allowed because it will hinder the mechanised extraction of milk later:

There seems little doubt that the welfare of both cow and calf would be at least temporarily improved by suckling, but even if we could restrict the calf's suckling and take the surplus for human consumption, the suckling and bunting of the udder by the calf elongates both the udder and the teats, making it difficult for the cow to be milked by machine.

(Phillips, 2001:12)

Phillips, citing Reinhardt and Reinhardt, also notes that a natural weaning age for cattle cannot be determined as no wild cattle exist but in feral cattle with little human interference "...female calves do not naturally sever the bonds with their mother even when they are mature" (Reinhardt & Reinhardt in Phillips 2001:11). Most dairy calves in the U.S. are separated from their mothers at birth or very soon afterwards (US DoA cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005:17).

Cows are often raised in "mega dairies" and with the use of antibiotics, specific lighting periods, growth hormones, genetic selection, special milking practices and even the call of young calves, produced 141% more milk in 2004 than they did in 1965 - up to ten times the amount needed to suckle a calf (Rauw *et al.*, McCowan *et al.*, US DoA cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005:20). Seventy five percent of all dairy cows in the United States never graze outside on pastures (US DoA cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005: 2, 11). The majority of cows are confined indoors or in lots with the stressful conditions leading to lameness, infectious disease and reproductive problems (*ibid*: 4-6).



**Figure 11: Dairy cow (PETA, n.d. g)**

For the dairy cow life under such conditions is short, however, and she is slaughtered after only three or four lactation cycles or even before that if she has any disease or her milk production drops (US DoA cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005: 27). This means that, although a cow can normally live to the age of 25, most are slaughtered at only four or five years of age (Karpf and Wallace cited in PETA n.d. m).

In some operations cows are kept chained by the neck for months in a stall which is so narrow they cannot turn around or groom themselves and are deprived of social contact and this makes them prone to lameness (Dunayer 2001: 131). One study showed that of those dairy cows exposed to concrete flooring, over 80% develop at least one hoof disorder (Somers *et al* cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005: 5).

### **3.4.2 Meat**

When they no longer produce milk at the required rate or fail to conceive, dairy cows are killed for meat. These animals are called dairy culls and in order to get maximum profit from their sale:

...dairy culls may be implanted with hormone analogues, principally synthetic androgens, but this should only be after

lactation has ended. The hormone implant can increase weight gain by about a quarter and improve the lean to fat ratio.

(Phillips, 2001: 233)

Studies in the U.S. and Canada show that between 75-91% of the animals too sick or crippled to move when delivered to slaughterhouses, in other words “downers”, are dairy cattle (Grandin *et al.*; Doonan *et al* cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2005: 17). Given that most of these animals are young and therefore well below their natural life expectancy, this speaks to the treatment they have received in their short lives.

Milk production requires that cows must repeatedly be made pregnant and the resulting “excess” calves of the dairy industry are used to produce meat. Some of these calves are slaughtered at between one and five days of age. Some are raised to produce beef, often at a later age being sold on to feedlot systems. Cows with calves may be given other cow’s calves to suckle which have been purchased from elsewhere and cows can be given hormone treatment to induce twinning (Phillips, 2001: 233). According to Phillips, if a farmer raises these suckled calves to slaughter weight he should obtain a good financial reward:

Some premium has always been available to producers of suckled calves, as buyers will pay appreciably more for calves that have been reared on their mother’s milk... The rearing method is identifiable to buyers in the form of “suckler bloom”, a shiny coat and bright eyes...

(*ibid*)

### **3.4.2.1 Finishing and mutilating**

Phillips (2001: 234-237) also describes methods of “finishing” cattle – getting them to a suitable weight and condition to obtain a good price at slaughter. Store cattle can be finished indoors or outdoors but in the Americas feedlots may contain up to 75 000 animals and often finish intensively with a possible throughput of 150 000 animals per year (*ibid*:2001: 234).

In the U.S., the age at which cattle are sent to slaughter has been continually

decreasing, falling to 2 to 3 years in the 1950's but down today to only 14-16 months (Pollan cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2006: 1). Cattle are put into feedlots, enclosures containing hundreds or thousands of cattle, in order to gain weight. Lack of exercise, protein supplements, antibiotics and growth hormone implants along with specialised feeding cause a massive gain in weight. In a stay of between 120 to 180 days they gain around 600 pounds (273 kg) of body weight, typically over 3 pounds (1.4 kg) a day (Edwards, Goodrich & Stricklin, cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2006: 3). They will also be castrated, branded and dehorned, none of the procedures being done with an anaesthetic. Dehorning is carried out in young calves by applying a hot iron cautery or a caustic paste and "is performed on older calves by the use of a scoop, saw, shears or wire" (Farm Sanctuary, 2006: 8). Castration is done to prevent "unsuitable" males from breeding, to reduce aggression and to improve the quality of meat (Farm Sanctuary, 2006: 8, 9). It is a painful procedure and is "...accomplished by three devices: the knife, the emasculator (a pliers-like device that crushes the spermatic cord and blood vessels to the testicles) and the elastrator (rubber ring placed over the testes that causes necrosis and eventual sloughing off of the testicles) (Farm Sanctuary, 2006: 9).

Dunayer (2001:131) explains how feedlots containing tens of thousands of cattle are barren places and stressful to the animals, who evolved in forests and naturally seek out riverine environments: "Crowded together, beset by flies, the cattle stand in mud and manure. In winter they endure sleet and snow, in summer relentless sun and dust." According to the South African Feedlotters Association (SAFA), 75% of South African beef comes from feedlots:

Today the SA Feedlot industry is a flourishing industry that produces approximately 75 % of all beef produced in South Africa which in real terms is in the region of 1,35 million head per annum with a one time standing total of  $\pm$ 420 000 head.

(SAFA, 2006)

### 3.4.2.2 Veal

Veal is a general term for the flesh of calves who have been reared in special ways to make the flesh pale and tender. There are a number of systems used but a general description is as follows (PETA, n.d.n; Farm Sanctuary, n.d.a).

Most of the calves used in veal production are calves born in the dairy industry and which the industry has no use for in the production of milk. They are deemed excess calves and used for meat. Soon after birth, if not immediately at birth, they are taken away from their mothers and confined in a small crate or similar construction where they are often tied and are unable to turn around or carry out normal movements (Reece & Hotchkiss cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. a). Instead of receiving their mother's milk they are fed on a special diet which promotes growth but lacks sufficient iron and fibre (Farm Sanctuary, n.d. a). As iron is essential for the formation of both haemoglobin and myoglobin, the calf becomes anaemic and its mucous membranes become pale. In such a confined state the calf's muscles are not used as they normally would be and start to atrophy, a process which will continue until he is killed. The continued contact with a hard floor often causes ulceration and joint disease and the animals can develop alimentary disorders as well as becoming psychologically disturbed (Terosky *et al.*; cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. a). The animals may also be kept in low light conditions.

Some veal calves, described as "bob" or "bobby veal" are between one and five days old when they are transported and slaughtered, while others are killed around 16 weeks of age (Patterson, 2002:116). As they have difficulty walking due to the cramped conditions they have been kept in and they are anaemic, transportation may be especially stressful. Their flesh is sold as veal, at a higher price than ordinary beef

for gourmet diners who enjoy the soft muscle (due to atrophy) and the pale appearance (caused by lack of iron) - in short, the flesh of a dead animal that was made sick before it was killed.

Not everyone would describe veal production as harsh and a number of organizations claim the animals are well cared for. A web site funded by America's Beef and Veal Producers through the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) titled "The Veal Farm" provides information about the veal industry including a seven minute video described as a veal farm tour and titled, "The Good Life" (CBB Veal Farm homepage, 2004). It also offers children an educational resource designed to teach them the fun of preparing veal. It maintains that the housing and tethering of the veal calves allows safe and gentle contact while reducing the risks of calves harming themselves and others (CBB, 2004a). It also claims that, "Conceptually, the milk-based diet is very similar to infant formula." (CBB, 2004b).

The Ontario Veal Association (OVA) describes how veal calves are kept in "adequately" lighted conditions to allow them to be monitored, fed and the environment cleaned (OVA, 2003a). It also describes how, with milk fed veal calves, the amount of iron is carefully controlled so that the calf does not become anaemic but there is insufficient iron for the meat to become dark.

Anemia is not desirable because it adversely affects health, feed conversion and average daily gain.

(OVA, 2003a).

Another type of veal, known as "red veal", is produced when the calves are fed grain rather than milk and the rumination process causes the meat to darken and take on a distinctive flavour and texture (CBB, 2004a).

The reasons for confining calves are explained as follows:

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), animal scientists and agricultural engineers have worked with the industry to develop specific guidelines for veal calf care and production. These guidelines support the practice of raising calves in individual housing stalls because it allows family farmers to carefully monitor and control the calf's nutritional and health status.

Calves in individual housing can comfortably lay [sic] in a natural position, stand up, groom themselves and interact with their neighbors.

In individual pens, calves can stretch without fear of other calves stepping on them.

(CBB, 2004a)

The pale colour of the flesh of milk fed veal calves is explained as follows:

The light meat results from the age of the calf and the level of myoglobin (iron content) in the muscle. Myoglobin produces a red pigment that affects the color of the meat. To keep the meat light, without harming calf health, the amount of iron a calf receives is controlled through a nutritionally balanced milk-based diet and monitored on a regular basis.

(CBB, 2004b)



**Figure 12: Veal calf chained in a stall (PETA, n.d. g)**

Not all commentators are so enthusiastic about veal production and question what happens in this industry. They maintain veal calves often have ulceration of the gut due to the abnormal diet they are fed, that they endure physical discomfort because of their confined conditions and after 10 weeks of age find it difficult to find a way to lie comfortably in their confined living areas (Farm Sanctuary, 2002: 14). They may be

unable to walk properly and there is increased susceptibility to disease (*ibid*: 14,15). As they are naturally gregarious animals, the calves become frustrated in these conditions and they may also become depressed and lose interest in eating. This is a death sentence because they are then no longer looked on as being economically viable (*ibid*: 15). Here, a report records the visit of an investigator to a veal production farm:

The windowless warehouses looked more like storage buildings than 'barns.' Inside, in the dim light, there were hundreds of calves in the building, each one tethered into a small crate. The crates of calves were organized into a series of rooms in the warehouse, according to size and age. The older, larger calves had difficulty standing up in the cramped space, and when they lay down, the back section of their bodies hung uncomfortably out the back of the crate. All the calves were tied so tightly that they couldn't turn around. The floors consisted of slatted wood and metal mesh, and the calves struggled to gain their footing on the slick, diarrhea-coated flooring. The calves' hindquarters were caked with dried excrement, and a stench filled the air. Mucus dripped from their nostrils and their eyes were tearing." Months later the investigator returned to the same farm, this time finding the barns empty, except for one "downed" calf lying in an alley way. He was too sick to walk onto the slaughterhouse truck, and he was left behind.

(Farm Sanctuary, 2002: 13)

### **3.4.2.3 Pigs**

Pigs are intelligent, protective of their young, able to form social bonds with other pigs and, contrary to widespread perceptions are naturally clean animals (Holder; Meier cited in PETA n.d. 1). When they are farmed for meat it is in the financial interests of all concerned in the pork industry to produce as much meat as quickly as possible for as low a cost as possible. In order to do this a system which confines sows to crates is often used. The animals are made pregnant and shortly before birth are moved to farrowing crates. Following the birth, the sow stays in the crate for between ten days to four weeks, where she feeds her young and after this time the piglets are taken away and she is made pregnant again and returned to a gestation crate (Rollin cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. c). This cycle of repeated birth followed by pregnancy followed by birth and so on will continue for the next three to five years

until the sow's body is worn out, after which she will be slaughtered (PETA, n.d. 1; Rollin cited in Farm Sanctuary n.d. c). Sows suffer a range of conditions on farms including joint damage, weakness of the legs, generalised lack of mobility, chronic stress, depression, aggression, neurotic behaviours, including stereotypes, and urinary tract infections, possibly from having to lie in their own faeces (Farm Sanctuary, n.d. c). One worker describes what happens to sows unable to stand anymore:

On the farm where I work they drag the live ones who can't stand up anymore out of the crate. They put a metal snare around her ear or foot and drag her full length of the building. These animals are just screaming in pain. They're dragging them across the concrete, it's ripping their skin, the metal snares are tearing up their ears.

(Eisnitz, cited in Patterson, 2002: 115)

The worn out sows are dumped in a pile waiting for the cull truck to collect them which may take up to two weeks (Patterson, 2002: 115).

The piglets produced in this system are kept packed together in close confinement and are prone to develop stress related behaviours such as tail biting and cannibalism. To prevent damage, workers cut off the piglet's tails and break off the ends of their teeth with pliers (Luce cited in PETA, n.d. 1).



**Figure 13: Breaking off the ends of a piglet's teeth with pliers (PETA, n.d. i)**



**Figure 14: Castrating a piglet (PETA, n.d. j)**

#### **3.4.2.4 Chickens**

Up to the end of the Second World War, chickens used for meat came from chickens

which had been kept for eggs but had ceased to lay (Schlosser, 2001: 139). Today many chickens which are used to provide food or eggs will spend almost the whole of their short lives confined to small cages. In the US some 245 million chickens are used in egg production and 98% of these live in cages (Mench & Segal cited in PETA n.d. a). Typically, the cages are sloped to allow eggs to roll to one side and each cage is about the height of a hen and holds between four to seven hens, which means they are unable to stretch or move around (Patterson, 2002: 128; PETA n.d. a). Young male chicks are of no use to the industry and are gassed, drowned, dumped in bins to suffocate or fed into a high speed grinder or a mincer (Mench & Segal; Summers cited in PETA n.d. a.; Pickover, 2005: 153). Female chicks have the middle toe of each foot cut off to prevent it growing around the wire of the cage where they will stand (Pickover, 2005: 153). The conditions in battery cages do not allow the hens to carry out almost any of their normal behaviours, such as roosting, dust bathing or sitting in a nest; the barrenness and crowding of their environment inducing frustration and stress (Farm Sanctuary n.d. b). Birds who become stressed by these cramped conditions may peck each other causing wounds and death. To prevent this happening, birds are kept in semi darkness and have their beaks cut off using a hot blade. (Mench & Segal cited in PETA n.d. a). “A hot blade slices off about half of each bird’s upper beak and less of the lower. The blade cuts through sensitive tissue, frequently burning a bird’s nostrils or tongue, searing their eyes or severing their tongue” (Dunayer, 2001: 129). No anaesthetic is used and birds may eat less in the days or weeks afterwards or may stop eating altogether and starve to death (*ibid*). This process causes “...behavioural and neurophysiological changes betokening both acute and chronic pain” (Rollin cited in PETA n.d. a).

To increase egg production, chickens are forced into a moult at around 10 months of age. This is done by keeping them in total darkness and depriving them of water for one to two days and of food for up to ten days (Dunayer, 2002: 129). The chickens may then enter a second egg cycle. Forced moulting is very stressful for the birds, producing an increased mortality and because of the cruelty involved has been banned in most European countries (Duncan cited in Farm Sanctuary n.d. b). The confinement of many thousands of birds in wire cages indoors and the build up of urine and faeces also causes health problems. Ammonia fills the air, birds develop

foot ulcers, ankle burns, breast blisters and ulceration as well as respiratory and eye diseases, the latter possibly leading to blindness (Dunayer, 2002: 128).



**Figure 15: Chickens in dark cramped conditions (PETA n.d. k)**

Broken bones are another problem as intensive egg laying weakens the bones of birds and those who suffer broken bones may, in fact, be suffering from significant osteoporosis (Gentle, cited in PETA n.d. a; Duncan cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. b). The situation is made worse because of the restricted movement of the birds as bone strength depends upon the ability of the birds to move normally (Baxter; European Commission cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. b). Birds may also suffer from fatty liver haemorrhagic syndrome leading to decreased egg laying and sudden death from the rupture of the liver (European Commission cited in Farm Sanctuary, n.d. b). After about two years, the chickens are no longer able to lay eggs and are known as “spent hens”. They are of no further use to the industry and are sent for slaughter.

Chickens used in the meat industry are treated in a similar way to those used for eggs and kept in confinement in large sheds. A rapid increase in body mass is facilitated by manipulation of the artificial lighting to stimulate them to eat more often and the use of antibiotics and arsenic-containing compounds to prevent infections in the cramped conditions (PETA, n.d. a). Arsenic compounds are used to promote growth, prevent diarrhoea from parasites and improve the pigmentation of the chicken meat (Hileman, 2007). Some chicken producers are stopping the use of arsenic, however, because of

its known detrimental effects on human health as the inorganic form is known to cause a range of cancers as well as immunological, neurological and endocrinal problems (*ibid*). There is now severe concern over the leakage of antibiotics as well as arsenic into water sources from animal farming facilities and the use of animal manure on fields (Hileman, 2007; PETA, n.d. a). In a geological study in the U.S.A., 50% of the waterways tested had traces of antibiotics used in the animal farming industry (Nutt cited in PETA, n.d. a). Organisms resistant to antibiotics are increasing and there is concern that this is due, at least in some part, to their widespread use in animal agriculture.

Changes in consumer habits mean that, rather than consuming whole chickens, people now often eat chicken parts such as wings or breasts or even processed entities such as nuggets and this has led to the breeding of chickens with unusual body shapes. It is in the financial interests of the industry to have chickens which will grow rapidly and cheaply and put on mass in those areas of the body which are later to be sold as meat. For this reason, genetic manipulation has been used to breed suitable birds. It is common for these birds to develop skeletal problems, especially of the leg bones, as well as ascites which is probably caused by heart and lung problems due to the inability of the birds' cardiopulmonary system to keep up with demand for oxygen (Mench & Segal; Balog cited in PETA n.d. c). Schlosser describes how, in the U.S., the chicken industry, like the cattle industry, involves a few major companies owning most of the operations (Schlosser, 2001: 139). When the McDonalds Corporation realised the threat to hamburger outlets from the increasing sales of chicken they responded by developing the chicken nugget consisting of small pieces of boneless chicken along with a number of other constituents. Tyson Foods worked with McDonalds to guarantee an adequate supply of chicken and soon developed a chicken with unusually large breasts dubbed "Mr McDonald" (Schlosser, 2001: 140).

The system used to supply chickens for the food processing and sales industry is exploitive both of the animals and people. Schlosser describes how Tyson Foods is the world's largest food processor and has multiple outlets for chicken. It breeds, slaughters, processes and owns the birds from laying to slaughter but it does not grow them, leaving this to short term contract chicken growers who supply the land, the

buildings, the fuel and the work but are under the control of the supplier (Schlosser, 2001: 140, 141). They are completely dependent on the timetables, transport, feeding schedules, feed, veterinary services and payments determined by the supplier's own count and formula. For most of the chicken growers, this leads to debt and/or unemployment (*ibid*):

The Chicken McNugget turned a bird that once had to be carved at a table into something that could easily be eaten behind the wheel of a car. It turned a bulk agricultural commodity into a manufactured, value-added product. And it encouraged a system of production that has turned many chicken farmers into little more than serfs.

(Schlosser, 2001: 139)

### **3.4.3 Animal breeding**

The genetic manipulation of animals has been going on for thousands of years as animals with attributes which humans wanted were used for breeding while others were castrated or killed. This is a highly technical area as shown by the excerpt below from a paper concerning studies on semen production by bulls under the sub heading, "Bull sexual behavior, intensity of semen collection, and sire power":

These collective studies resulted in recognizing the importance of evaluating the sexual responses of individual bulls and applying stimuli along with an optimal frequency of about six semen collections per week. The result was a sperm output of 30 to 40 × 10<sup>9</sup> sperm per week per sire. With a 50-wk-per-year collection schedule and 10 × 10<sup>6</sup> sperm per insemination dose, these sperm numbers translate into 200,000 doses of semen for insemination each year.

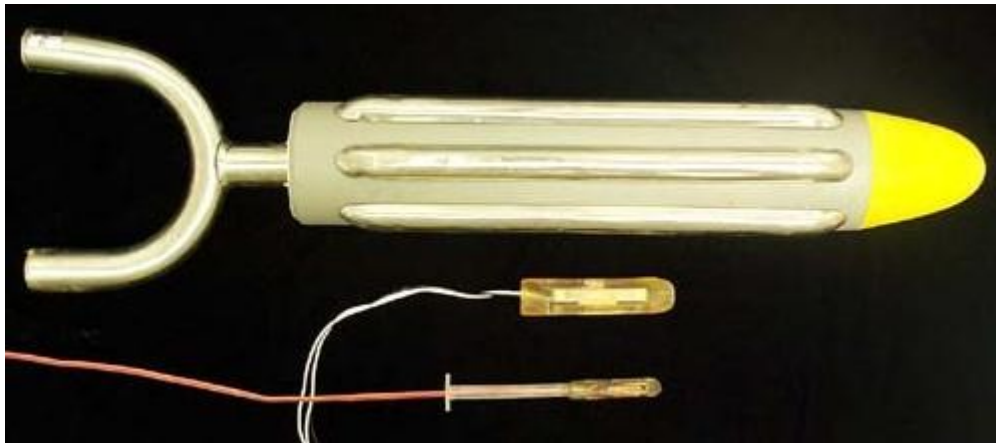
(Foote, 2002: 4)

Rouge & Bowen (2002) describe how semen can be collected using an artificial vagina or AV. Some examples of artificial vaginas are shown below. They are used for rabbits (top), dogs (middle) and bulls.



**Figure 16: Examples of artificial vaginas (Rouge & Bowen, 2002)**

Semen can be produced by using digital manipulation or an electroejaculator. Some examples, which have been used for bulls, leopards and ferrets, are shown below.



**Figure 17: Examples of electroejaculators (Rouge & Bowen, 2002)**

Rouge & Bowen explain that:

Three pieces of equipment are required for electroejaculation. The electroejaculator itself is a power supply with rheostats to control the amplitude of the delivered current and lots of circuitry to prevent accidental electrocution. Second, one needs a collection tube, usually attached to a latex rubber cone ("loving cup") in which to collect the semen. Finally, the pulses of current are applied through an electroejaculator probe. The probe is inserted into the rectum such that the electrodes lie within the pelvic cavity.

(Rouge & Bowen, 2002)

Techniques have advanced and now artificial insemination is widely available as is embryo transplantation. This means that one male can sire many offspring and gives

more uniformity to the “product” i.e. the living creatures produced. One of the outcomes of selective breeding is the production of animals which are out of balance with their physiology. Chickens are produced which have bodies so large and which grow so rapidly that their physiology has difficulty coping. The Belgian Blue, a breed of cattle with an extra muscle gene, has difficulty giving birth.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The description above is an attenuated view of animal farming, particularly in its present large scale or modern form. There is a great deal more which could be written and the practices associated with animal farming are developing rapidly but I believe this description, although inevitably deficient in some respects, apprehends the essentials of the phenomenon. Animal farming is an institutionalized global phenomenon and there are many similarities between what happens in the farming of cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and other animals in countries across the world.

In order to understand the phenomenon, to discern and explain some of the mechanisms which support it and enable its continuation, I will examine it from a critical realist standpoint. The above descriptions I take to be the empirical level of the phenomenon which exists in a stratified reality. In the next chapter I analyse the phenomenon and recontextualise it.

## Chapter 4

*The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words.*

Philip K. Dick.

*Let me say it openly: we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty, and killing which rivals anything the Third Reich was capable of, indeed dwarfs it, in that ours is an enterprise without end, self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them.*

J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*.

## 4. Abduction – seeing things differently

### 4.1. Introduction

In order to understand more fully, more deeply, the empirical description given in the last chapter, I now re-describe what is happening in these interactions between humans and animals, giving a new frame of reference for the phenomenon and then interpreting what is happening. This is a way of breaking away from the habitualised ways of apprehending the phenomenon, the “normal” everyday accepted ways of seeing it, and moving to something less conditioned and holding deeper insights. This process may be described as re-contextualisation or abduction.

Animal farming is an accepted, normal practice, one which evokes pictures of rustic bliss in which happy farm animals contentedly munch away in green fields under the care of earthy, compassionate, hardworking carers. For many of us, brief visits to farm land and contacts with farm animals are some of the happiest memories of our childhoods, so it may seem pedantic, perhaps even absurd, to question the normality and legitimacy of animal farming.

In Eco’s scheme, this benign, traditional vision of animal farming is an example of overcoded abduction. That is, it is a natural outlook arising from its social and

cultural context (Eco cited in Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 93). This view and the empirical description of animal farming given earlier, fail to highlight that animal farming contains many essentially uncontested propositions; for example, that it is natural or right for humans to keep animals confined or that we need to eat animal flesh and milk to be healthy or that farmed animals exist for the purpose of providing humans with food and other consumables. As Danermark *et al.* emphasise, overcoded abduction, even if apparently scientific in nature, may hide subtle mechanisms able to promote and uphold oppressive power differentials:

But it is also important to problematize the inference made in a more automatic way (overcoded abduction). Scientific observations and analyses are based on classifications. There may be good reasons for questioning some classifications and conceptualizations as manifestations of ideologies and hegemonic values.

Danermark *et al.*, 2000: 95)

To lay the groundwork for a redescription of the phenomenon and to assist in constructing a more critical frame of reference which will allow for meaningful interpretation, I examine philosophical arguments concerning the moral status of nonhumans, the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world, the parallels between the treatment of animals and the treatment of women, between animals and slaves and the role of language in shaping our perceptions of animals.

## **4.2. Thinking about animals**

Humans use billions of animals each year for food, fur, skins and an immense range of other “products”. They also use animals for experimentation, entertainment, power, sport and protection. These animals often suffer terribly in this exploitation both in terms of the severity of their distress and the numbers who suffer. Much of this cruelty, indeed overwhelmingly the major part, is routine, institutionalized and legally sanctioned (Singer, 1975; Mason, 1985; Turner 1999; Schlosser, 2002; PETA, 2007).

Drawing on the work of Orlans and Morgan, Pederson classifies attitudes towards animal in a scheme which places animal exploitation at one extreme and animal

liberation at the other whilst pointing out that this is, in reality, a continuum (Pedersen, 2000: 69). In animal exploitation, animals are simply resources to be used as the individual sees fit with no regard to cruelty caused, killing or even the law. Animal liberation, at the other end of the scale, views animals as having rights which need to be protected and, if need be, some supporters of this point of view are willing to carry out illegal acts.

Much of the philosophical debate concerning the treatment of animals focuses on their moral status and the duties which humans may or may not have towards them on account of that status. Respect and concern for animals has been a part of many human value systems over thousands of years but the explosive increase in systematic and widespread animal exploitation over the last three hundred years, particularly but not exclusively, in large scale farming and vivisection has led to the formation of a range of animal welfare and animal rights organizations.

## **4.2.1 Philosophical Theories: Animals and their moral standing**

### **4.2.1.1 The great divide**

There are a variety of philosophical views concerning the moral status of animals, which I will briefly review. At this point let me state that this examination cannot help but fail to do justice to the full range and depth of the many intricate philosophical arguments which have been propounded in this arena. It is rather a set of signposts marking out the major claims of the differing views.

A convenient scheme is given by Wilson (2006) who divides the theories about the moral status of animals into two groups: indirect theories and direct theories. Indirect theories state that animals do not warrant any moral concern as of themselves but they may warrant concern in so far as they have some relationship to human beings (Wilson, 2006). Direct theories view animals as beings who have a moral status in their own right and, this being the case, we have moral duties towards them. Simply described, from the point of view of indirect moral duties, if I kick a person's dog, a dog which they love and care for, this act is wrong because seeing the dog's pain might cause that person distress or it might also cause them distress because I have

damaged their property (the dog) (Regan 1985:15). Another reason is that it might mean I will become a crueler person myself and eventually go on to carry out some heinous act against another human being. Whatever the case, the distress experienced by the dog is neither here nor there in that it is essentially of no moral consequence. On the other hand, from the point of view of people having direct moral duties towards animals, kicking any dog, owned or not owned, whether the act is seen or unseen, is simply immoral because it causes distress to the animal herself.

I will now briefly review these theories, beginning with those concerned with indirect duties towards animals.

## **4.2.2. Indirect Theories**

### **4.2.2.1. Cartesian Theories**

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) argues that everything in the world can be reduced to two types of substances, minds and bodies or the physical and mental (Des Jardins, 1997: 92). The mental includes all thinking, sensation and consciousness while the body or physical has no consciousness and is simply a matter of mechanics. For Descartes, animals are machines or “thoughtless brutes” even though they may still be counted as being alive (Des Jardins, 1997: 92). Their behaviour can be explained in mechanistic terms without any reference to awareness or consciousness (Wilson, 2006). This conception, still very much in evidence in our thinking today, not only divides the person into mind and body but the world into human and nonhuman. Around the time he was alive, Descartes’ views were opposed by Henry More at Cambridge, an animist who taught of a Spirit of Nature, and later by Gottfried Leibnitz in Germany, who discarded the idea of the separation of humans and nature and even the living from the non living. However, it is Leibniz’ contemporary, Baruch Spinoza, who sees all things as a temporary manifestation of “God created substance” and anticipates our present ecological consciousness (Nash, 1989: 20).

The claim that animals are not conscious is still supported by some philosophers including Harrison and Carruthers (Wilson, 2006). Harrison (1991) asserts that pain behaviour and pain are two different things and simply because an animal exhibits

pain behaviour means that we cannot conclude that they are experiencing pain (Harrison cited in Wilson, 2006). Carruthers suggests “human beings are unique amongst members of the animal kingdom in possessing mental states” and he proposes an explanation as to why animals might seem to be in pain but they are not (Carruthers, 1992: 186). Firstly, he notes that humans carry out some things in an automatic way, such as driving a car, and yet they can still react to stimuli even though they are not immediately conscious of them. He also offers the example of blindsighted individuals who cannot see in a particular field but are still able to react to things happening in that blind area, such as reacting to an object thrown towards them. His conclusion is that to be conscious, as humans are, is to have higher order thoughts and that there is no evidence that animals have higher order thoughts. This means that although they may exhibit unconscious pain behavior, we cannot say they experience pain:

... and our account of this distinction will be given as before in terms of the availability of conscious pain to conscious thinking. In which case, if animals are incapable of thinking about their own acts of thinking, then their pains must be unconscious ones.

(Carruthers, 1992: 189)

This argument fails for a number of reasons. Firstly it does not answer the question of why humans, who are classed as animals and who have a shared evolution with all other life on the planet, should be the sole recipients of the experience of pain. Pain has great survival value in evolutionary terms, protecting creatures from danger and further injury. It is unreasonable to propose, for example, that humans feel pain while chimpanzees, our closest relatives who are believed to have descended from our common ancestor some 6-8 million years ago after a shared evolution of nearly 4 000 million years, do not (Shock, 2000; Foley *et al.*, 1996).

Secondly, pain is often used as a form of “training” for animals. They may be coerced into doing tricks of various kinds or, if they are horses or donkeys, simply beaten to make them run faster. Of course humans can also be trained in exactly the same way. These animals do the tricks, or run faster to avoid the repetitive infliction of pain. For this process to work, they must be able to remember the past in some way (the crack

of the whip is often enough). They must therefore experience pain to be something very unpleasant and to be avoided and they must anticipate, in some way that failing to do the tricks or run faster will lead to the experience of pain again. Doing tricks or running faster to avoid pain can in no way be equated to the automatic reflexes which help organisms to avoid injury or to “unconscious pain behaviour” and so the conclusion must be that animals actually experience conscious pain.

Thirdly, humans, under physical stress, release a class of biologically active chemicals known as endorphins, some of which act as natural painkillers although they have a wide range of effects (Bradford, 1987; Henderson, 2001). It has even been suggested that some compulsive athletes get addicted to a natural high brought about by these chemicals during and after exercise, although the validity of this is uncertain.

Animals also produce endorphins when physically stressed but, if animals do not feel pain, then there is no need for natural painkillers to be released into their systems. If there is no need, but the endorphins are released anyway, we must now accommodate the unreasonable supposition that, in humans who are injured, endorphins act as painkillers but in animals who are injured, the released endorphins must do something else or simply be an artifact of no significance.

Fourthly, all of us personally know many things which will cause us pain and this knowledge helps us to survive and avoid injury. It also helps us to help others who are injured. However, it is simply never possible to actually experience what another individual feels, human or non human, since we are isolated in our own bodies. We may try to describe, to compare and contrast, to note common things which give us pleasurable or painful experiences but we cannot say, in absolute terms, that what we experience, another being, human or nonhuman, actually feels. Despite this, every day, as an act of faith, we live out our lives as if we are cognizant of what others feel and experience. Our daily existence would be impossible without this. Our religious, ethical and legal systems do not even need to acknowledge such a belief but accept it as axiomatic. It would be bizarre, to say the least, to arrive at the scene of an armed attack and see a horse and a man writhing around on the ground, both with gunshot

wounds, and yet conclude that a) neither of them is experiencing pain or b) only the man is experiencing pain.

To refuse to accept that animals do experience pain suggests a powerful element of human self interest and, as Sagan and Druyan point out, “[h]umans - who enslave, castrate, experiment on and fillet other animals – have an understandable penchant for pretending that animals do not feel pain” (Sagan and Druyan, 1992: 371).

#### **4.2.2.2. Kantian Theories**

Kantian theories concerning the moral status of animals argue that human beings have some property or properties which animals do not have and it is for this reason that humans must be accorded high moral status and animals given none (Wilson, 2006). For Kant (1724-1804), the important distinguishing factor between humans and animals is the will (Wilson, 2006). Both humans and animals are driven by desires but only humans can stand back from their desires and make a choice. This means that only humans have moral value and animals do not:

So far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are... there merely as a means to an end. That end is man.

(Kant cited in Wenz, 1988:131)

“A theory is a Kantian theory, then, if it provides an account of the properties that human beings have and animals lack that warrants our according human beings a very strong moral status while denying animals any kind of moral status at all” (Wilson, 2006)<sup>2</sup>. Yet Kant is opposed to animal cruelty and justifies this by claiming that those who are cruel to animals will go on to become hard in their dealings with people. Animal cruelty is to be condemned, not because it is morally wrong in itself, but because it would lead to human suffering (Wenz, 1988: 131). Kant also assumes, in a further piece of elitist thinking, that it is the working class and urban poor who are actually the ones who are cruel to animals, this being due to not being quite as fully human as they should be (Tester, 1991:99).

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<sup>2</sup> It might also be claimed that Kantian Theories describe any which invoke a categorical imperative of some kind but I mean here to refer to those theories which essentially follow the ideas of Kant concerning humans and animals.

### 4.2.2.3. Contractualist Theories

Contractualism is named after its governing conception where morality is viewed as an imaginary contract between rational agents who agree upon rules which will govern their subsequent behaviour (Carruthers, 1992: 35). John Locke and Thomas Hobbes both explored contractualism, which has many varieties, but the relationship between animals and contractualism was not really explored until after Rawls published *A Theory Of Justice* in 1971 (Wise, 2001: 41; Wilson 2001: 4).

Rawls argues for a conception of justice as fairness. He proposes a hypothetical situation where people, behind a veil of ignorance, choose the rules by which society will be governed. They do not know who they are (male, female, black, white etc.) although they do understand the general workings of human society. In this way the rules they would choose, it might be expected, would be as fair and just as possible to all concerned. So it is as if person A “signs up to the contract” not to murder, enslave, torture, imprison, etc. on the understanding that all others who are part of the contract have agreed to the same conditions and thus the rights of each person are guaranteed.

From a contractualist point of view, it may be argued that only those who are fully a part of the “social contract”, who can reciprocate it in its totality, can justifiably benefit from the rights which it defines and bestows. Since animals cannot reciprocate such a contract, they must be excluded from enjoying those rights. Of course this argument runs into some problems. One of these is that some people might not wish to be part of the contract at all and conversely that there are also human beings in society who, due to such things as their physical condition or being not yet fully developed, are not themselves able to take up and reciprocate their part of the contract. Some might be able to do so at some future date but others never will. However, all of these people are in practice still afforded rights while, on the other hand, animals are excluded on the grounds that they cannot reciprocate the contract.

Of course if the original participants behind the veil of ignorance had not known whether they were human or non human, the resulting contract would certainly have been very different and would have secured rights for animals. Concerning objections to the exclusion of animals, Garner writes:

Rawls, it is suggested, illegitimately excludes animals as entities who can be beneficiaries from the decisions taken by participants in the original position. Just as knowledge of gender, economic circumstances and physical and mental well-being is lacking, there is no reason why the veil of ignorance cannot be thickened further to exclude knowledge of animal species.

(Garner, 2003: 236)

Tribe (1974) has suggested that nature itself could be included in the contractual arrangements assumed to have occurred at the start of a society, and that the maximum liberty principle of Rawls, when applied equally, would maximize the benefits for all life (Nash, 1989: 132).

#### **4.2.2.4. Teleological anthropocentrism or The Great Chain of Being**

Although this ideology can be traced back at least two thousand years, it has a tenacious grip on the human psyche even today, appearing in different forms and with different justifications, and may be subscribed to consciously or unconsciously. In essence it claims that human beings, male humans particularly, are the highest form of existence on the earth and that this “fact” gives humans the right to use as we please all those things which have an existence lower than ours – which conveniently is everything else, living and non living.

This theme of an hierarchically constructed universe composed of greater and lesser beings is sometimes described as the “Great Chain of Being” and Lovejoy describes its pervasiveness and power as follows:

[It is]...one of the half dozen most potent and persistent presuppositions in Western thought. It was, until not much more than a century ago, probably the most widely familiar conception of the general scheme of things, of the constitutive pattern of the universe.

(Lovejoy cited in Wise, 2001: 11)

Today, this belief may be held overtly, as it is in the doctrines of some forms of religious faith, or it may arise from an anthropomorphic-scientific perspective on the world or it may simply be understood by many people as something obvious and common sense.

#### **4.2.2.4.1. Ancient Greece**

For many in ancient Greece the worldview was one in which everything had a purpose. Rain fell for the sake of the corn and the corn grew for the sake of the animals who fed on it (Wise, 2001: 12). Socrates, according to Xenophon, believed that animals existed just for humans and that even the passage of the sun across the sky was for man (Wise, 2001: 11). Aristotle thought of all of nature as a ladder. He held the view that those in nature with less reasoning ability exist for the sake of those with more. Plants exist for the sake of animals and animals for the sake of man. Even the barbarian tribes, who were seen as less rational, found their place in life as slaves serving those more rational.

#### **4.2.2.4.2. Judeo-Christian tradition**

In general, the major faiths of Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism are often seen as relatively animal friendly while those sharing the Judaic root, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are often perceived as being harsh, to say the least, on other living beings. Some commentators point to Christianity, or at least some forms of Christianity, as being largely responsible for the elitist attitude of humans concerning the world and for a belief that we have a God-given right to exploit the living and the nonliving world for our own ends.

The “evidence” that humans are the pinnacle of creation, as is often claimed or at least implied, is supposedly shown by two biblical references. First, in the creation story humans are made last. God makes the best at the end of the work of creation and that is humans. Secondly, humans are said to be made in the image of God. Concerning the first idea, Kemmerer points out that this makes no sense as there are two creation stories in Genesis, one in which humans are the last things to be created by God and another in which man is formed first, from the dust of the earth, followed by animals and birds and finally by woman (Kemmerer, 2006:159). Secondly, she notes, citing a

number of authors, that “being made in the image of God” is a much debated phrase which may be understood as having god-like responsibilities and perhaps as bearing responsibility for reflecting such aspects of God as goodness, wisdom, righteousness, love and justice. Notwithstanding all this, humans are still understood to be part of creation (Kemmerer, 2006: 157,158).

There is also the idea, again in Genesis, of humans possessing a God-given dominion over the world and, once again, this is open to very different interpretations. Some see it as *carte blanche* for exploitation and the use of all things living and non-living but it can also be interpreted as power to be used only with responsibility and restraint (Linzey, 1985: 11). This dominion is also limited. It is given over every living thing which moves, but not over plants, or seas or mountains, and this is also bestowed at the same time that God makes it clear that all of the animals of the earth, including man, have been given vegetarian food to eat; so evidently this is a very limited form of dominion (Kemmerer 2006:158).

Jewish law was not necessarily pejorative to animals even if it did at times allow animal sacrifice and, citing Regenstein, Preece notes that the Talmud states that “it is forbidden according to the law of Torah to inflict pain on any living creature” (Regenstein in Preece, 2005; 47). Passmore claims that the notion that nature exists to satisfy the needs of man alone is not the accepted teaching of the Old Testament where, for example, God causes the rain to fall on desolate areas so that plants may be able to grow even though no man exists there. Even the doctrine that everything is made for man would not mean that man should go and transform the world and this was an accepted interpretation for centuries. Any attempt by men to reshape the world as God created it would have been a “form of presumption, of hubris” (Passmore, 1995: 131).

Despite all this, St Thomas Aquinas (1275-1274) echoes the Greek world hierarchy by arguing that only beings which are rational are capable of determining their own actions and are the only ones “to which we should extend concern ‘for their own sakes’” (Regan & Singer cited by Wilson, 2006). Aquinas believes that animals are merely instruments and instruments do not exist for their own sake but exist for use by people. The only possible objection to cruelty to animals is that it might lead to

cruelty being practiced against humans (Singer, 1985: 3). Cruelty to animals is therefore not wrong in itself. In the extract below the implicit hierarchy of greater and lesser beings is plain:

Now all animals are naturally subject to man. This can be proved in three ways. First, from the order observed by nature. For just as in the generation of things we perceive a certain order of procession from the imperfect (thus matter is for the sake of form; and the imperfect for the sake of the perfect), so also is there order in the use of natural things. For the imperfect are for the use of the perfect: as the plants make use of the earth for their nourishment, animals make use of plants and man makes use of both plants and animals ... Secondly this is proved from the order of divine providence which always governs inferior things by the superior.

(Aquinas cited in Wise, 2001:19)

Passmore maintains it was the Stoic-Christian tradition, which insisted on the absolute uniqueness of man as one who has been addressed by God and who could be saved or damned, which therefore meant that “[n]o natural object was sacred in itself, there was no risk of sacrilege in felling a tree or killing an animal” (Passmore, 1995:130-132).

The nature reverent side of Christianity seems to have been an aspect which has been lost, or more likely suppressed, through the ages. Evidence of this side of Christianity does exist, however. It is clear that vegetarianism has been something associated with Christianity from its earliest days (Preece, 2005: 8-10; Linzey, 2007: 117-127).

Preece describes how many communities of the early Christian church, as well as many Gnostic groups, were vegetarian, with the monastic community, the Essenes, being vegetarian except for eating grasshoppers and fish (Preece, 2005:8,9). St Augustine claimed that vegetarian Christians existed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and “it is clear that Augustine believed they were vegetarian because they considered it unethical to kill animals for food” (Preece, 2005:8).

There are also stories about some of those early Christians who choose to be close to nature. One such story is told by St Jerome about Theron, a monk who lived in Egypt, who would go out into the desert at night, draw water from his well and offer

cups of it to all those desert animals who were with him (Waddell, in Preece: 2005: 9). The absolute truth of this story obviously cannot be confirmed, although equally there are no reasons to doubt it, but Preece proposes that what is revealing is the spirit behind it and given the significance of wells in a desert region and their importance to the family group, that, “[t]o share one’s well with the animals was a mark of great respect and an intimation of closely felt kinship” (Preece, 2005:10).

Even hundreds of years later this aspect had not been lost. In the Celtic Christian tradition, possibly because of the fusion of Christianity with the earlier Celtic beliefs, the emphasis was on the imminence of God in the world (Bradley, 1993: 32, 32). Early publications of the lives of the Celtic saints “give a picture of men and women who were deeply attached to animals and birds” (*ibid*: 55). Columbanus would summon the animals and birds who would come to him and play. On one occasion wolves stood peacefully around him as he recited a psalm and on another occasion he was able to persuade a bear to leave its cave so that he could use it as a hermitage. Otters warmed the feet of St Cuthbert as he came out of the North sea and dried him with their fur and St Serf had a lamb that followed him about and a pet robin and is said to have raised a pig from the dead (*ibid*: 55). A boar, although savage to begin with, became the first disciple of Saint Ciaran of Ossory and other animals also came and joined him: a fox, a badger, a wolf and a stag (Lehane, 1968: 64). St Mochuas lived as a simple life as a hermit but was kept company by a fly, a mouse and a cock (*ibid*: 65). The cock would keep the hour of Matins for him. The mouse would not let him sleep more than five hours a day and, if he did so, the mouse would lick his ear and wake him and the fly would walk along each line of the psalter as he read it and would keep his place until he returned to it for the saying of more psalms (Flower in *ibid*: 65). The gentleness and care extended to the animals and birds by these spiritual leaders are shown in the next two excerpts. The first concerns St Kevin:

According to his custom he put his hand (in raising it to heaven) out through the window, when, behold, a blackbird happened to settle on it, and using it as a nest, laid its eggs there. The saint was moved with such pity and was so patient with it that he neither closed nor withdrew his hand: but held it out in a suitable position without tiring until the young were quite hatched. In perpetual remembrance of this wonderful happening, all the representations of

St Kevin throughout Ireland have a blackbird in the outstretched hand.

(Cambrensis in Lehane: 66)

The second is about an abbot of Lismore who comes across a bird weeping by the path. He is puzzled by this and then an angel comes to explain:

“Hail, cleric!” says the angel “let the trouble of this vex thee no longer. Molua, Ocha’s son, is dead. And for this cause the creatures lament him, for that he never killed any creature, little or big. And not more do men bewail him than the creatures, and among them the tiny bird though seest.”

(Flower in Lehane: 66)

As Columba, nearly 80 years old and on the last day of his life, sits down to rest, a white horse who carried the milk for the monastery, approaches him and senses his soul is about to depart (Adamnan in Lehane, 1968: 136; Adamnan in Bradley, 1993: 56):

It went to the saint and strange to tell put its head in his bosom, inspired as I believe, by God, before whom every living creature has understanding, with such perception of things as the creator has decreed; and knowing that its master would presently depart from it, and that it should see him no more, it began to mourn and like a human being to let tears fall freely on the lap of the saint, and, foaming much, to weep aloud.

(Adamnan in Lehane 1968:136)

So what may be looked upon as being the dominant Christian tradition concerning the living world, may be simply one which has evolved or been emphasised to excuse and justify Western domination and exploitation of a world increasingly experiencing the growth of capitalism.

Linzey, who has written extensively concerning animals and Christianity, quotes the words of St Isaac the Syrian (c.345 - 438) asking “What is a charitable heart?”:

It is a heart which is burning with love for the whole creation, for men, for the birds, for the beasts, for the demons — for all creatures. He who has such a heart cannot see or call to mind a creature without his eyes being filled with tears by reason of the immense compassion which seizes his heart; a heart which is softened and can no longer bear to see or learn from others of any suffering, even the smallest pain, being inflicted upon a creature.

(St Isaac the Syrian in Linzey, 2003: 1)

With the birth of the Renaissance and a progressively more scientific outlook developing over the next three hundred years, the unique position of man on his pinnacle of creation came under increasingly challenge (Wise, 2001: 20, 21). However, in the middle of the 19th century, and claiming the touchstone of science, particularly evolutionary theory, new explanations came to hand to support the old hierarchy of existence and provide comfortable justifications for the most vicious exploitation yet of nonhumans, some humans and the rest of the living world.

#### **4.2.2.4.3. Evolution**

Following Charles Darwin's work and the further development of his theory, another incarnation of the Great Chain of Being came into existence. This version appears to have scientific credibility, and the status which this bestows has extended its malicious reach right up to the present day. According to this account, over the years, some beings have evolved more than others and are therefore higher up the "evolutionary scale" or in other terms, they are "more highly evolved". This is a very familiar idea and is easily discernable in, for example, scientific descriptions such as "the higher vertebrates". Of course there is no support whatsoever for this view in Darwin's original theory nor in its later developments. Evolution is essentially about survival strategies and the production of viable offspring who are able, in turn, to go on and reproduce successfully. Crocodiles, for example, have stayed more or less the way they are for millions of years, not because they have been left behind in some evolutionary race but because they are very good at what they do. They are effective hunters, well suited to living in the rivers and lakes of Africa and elsewhere, and, when times do get hard, they can survive long periods without food. In other words their survival and reproductive strategies work extremely well and so there is no evolutionary pressure on them to change.

Gould points out that evolution is again and again represented both in lay and academic publications as a form of ladder which creatures ascend as time and evolution go on or as a cone of increasing diversity showing how species split from each other to form new species and the diversity has kept on increasing (Gould, 1989: 27-48). The problem is that there is no evidence for all this in the fossil record. On the contrary, the evolution of life on earth is better represented, he maintains, as a much branched bush with most branches and twigs ending in extinction and relatively few twigs surviving to the present. There is no upward ladder which species climb becoming more and more evolved and the idea of being more highly evolved, although common in lay and academic circles, has no scientific meaning.

The myth of ascending evolution, particularly as it applies to human “superiority”, has been ridiculed by Gould (Gould, 1989: 27-52; Gould, 1991: 168-181). He writes, “[t]he familiar iconographies of evolution are all directed – sometimes crudely sometimes subtly – towards reinforcing a comfortable view of human inevitability and superiority” (Gould, 1989: 28). He maintains that it is only those relatively unsuccessful groups, such as the horse with just one or two survivors, whose paths can be misrepresented in the form a ladder. Very successful groups such as bats, or antelopes, having many members, are not represented in this way. He makes the point that this is really about our belief in the centrality of humans to all things:

I need hardly remind everybody that at least one other mammalian lineage, preeminent among all in our attention and concern, shares with horses the sorry state of reduction from a formally luxuriant bush to a single surviving twig – the very property of tenuousness that permits us to build a ladder reaching only to the heart of our own folly and hubris.

(Gould 1991: 181)

We prefer to think of humans as the end point of millions of years of refinement which has produced the best possible model for life in the world today, rather than us being just one of the many organisms which have adapted to, and survived, the

countless challenges from our environment since the time of the early oceans through to the present. We share deep and abiding ties with all living things and Nobel prizewinner David Baltimore writing about the Human Genome Project notes that:

... it confirms something obvious and expected, yet controversial: our genes look much like those of fruit flies, worms and even plants...the genome shows that we all descended from the same humble beginnings and the connections are written in our genes.

(Baltimore cited in Wise, 2002: 19)

For almost the whole of earth's history human beings have been absent and, even for the vast majority of the history of life on earth, we have not existed. We are very late on the scene, emerging most likely from environmental changes which saw the loss of forest and the increase in savannas only a few million years ago (Foley *et al*, 1996). But every creature alive today, be they a lion or a snail is the result of the same number of years of evolution as human beings. All of us alive today have come this far together.

Here Mark Twain explains about evolution and humans, cleverly poking fun at our conceit:

Man has been here 32,000 years. That it took a hundred million years to prepare the world<sup>3</sup> for him is proof that that is what it was done for. I suppose it is. I dunno. If the Eiffel Tower were now representing the world's age, the skin of paint on the pinnacle knob at its summit would represent man's share of that age; and anybody would perceive that the skin was what the tower was built for. I reckon they would, I dunno.

(Mark Twain cited in Gould, 1989: 45)

Spiegel points out that before the wide acceptance of evolutionary theory, "civilized" white Christian human beings were placed above all other beings, giving them an excellent justification for the subjugation of black people and animals. With time the source of the justification may have changed but the basic has concept remained:

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<sup>3</sup> Twain was using an early estimate of the earth's age (*ibid*)

Later, under the banner of Social Darwinism both the unmitigated violence towards the 'lower' animals and the enslavement of black 'savages' in Africa were looked at as expressions of an evolutionary birthright.

(Spiegel, 1996: 21)

Cullinan places this idea within a uniquely South African perspective of racial oppression when he writes:

The dominant cultures of our world are as convinced of the superiority of our species over others and of our right to rule the planet as most South Africans once were about their right to oppress other South Africans.

(Cullinan, 2002:35)

The idea of the world being made for human exploitation, has become a foundation of Western outlook and one which Lovejoy condemns as "...one of the most curious movements of human imbecility" (Lovejoy cited by Wise, 2001:19).

Yet the power and pervasiveness of this ideology, otherwise described as teleological anthropocentrism, is difficult to overestimate. It has served, and continues to serve to justify slavery in its many forms, the oppression of women, racism, the use of animals for food, entertainment, experimentation, and power, the wholesale destruction of forests, the pollution of rivers, the plundering of the oceans and much more.

Using religion or "evolutionary theory" as justification, if indeed any justification is required at all, there is the implicit understanding that everything on earth is subject to, and can be rightfully used for, the purpose of fulfilling the needs and wishes of the male of the species *Homo sapiens*.

There are alternative views of the world in which animals are assigned rights or moral standing and so people are said to have direct duties towards them. In some of these views animals are still seen as less than humans in some way, being rated on a scale of some description, but may still be seen as deserving of moral consideration up to a point and, possibly, of deserving limited rights. There are yet other views in which

animals are assigned full moral standing and/or are assigned the full range of basic “human” rights. All of these theories concern having direct moral duties towards animals and I will examine these next.

### **4.2.3. Direct Theories**

#### **4.2.3.1. Utilitarianism**

There are many forms of utilitarianism but in general it may be described as a philosophy requiring actions and decisions to be taken which maximize the overall good (Des Jardines, 1997: 24). The consequences of an act are the things which need to be considered in making a moral decision. If the act maximizes the amount of good then it is a moral act and therefore it is the right choice of action. Two important variations of utilitarianism are hedonistic utilitarianism and preference utilitarianism. In the first, pleasure or the absence of pain is seen to be “the only good, valued for its own sake” (Des Jardines 1997: 24). In the second, good is understood as happiness brought about by the satisfaction of desires and in some versions individuals may be allowed to choose and rank their desires.

Epicurus, Bentham and Mill all see pain as evil and its opposite, pleasure and freedom from pain, as good (Callicott 1995:36). For Jeremy Bentham animals are worthy of moral consideration and their pain and suffering morally significant. This naturally means that they must be taken into account in any calculation of the maximum good to be produced by any actions. As the slave trade began to crumble, Bentham, writing in 1789 in his *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*, makes a telling comparison and looks forward to a more compassionate world:

(Slaves) have been treated by the law upon the same footing as, in England, for example, the ... animals are still. The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. (Some) have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin or the

termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate.

(Bentham cited by Spiegel, 1996: 32)

He makes the point that differences between humans and animals, such as language or intellectual ability, are not relevant to the moral question and should not allow us to treat animals in an immoral way. “The question is not, Can they *reason?* nor Can they *talk?*, but *Can they suffer?*” (Bentham cited in Des Jardines, 1997: 93 emphasis in the original).

Singer argues that it is interests which we need to take into consideration when making moral decisions. Interests are such things as enjoying various pleasures and avoiding pain, so living things can have interests but non-living things cannot (Singer, 1986: 219, 220). In making moral decisions the interests of all those concerned must be taken into account irrespective of race, creed, colour, gender or any other irrelevant differences of the individuals concerned including whether they are human or animal. Singer also maintains that in accordance with the Principle of Equal Consideration of Interests in moral deliberations, equal weight must be given to the like interests of all those affected by our actions (Singer, 1986: 221,222).

A simple example of utilitarian reasoning can be seen when the question is posed, “Is it morally right for a man to eat a steak”? The argument might go along the following lines. There are two individuals whose interests are to be considered here: they are the man, who has an interest in eating the meat and the cow who has an interest in staying alive. In this scenario it is understood that the man does not have to eat meat to stay alive, that there are other sources of food available and that he is not, say, on a rocky island devoid of any vegetation. If a decision is taken to allow the man to eat the steak, he gains the pleasure of eating the meat and some sustenance while, on the other hand, the cow loses her life. If a decision is taken not to allow the man to eat meat, he is deprived of a few moments pleasure but the cow is able to keep her life. If interests are considered equally and the few moments of pleasure weighed against taking away the cow’s life, it is clear that steak must be off the menu and the cow gets to enjoy a few more years chewing the cud and raising her young ones.

Utilitarian arguments are not always so clear cut and questions arise such as “When can it be said that an individual has interests: when they are conceived, when they are born, when they are a year old, and is it possible for a person to no longer have any interests?” Also, is it right for some individuals, human or nonhuman, to be injured or sacrificed if it means that many others will benefit from the action, i.e. that a greater overall good will be produced? Sometimes the outcome of this form of moral accounting can lead to results which are morally unacceptable for one reason or another.

#### **4.2.3.1.2. Animals and the Argument from Marginal Cases**

In most countries, all humans in society have full moral status although it is not always clear on what basis this status is held. It is certainly not, for example, allocated on the basis of gender, IQ or family connections, pigmentation of the skin or any other arbitrary distinction. To allocate moral status to individuals, for example, on the basis of their race is racist or on the basis of their sex is sexist. These are forms of unfair discrimination and morally unacceptable. The argument from Marginal Cases points out that human beings are not all the same and some are in fact very different from the majority of members of society. Young babies, the senile and those in comas are some examples. Yet such humans are still allocated full moral status. Animals, on the other hand, although they may clearly display high levels of sentience, are not allocated such status. Wilson outlines Singer’s philosophical argument against this practice as follows.

1. In order to conclude that all and only human beings deserve a full and equal moral status (and therefore that no animals deserve a full and equal moral status), there must be some property *P* that all and only human beings have that can ground such a claim.
2. Any *P* that only humans have is a property that (some) human beings lack (e.g. the marginal cases)
3. Any *P* that all human beings have is a property that (most) animals have as well.

4. Therefore there is no way to defend the claim that all and only human beings deserve full and equal moral status.

(Wilson, 2006)

How this works is as follows. It might be argued for example, that only humans can communicate with language and that it is this special quality which sets them apart from animals<sup>4</sup>. This being the case, and humans beings alone in this respect, it is further argued that this attribute is the criterion for the allocation of moral status and therefore that moral status should only be accorded to humans. The problem here is that clearly not all humans can and do use language i.e. those referred to as the marginal cases. However, these particular humans, in practice, *are* accorded direct moral status by society. This means the argument is fundamentally flawed, and that allocation of direct moral status on such grounds is inegalitarian and perverse. To exclude animals from direct moral status in this way is a form of unfair discrimination based solely on their non membership of the species *Homo sapiens*. The exclusion is therefore speciesist and, this being the case, as unjust and abhorrent as actions taken on the basis of sexist or racist arguments.

#### **4.2.3.2. Animal rights**

Despite the widespread support for all kinds of rights such as gay rights, women's rights, and of course human rights, it is not clear on what basis the idea of the possession of rights rests, what rights there should be or exactly how these rights should be allocated. However it is fair to say that in general most people recognize and support basic bodily integrity rights such as the right to freedom from injury by another, from murder or from incarceration.

The philosopher Tom Regan proposes that animals should have basic moral rights because animals are “subjects-of-a-life” and as such have their own inherent value (Regan, 1988). To be the subject of a life means a being has:

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<sup>4</sup> This proposition is of course highly debatable. Other supposed special qualities such as consciousness, intelligence, conscience, will or speech might also be proposed in this form of the argument in an attempt to set humans aside from all other living beings.

... beliefs, desires, memory, perception, a sense of the future, including their own, emotional life with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference and welfare interests, the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, independently of their welfare for others.

(Regan, 1988: 243)

So animals are not to be valued for their usefulness to other parties, as possessions to be used or goods to be bought and sold, but have fundamentally inherent value as of themselves. One human is never, in a moral sense, valued differently from any other human, even though we are all different in many respects and some may be very different from the majority of other people. Regan proposes that all moral agents must have the same inherent value, otherwise the question of assigning what “level” of inherent value they possess must arise and this in turn will lead to unacceptable ethical consequences:

If moral agents are viewed as having inherent value to varying degrees, then there would have to be some basis for determining how much inherent value any given moral agent has. Theoretically the basis could be claimed to be anything – such as wealth or belonging to the “right” race or sex.

(Regan, 1998:236)

Simply because some humans are different to others does not mean they have less inherent value and so we cannot rationally sustain the view that animals, who are also the experiencing subjects of a life, have less inherent value than humans (Regan, 1985: 23).

All those who have inherent value have it equally, irrespective of whether or not they are members of the species *Homo sapiens* and discrimination on the basis of species once again leads to the charge of speciesism. Once again it is possible to advance a form of the Argument from Marginal Cases but this time referring to rights.

Wise also argues for animal rights but from a legal perspective (Wise, 2001; 2002). In psychological tests on different types of nonhumans such as chimpanzees, dolphins and other animals, it has been demonstrated that they have a level of consciousness and self awareness often similar to, or even greater than, that of a human child (Wise, 2002). Of course this is a very anthropocentric perspective which presumes that human consciousness, whatever that is, is the form by which any other versions of consciousness should be compared. However in legal terms it is a very valuable comparison. Even though the level of consciousness, as we understand it, of a person in a coma or a person suffering from advanced Alzheimer's disease or even a day old child is not the same as that of most human adults, we cannot legally use them for, say, vivisection or meat. They are all afforded rights which protect them and, even though they themselves cannot exercise those rights, this does not in any way invalidate the possession of those basic rights. So the legal argument for rights claims that fairness and justice demands that animals, at least of a certain level of awareness, must have basic rights.

It is important to remember here that this is a legal argument meant to hold sway in a court of law which is not necessarily, on a day to day basis, the place to debate complex philosophical issues. Wise is fully aware that this argument leaves out, for the moment at least, nonhuman animals whom we cannot show to have consciousness similar to humans either because our investigative methods are deficient or because their being in the world is so different to our own that we have difficulty in comprehending it. However, if this line of argument is accepted, he sees it as taking one step which will help a significant number of individuals and at the same time open an important door for further change.

#### **4.2.3.2.1. Practical implications of the rights view for nonhuman animals**

As can be seen from the brief review above, the present operating philosophy concerning animals in most societies is one which recognizes only indirect moral duties towards animals with animals having no basic rights at all. A shift to the adoption of a direct moral duties view and/or the allocation of rights to animals will

have profound repercussions. Regan states that he sees the animal rights movement committed to a number of goals which include:

- the total abolition of animals in science;
- the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture;
- the total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping.

(Regan, 1985: 13)

To be sure, these are major changes. The resistance to the abolition of the slave trade by those with vested interests will be a very minor matter compared to the resistance that will be set in motion when animals are invested with basic rights. Power and privilege, not to mention large profits, are seldom relinquished voluntarily and the indications are that, for significant change to take place, actions both overt and covert, direct and indirect, legal and illegal may be required and this conflict is already under way in different parts of the world (Best & Nocella, 2004, 2006).

Such change will be different from other liberation struggles, as there would be no consciousness raising of the oppressed group and no active participation from the victims. Garner sees many problems in a liberation struggle for animals:

... for humans to campaign on behalf of them requires an altruism that is much more profound than for other social movements. Not only does it involve action to seek the advancement of the interests of another species, there is also a potential conflict between the interests of animals and those of humans. Animals provide direct economic benefits; they are used as a source of nutrition, as vehicles to test potentially dangerous products, as scientific models in the search for new drug products and medical procedures, as well as sources of entertainment and clothing. Given this, it is hardly surprising that attempts to justify an increase in the moral status of animals remain peripheral to mainstream ideologies.

(Garner, 2003: 236)

### **4.3. Seeing animals and the natural world**

I now wish to turn to look at the relationship between humans and the natural world and special associations between animals and women, animals and slavery and animals and language.

The last 1000 years has witnessed, for many humans, an increasing physical, psychological and spiritual isolation from the natural world which has had devastating consequences for living creatures and the environment as a whole. I now wish to look briefly at that illusion of separation and its effects.

#### **4.3.1 The illusion of isolation**

Today more people than ever before live out their lives away from the natural world<sup>5</sup>. Many live in large and growing conurbations, existing in totally built environments, day after day and year after year. Even those who live in small towns and villages may, to a great extent, have lost their close contact with the natural world. People no longer really experience the bitter cold of winter or the searing heat of summer, or breathe in the smell of the soil at the first rains. We do not sleep under the stars, pausing to wonder and to search for our place in the universe nor do we dream of those human and animal ancestors who lie beneath our feet and who have trod this ground millennia before us. We have become disconnected from our past and insular in our present, living in a physically and mentally manufactured reality.

Today few things that we possess, use or consume have a tangible history for us. They arrive ready-made in our world without any direct contact or work on our part. Our efforts to possess them are expressed in monetary terms which in turn are calculated from hours spent working on other unrelated tasks.

Mostly, there is nothing too special about these objects, nothing that gives them character or tells a story. They are just like the billions of other things which have been produced. A cool drink in a can says nothing to us about the massive mine in

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<sup>5</sup> The term “natural world” is a contested term as it may be argued that the idea of nature is simply a construction. However in the context above I use it to mean situations where human impact on the environment has been minimal.

Australia where the ore is dragged out of the ground or the huge ships which carry it over thousands of kilometres to Europe or of the factory where it is then smelted in a continuous electrolytic process. There is nothing about the metal being transported and rolled out in another factory and eventually fabricated into cans, nothing about the fields of beet and sugar cane which, when harvested and crushed, give up their sugars which are used in the drink nor about the other fruits or synthetically made chemicals which are also added and nothing at all about the origin of the major constituent in the can - water.

We have no thought and often no knowledge whatsoever about the processes, the people and other living beings whose lives were in some ways touched by what we hold in our hands. For us, its history is short, starting with its purchase at a local shop and ending up in a waste bin not long after. Its value is only apprehended in monetary terms, not in terms of resources used, human effort, the effects on living things, pollution and exploitation. It is one more thing which appears in our world and which can be ours if we have enough money. From the point when it leaves our hands and enters the waste bin it either no longer exists or, if we think about it at all, it goes to be disposed of somewhere else, some other place outside our personal world. What happens somewhere out there in production or disposal is, for the most part, no concern of ours.

On the other hand if, for example, we eat beans grown in our own garden or sit on a wooden chair we have fashioned ourselves, we have some idea of the effort and frustration, the care and faith needed to get to that point. We have cognizance of the sacrifices made by ourselves and those we have been in contact with, some idea of the toll on the environment and some understanding of the consequences of our actions. These things have a real history for us and it is one which gives them meaning and makes them especially precious. Greenbrier blames this separation from the natural world on something we call civilization:

Civilization saturates us to the core. On physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels, we are born manufactured in Civilization's image. It has torn each of us from our wild selves and the wild world we rely on for survival. It flows in our blood, projecting itself onto the world around us and representing itself as "reality."

To perpetuate itself, it demands that we must separate, isolate, categorize, label, package and inevitably devour our own inner wildness, and the unmolested places around us that we have come to call "wilderness."

(Greenbrier, 2006: 198)

I am not suggesting that life, say, 500 years ago was idyllic, an Arcadian world of peace and happiness but significant, novel changes have taken place in society over the last 100 years and there is an accelerating rate of change today.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough describe Harvey's historical-geographical material analysis of late modernity which sees Fordism being superseded by the new capitalism of "flexible accumulation" and leading to those who are employed being under greater pressure than previously and a workforce which needs to constantly re-skill (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 76, 77). Along with this goes a relative shift towards services and a speeding up of consumption which "involves capitalist penetration of many cultural domains which were previously outside or on the edge of the commodity market" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 77). They describe how Harvey argues that:

... these economic changes have profound cultural consequences. Contemporary societies are dominated by the volatile, the ephemeral and the disposable, not only in the domain of material goods but also in 'values, lifestyles, stable relationships and attachments to things, buildings, places, people, and received ways of doing and being' (Harvey, 1990).

(Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999: 77)

To compound these changes, there is also a long standing ideology of human supremacism, born from our obsessive hierarchical thinking. The South African lawyer and environmentalist Cormac Cullinan describes how this mental isolation has evolved:

For centuries now we humans have been enthusiastically engaged in constructing a delusory 'human world' that is separate from the real universe. We have rejected the biosphere into which we were born and have erected in our minds a vast hermetically sealed 'humans only' world. We have lived so long within this contrived

‘homosphere’ breathing its myths of human supremacy, that it is now more real to us than Earth.

(Cullinan: 2002: 35)

Insofar as farming is concerned, for most of us, animals are raised on our behalf at some other place and their lives are taken away in large anonymous buildings discretely hidden far from the residential areas of towns and cities. The animal body parts come wrapped in plastic packages as amorphous red matter, already hung for days and unrecognizable for what they are, or perhaps macerated into coloured, flavoured and preserved concoctions such as polony, sausages or corned beef. Mother’s milk, extracted from somebody else’s mother, is simply always there for our consumption, easily obtained with just a trip to the local supermarket.

A simple example of how isolated we have become is given by Schliefer who maintains that a large proportion of intelligent, educated adults do not associate cow’s milk with the animal’s pregnancy or realize that the unwanted calves are the “raw material of the veal industry” (Schliefer, 1985: 69).

This estrangement from our environment and our dislocation from other beings is seen by Dickens as a form of egotistical self centredness:

A modern identity of this kind is an extension into adulthood of more understandable childlike disregard for the needs of other living beings. This kind of subjectivity envisages the physical environment, animals, and other human beings as mere means of serving our own, *human*, well-being and identity. Such a modern narcissistic self leaves animals, and their need for a separately recognized kind of identity, with little chance of an independent existence. At best, they are limited to zoos and wildlife parks, tethered and displayed for humanity’s paid-for yet detached enjoyment.

(Dickens, 2003:72 emphasis in the original)

This attitude of detachment and self-centredness is vital to capitalism’s continued growth and Dickens further points out how animals have been subsumed into the capitalist process, becoming nothing more than commodities:

Commodification, capitalism's restless search for value and the incorporation of nature of all kinds into capitalist labor processes, is at the heart of the capitalist enterprise. Animals as well as human beings seen from this perspective are not only, or simply, a "working class" on whose labor the whole of human society is predicated. Their biologically inherited powers of growth and reproduction are now increasingly subsumed within, and indeed modified by, capitalist social relations. They are being increasingly modified in capital's own image. Their bodies and powers of development are being made an increasingly integral part of the production process in the *food*-production process.

(Dickens, 2003: 70 emphasis in the original)

Another perspective places the emphasis for this isolation on a history of dualistic thinking. Plumwood (1995) notes that western thought has provided sets of dualisms including mind - body, reason - nature and masculine - feminine. Human beings are placed in opposition to nature and supposedly special human qualities grant humans their separateness from the natural world. She points to Rodman's description of this as the "Differential Imperative":

What is taken to be authentically and characteristically human, defining of the human, as well as the ideal for which humans should strive, is *not* to be found in what is shared with the natural and animal (e.g. the body, sexuality, reproduction, emotionality, the senses, agency) but in what is thought to separate and distinguish them- especially reason and its offshoots. Hence humanity is not defined as part of nature (perhaps a special part) but as separate from and in opposition to it.

(Plumwood, 1995: 156 emphasis in the original)

This extract hints at a fear or disgust at what is described as our animal nature, something looked on as base, to be transcended by some notional higher faculties. Suchet describes how this is a recurring theme:

Despite a variety of (often contradictory) ways Eurocentric discourses have represented relationships between culture and nature, a hierarchical opposition between human and animal can always be traced to notions of reason, rationality, intent and purpose.

(Suchet, 2002:143)

We disguise our animal nature when we wear clothes and our bodily functions, particularly those related to sex and reproduction, are taboo and or medicalised. Humans are not even supposed to smell like humans using deodorants and perfumes for disguise yet we still hark back to nature as women smell of flowers and fruit and both men and women use musk, a scent derived from a gland of the musk deer (“musk”, 2007). This is a widespread mental dichotomy which I will return to later in this chapter, in the section on women and animals.

The idea of our separateness from everything else is surprisingly tenacious given that we live in a technological world where science is generally held in high esteem and where science has shown that humans share many millions of years of evolution in common with all other forms of life. Evolutionary theory describes how all living things are descended from the same original early ancestor or very early community, which lived in the ancient seas of 3000 million to 4000 million years ago and so all humans are related to all other living beings (Evolutionary history of life, 2007; Evolution 2007; Last universal ancestor, 2007).

It might be claimed that, unlike many societies in the past, most people do not have a sense of where we come from and where we belong; no sense of continuity and of being at home in their world. Science, however, presents us with the most dramatic and remarkable genesis story - the story of the evolution of the universe itself.

Swimm and Berry (2004) are two authors who eloquently tell this tale of humans and the evolution of the universe, tracing a timeline from the big bang of around 14 billion years ago up to today. It begins with the incredibly energetic singularity described as the “Big Bang”, coming into being from outside time and space. Next there is the

formation of elementary particles, the first stars, giant galaxies and eventually the formation of new stars. Around some of those stars form planets. As one particular planet, the earth, cools, the evolution of the universe continues to express itself in mountain formation, tectonic movement, storms, erosion and continuous chemical change. Then, around four thousand million years ago, this continual evolution takes on yet another form, that of the appearance of the first living things in the waters of those ancient seas. From this seed, life evolves into its myriad different forms, punctuated along the path by massive extinctions which are followed by bursts of growth and diversity – all of this giving rise to the world we are part of today. Everything, trees, mountains, rivers, stars, bacteria and supernovae are different expressions of our evolving universe existing in our present time.

Referring to our home galaxy, from whose matter we have come into being, Swimm and Berry provide a deep insight into this profound and magnificent vision:

The truth of the Milky Way galaxy cannot be realized by restricting our attention to its early components, hydrogen and helium. That will tell us tremendously important things about the Milky Way but unless we reflect on the fact that the Milky Way in its later modes of being is capable of thinking and feeling and creating, we are failing to confront the galaxy as it is.

And later...

After such long centuries of inquiry, we find that the universe developed over fifteen billion years, and that the eye that searches the Milky Way galaxy is itself an eye shaped by the Milky Way. The mind that searches for contact with the Milky Way is the very mind of the Milky Way galaxy in search of its inner depths.

(Swimme & Berry, 2004: 38, 45)

Yet despite the weight of evidence to the contrary, we seem unable to relinquish our belief that we stand apart in glorious isolation from nature and from the universe of which we are one expression. We resolutely play the part of alien observers in our only home.

### 4.3.2. Animals and women

There are many similarities between the way women and animals have been viewed in the past and are still viewed today. Women, like animals, are often seen as possessions, the ownership sometimes being a subtle, almost unconscious notion and, at other times, wholly overt. One such an overt example occurred in a recent court case in Cameroon concerning a woman who wished to inherit her deceased husband's property. The presiding judge first made the statement that "Women are property" and followed this with the question, "How can property own property?" (Abdela cited by McKee, 2003: 44).

When a woman is said to be "making herself cheap", perhaps by having a number of partners, it must imply that to begin with she did have a price and can be purchased.

Kaloff notes that a consistent research finding is that women are more concerned about animals than are men:

While substantial differences in attitudes toward animals have been found by age, region, race and education (Kellert, 1980), one of the most consistent findings in the literature is the tendency for women to be more concerned than men about animals.

(Kaloff, 2000: 4)

She also argues that recent research suggests gender differences in attitudes, beliefs and perceptions may be shaped by social structure, and that this may provide an explanation for the greater support for animal rights by women, as women are themselves an oppressed group: "[t]hus, the experience of oppression may produce empathy for other oppressed groups and egalitarian worldviews" (Kaloff, 2000: 5).

Mason describes our hierarchical thinking with regard to women and animals and that the domestication of animals may have gone hand in hand with the loss of status of women and their subsequent suppression:

On the dominionist ladder or hierarchy of being, women of one's own group are a step down. They have been regarded as "near the animal state" according to Sir Keith Thomas in his survey of European attitudes in *Man and the Natural World*. Other writers

have explained how the subjugation of women under patriarchy began with animal-domesticating, animal-herding tribes of the ancient Middle East. These first male supremacists rewrote creation stories and other myths, destroyed goddess cults, introduced misogyny into poetry and myths and ultimately reduced the status of women.

(Mason, 2006:181)

Nature has been given a female persona in which she is both peaceful, nurturing and fertile and also wild, chaotic and dangerous, the equivalent of “the virgin and the witch”, and Merchant notes that “disorderly women, like chaotic nature, needed to be controlled” (Merchant, 1980: 127). She describes how Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) reduces the image of female Nature to a resource to be exploited for production:

Sensitive to the same social transformations that had already begun to reduce women to psychic and reproductive resources, Bacon developed the power of language as a political instrument in reducing female nature to a resource for economic production. Female imagery became a tool in adapting scientific knowledge and method to a new form of human power over nature.

(Merchant, 1980:165)

In this paradigm, female Nature must be “bound into service”, enslaved, “put in constraints”, “molded”, and much of Bacon’s imagery for describing his scientific methods and objectives is also derived from the courtroom and “...treats nature as a female to be tortured through mechanical inventions...” (Merchant, 1980: 168, 169).

Adams has argued that violence against women and animals is made possible by the cultural symbols encouraging the dominance of humans and that the essential removal of a living feeling being is brought about by objectification, fragmentation and consumption (Adams cited in Schnurer, 2004: 108, 109). Thus animals are treated as objects, dismembered and eventually consumed and, in a similar way, women are objectified by men and fragmented by way of a sexual fixation of some body parts and consumed in non-consensual sex.

Images using animals and animal flesh are common in relation to sex. For example, meat is used generally to describe the sexual organs of both men and women with

phrases such as “meat and two veg” being used to describe the male genitals and the “mutton dagger”, the “pork sword” and the “pork dagger” used to describe the penis. In a similar vein, “pussy” is used to describe the female genitals with this term also describing women in a general sense to denote their status as sexual objects and “polony” being used to describe a girl or young woman (Duckworth, 1996a; Duckworth, 1996b). The terms “meat injection” and “porking” are used to describe the act of sexual intercourse, “milkers” and “puppies” are used for women’s breasts and the phrase “mutton dressed as lamb” used to denote a woman dressing in fashions usually worn by women younger than her age (*ibid*). In vernacular usage, “pulling a pig” denotes the seduction of an ugly person and is sometimes played as a cruel game (Duckworth, 1996b). This is not an exhaustive list by any means, more of a cursory glance at a few examples.

Fiddes points out that there are strong links between the language system of meat and that used to describe women in normal discourse and in pornography (Fiddes, 1991: 148-151). Women are referred to as “cats”, “chicks”, “dogs”, “cows” and as a “filly”, “minx”, “sex kitten”, “bunny girl” and many other animal forms. Men “hunt” them and they may be “ridden”, “bridled” or “married to a groom” (*ibid*). They can also be “tasty”, “juicy” and “succulent” and a young woman who has recently reached the age of sexual consent may be described as “fresh meat” (*ibid*). This is the language of masculine power and Fiddes observes that, Nature and women have been characterized as twin threats to this supreme masculine power (Fiddes, 1991:154).

### **4.3.3. Animals and slavery**

Spiegel has extensively documented the similarities between human slavery and the way humans treat animals (Spiegel, 1996). It might be argued that slavery only describes the ownership of one person by another but Midgley points out that the Latin word *persona* never applied to slaves (Midgley, 1985: 54). In ancient Greece, slaves were classed as non-persons as Aristotle makes clear when he notes “[t]he slave is a living tool and the tool is a lifeless slave” (Aristotle, cited in Wise, 2001: 12). Similarly, during the time of slavery in pre-civil war America, slaves were not recognised as legal persons (Regan, 1988: 348). They were regarded as property as animals are legally regarded as property today.

Each of us is born into a world where animal slavery already exists and has existed for many thousands of years, so is hardly surprising that we accept the way we treat animals as being something normal and natural. However the similarities between our oppression of people in slavery and our oppression of animals are truly striking and cannot be ignored.

As outlined in Chapter Three, farm animals are absolutely owned by somebody, are held captive and coerced, have no agency except that allowed by their owners and no rights. They are mutilated in various ways, their young are taken from them, their families are broken up, they are bought and sold, and their flesh is consumed. Does this mean they can be described as slaves? What are the characteristics of slavery? Before going any further it must be said that over the years, slavery has involved a core of enslavement practices with a range of variations rather than a single monolithic practice.

The defining characteristic of slavery is the ownership of one being by another. It is first and foremost a relationship of absolute power and as such open to the most corrosive abuse. Lovejoy maintains that slavery in general is a specific form of exploitation and his description captures the powerlessness of slaves:

First, slaves were property. As individuals they were owned, and while they were also recognized as human beings, their fundamental characteristic was that they were commodities. Slaves were outsiders by origin, who lacked kinship ties and who had been denied their heritage through judicial or other sanctions. The relationship between slave and master was ultimately based on coercion, realized initially through the original, often violent, act of enslavement and maintained thereafter through the threat and occasional institution of physical force. Slaves were completely at the disposal of their masters: The[sic] labor power of slaves could be used however desired; even their sexuality and, by extension their reproductive capacities were not theirs by right.

(Lovejoy, 1981: 11)

Concerning slavery and the Mangbetu people of north eastern Zaire, Hutereau writes;

Slaves... are the absolute property of the master. He beats them, sells them, trades them, mutilates them, executes them ... Slaves have no right to legal protection.

(Hutereau cited in Keim, 1997: 148)

The ownership of the slave does not only extend to the individual who has been enslaved but to their unborn children as well. As Meillassoux observes of female slaves who have born children:

As a rule their children belonged to her master even when he was not the genitor. The male slave with whom she had these children was not

the “father” and had, as a result, little or no interest in them.

(Meillassoux, 1997: 53)

In the case of the Songhat-Zarma people of Mali and Niger, drawing a parallel with animals, de Sardan writes:

The child of two slaves belonged to the master of the woman, just as the increase of a herd belonged to the owner of the cow.

(Olivier de Sardan, 1997: 139)

Although in some locations, female slaves had few children, and those they did have often did not survive long, in North America around 1750 and onwards the leveling out of the gender ratio and the emergence of stable slave families gave rise to further exploitation of these women:

Thus slave reproduction became another form of exploitation for slave women, for they were not only expected to work and contribute to the well-being of family and community, but their owners came to expect them to produce future children to add to their stock of slaves.

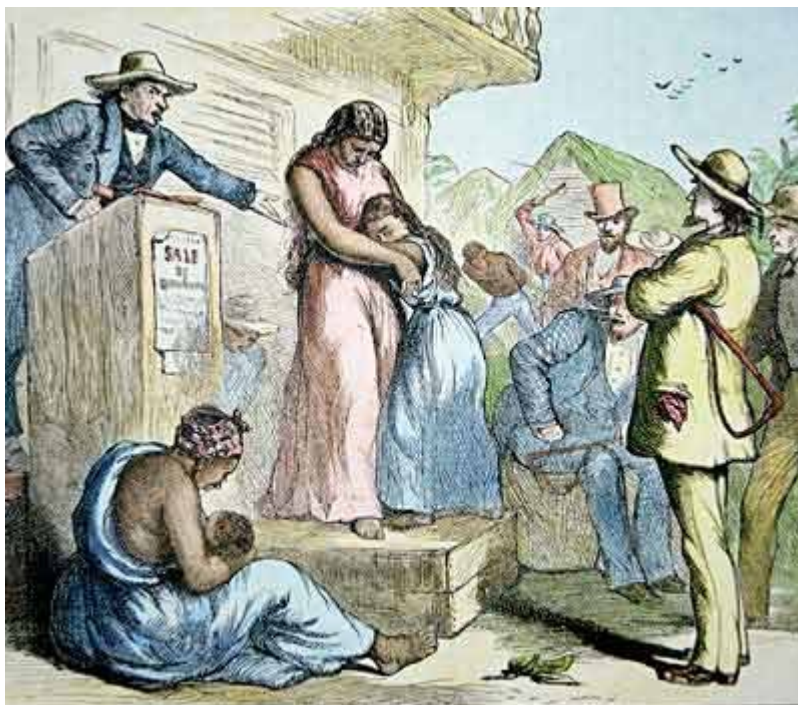
(Walvin, 1996: 101)

Writing of slavery in Nigeria, Northrup (1981) notes that, although it was originally based on a system where slaves would become similar to kin, the commercial changes

of the 18<sup>th</sup> century altered its conception. Slaves were perceived as a form of capital, perhaps being sold many times by traders and, although he maintains children were not usually sold, it was not the case in all societies especially amongst the north eastern Igbo. Once again a parallel with animals is drawn:

... any child born to a slave woman was a slave from birth, and could be sold or given away by its master as soon as it was old enough to leave its mother. Thus a female slave was regarded as a profitable investment, in the same way as a cow or a ewe is regarded at the present time.

(Allen cited in Northrup, 1981: 110)



**Figure 18: Engraving from 1850 showing a mother and daughter being separated from each other at a slave auction (Hochschild, 2007)**

The equating of slaves with capital is particularly telling, the term capital being closely related etymologically to the term cattle as already noted in Chapter Three.

Human slave families could easily be broken up at the will of their owner:

A marital union of between two slaves does not prevent the master from removing one of the two partners to conclude an exchange or endow a relative or client with a wife.

(Retel-Laurentin cited in Meillassoux, 1997: 53)

Describing the removal of young slaves Walvin writes:

It was at this point, when the young slaves had begun to work and had an economic value and potential of their own, that many of them were removed from their family home and placed in what their master thought was more appropriate labour.

(Walvin, 1992: 206)

The total denial of family ties was a convenient “truth” for those involved in the colonial slave trade as it is today for supporters of animal exploitation:

... Europeans saw little reason to imagine that the slaves had left behind anything worthwhile in Africa. Though the more observant of the slave-traders (especially those who subsequently repented of their ways) acknowledged the grief displayed by the slaves, few thought that they had come from societies where family ties, with their resulting emotions and affections, played any significant role.

(Walvin, 1993: 198)

Yet another telling parallel, this time in the coercion of slaves and animals, is made by William Beckford who, writing in 1790, observes that the whip was an:

... instrument of correction in Jamaica, whether it be in the hands of the cart-man, the mule-boy or the negro-driver, [and] is heard in either case, to resound among the hills and upon the plains...

(Beckford cited in Walvin, 1996: 55)

Animals are often said to be broken or tamed by their trainers and in antebellum United States “troublesome” slaves could be sent to “nigger breakers” to be tamed and to make them compliant (Spiegel, 1996: 38). A compliant animal, like a compliant slave, is a much-prized commodity.

Animals to be used on farms are examined and bought at auctions and sold from one farmer to another. It was no different in human slavery and slave traders would inspect slaves, and physically examine them before purchase or possibly the task might require the guiding hand of science and the ship’s surgeon would do the job. The surgeons work began:

... on the African coast when, alongside experienced traders, they carefully examined the new slaves (intimately and often publicly) before deciding if the slave would make a commercial investment.

(Walvin, 1993: 54)

Cattle and sheep are today transported by crowding them into the holds of ships, just as slaves were once and, not surprisingly, death is a common occurrence in that hot, fetid environment. Nibet draws this comparison about the trade in animals during the great expansion of ranching in America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

Hundreds of thousands of cows and other animals were forced into "cattle cars" and transported to the slaughterhouses of St Louis and Chicago. Millions of live cows also were shipped to Britain in a passage much like the journeys of the notorious slave ships transporting humans from Africa. Traders packed the animals so tightly they could not lie down to sleep. To keep them on their feet, they were beaten by low-paid crew members whose families were made destitute when overloaded "cattle ships" were lost to storms.

(Nibet, 2007)

Many slaves, weak and emaciated from the journey, were fattened up in a slave yard before being offered for sale (Spiegel, 1996: 56).

Even the use of the flesh of slaves as food in what appears to have been an expression of the total power of the slave owner is documented. Keim notes that, if reports are true, slaves might have sometimes been eaten, and this probably took the form of displays of wealth rather than acts of ritual - what might be described as acts of "conspicuous consumption" (Keim, 1997: 145-152). Northrup records that, on the death of important men, slaves might be killed at their funerals (Northrup, 1981: 111). The slaughtering of animals at funerals is still common in some societies today although, in some cases, this might have religious justifications.

As can be seen from the above, the practice of animal slavery parallels human slavery in almost every single aspect, the major difference being the species of the victims. Wise maintains that the present human use of, and dependence on, animals is far

greater than the dependence of nineteenth century commerce on the slave trade. The products of their dead bodies are everywhere:

For example, the blood of a slaughtered cow is used to manufacture plywood adhesives, fertilizer, fire extinguisher foam, and dyes. Her fat helps make plastic, tires, crayons, cosmetics, lubricants, soap, detergents, cough syrup, contraceptive jellies and creams, ink, shaving cream, fabric softeners, synthetic rubber, jet engine lubricants, textiles, corrosion inhibitors and metal- machine lubricants. Her collagen is found in pie crusts, yogurts, matches, bank notes, paper, cardboard glue; her intestines are used for strings for musical instruments and racquets; her bones in charcoal ash for refining sugar, in ceramics, and in cleaning and polishing.

(Wise, 2002: 10-11)

#### **4.3.4. Animals and language**

The power of language to construct reality makes it a highly contested domain and one in which the subtle workings of power are always present especially in areas of social life which are the sites of conflicting views. An example of this would be people's sexual orientation where even the actual meaning of words is a focus of struggle. For example, the union of two gay<sup>6</sup> people may be described as a marriage by some, while others maintain that this is a totally incorrect description since the term can only be applied to a heterosexual union. The very meaning of the word marriage is therefore called into question and is open for examination and modification and the eventual, generally accepted definition, if there is one, will be a reflection of the dominant world view in society at that time, which in turn will be a reflection of power differentials.

For animals there can be no direct resistance through language to the descriptions and constructions which are applied to them by humans and which generally reflect overwhelming domination as well as denigration. This is not an insignificant matter. How we refer to animals, and so how we think about animals, informs the way we behave towards them and, as Lawrence observes, "... social constructs determine the fate of animals" (Lawrence, 1994: 183).

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<sup>6</sup> If gay does stand for "good as you" as it is often claimed, this clearly represents power differences which one group – the gay community, is trying to address.

A significant example of this power of construction is that it is common practice to use the two categories of humans *or* animals, as I have been doing up to this point. Yet this implies that these are two fundamentally different types of thing and this is not true. Humans simply *are* animals, and there is no raging scientific controversy about the validity of this categorization. In fact even our very classification as the lone representatives of the genus *Homo*, is in serious doubt as, from a cladist perspective, relying on genealogy, many taxonomists place humans in the same genus as some African apes (Wise, 2001: 137-140). In 1871, Charles Darwin wrote, "...if man had not been his own classifier he would never have thought of founding a separate order for his reception" (Darwin in Preece, 2005: 308). Even Linnaeus, the father of taxonomy, could not convincingly explain why he had placed humans in their own genus and made this appeal in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of his *Systema Naturae*, "I demand of you and of the whole world that you show me a generic characteristic... by which to distinguish between man and ape. I myself assuredly know of none. I wish somebody would indicate one to me" (Linnaeus cited in Wise, 2001: 137). His taxonomic decision had more to do with politics than science and he wrote to Johann Gmelin, the German botanist in 1747, "But, if I had called man an ape, or visa versa, I would have fallen under the ban of the ecclesiastics. It may be as a naturalist I ought to have done so" (Linnaeus in Preece, 2005: 308).

Today humans are recognised as one of the "great apes" but the terms "animal" and "ape" are still used as a form of insult, even though, in scientific terms, we are all both animal and ape. So given that, all things being equal, it is better to make a true statement than one which is untrue or misleading, it is better to speak of human animals and nonhuman animals rather than humans and animals. Even this description leaves something to be desired suggesting the existence of some form of natural dichotomy dividing the animal world into two parts.

Language can be an invisible cage and Dunayer, who has written extensively on the use of speciesist language, observes that:

Bigotry requires self deception. Speciesism can't survive without lies. Standard English usage supplies these in abundance.

Linguistically the lies take many forms, from euphemism to false definition. We lie with our choice of words. We lie with our syntax. We even lie with our punctuation.

(Dunayer, 2001: 1)

She notes that hunters “conserve” animals, wildlife is not killed but “managed” and animals are “harvested”. In turn, researchers “sacrifice” animals and “stress” them in various ways (Dunayer, 2001).

It is common in English, when describing animals, to use the pronoun *it* rather than *he* or *she* and Gupta has shown, using text available on the internet, that *who* is more likely to refer to human, primate or companion animals, while *which* tends to follow inanimate objects and animals who are used for food (Gupta, 2006: 113). Such deeply embedded language practice is a powerful reinforcer of current attitudes but also a possible key to change:

Our pronoun choices reflect and influence our attitudes towards others. Standard English pronoun use perpetuates disregard of non-human beings by characterizing them as genderless, insentient things. Politically loaded, English pronouns have special power to promote or undermine speciesism.

(Dunayer, 2001: 150)

As mentioned earlier, the word “animal” is itself used as a term of abuse, as in “behaved like an animal”, “you are a filthy animal” or, simply, “he is an animal”. Many derogatory terms in the English language use animal imagery. Stibbe notes that pigs in particular seem to be a focus, in contemporary English, for the use of negative descriptions, with phrases such as “rotten pig”, “self righteous pig”, “drunken swine”, “greedy pig”, “ignorant pig”, “behaving like a pig” and “murderous pig” in common usage (Stibbe, 2003). He found that within the British National Corpus of 100 million words taken from such sources as books, newspapers, everyday speech and TV programmes, there are 62 non literal uses of words for pig, revealing, “...the overwhelmingly negative attitude toward pigs expressed in everyday British English” (Stibbe, 2003). He draws on work by Leach suggesting that, because pigs lived in very close contact with some people in Victorian Britain and as the pigs were

eventually going to be killed, a sense of shame became attached to the deed – shame which was effectively transferred on to the pig herself (Stibbe, 2003).

Similar animal terms come to mind easily, such as describing a person as “a carthorse”, “a dirty rat”, “a bitch”, “a donkey”, “an elephant” or “an old cow” – all with their derogatory meanings. Some phrases carry the impression of our violence practices towards nonhumans, such as, “screaming like a stuck pig”, “jumped like a scalded cat”, “flogging a dead horse”, “breaking the back of a job”, “hunting someone down”, “more than one way to skin a cat” and “a complete shambles”<sup>7</sup>. When one human violently attacks another, it is often perversely and inaccurately described as being a “brutal” attack<sup>8</sup>.

Language relating to animals is also used as a means to distance, obscure or normalize some activities. The flesh of dead animals is seldom if ever described as such. The body is not a corpse and the various body parts are given special names when being sold such as “silverside”, “steak”, “tripe”, “sweetmeats” and “T bones” and rather than refer to the flesh of the animal herself we use terms such as “bacon”, “beef”, “pork”, “mutton” and “chevron”.

Preece maintains that the linguistic schism between the English names of animals and the name of their flesh when used for food, at least in so far as cows, sheep and pigs are concerned, owes more to a reflection of the power differences between people in the Middle Ages than attempts at linguistic concealment (Preece, 2005:13-16). At that time, the Normans ruled England and the Anglo Saxons were under their authority. It was the Anglo Saxons who did the work of tending the animals and, naturally, called them by Anglo Saxon names such as “swine” or “cow”. When the animals were killed and taken to the table of the Norman lords, however, their flesh was given Norman names and from these are derived the English terms for particular meats such as beef and pork (*ibid*). Whatever the historical derivation of these terms there is a sensitivity today to referring to animals used for flesh by their (living) names and to describing their body parts using the correct anatomical labels, although this

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<sup>7</sup> The place where animals were slaughtered and meat was sold (“shambles” 1989).

<sup>8</sup> It may be more accurate if derived from the original Latin, “brutus” meaning dull or cruel (Preece 2005: 1).

sensitivity may be lower when it is non-mammals who are being consumed (Dunayer, 2001:138-140).

Local examples of the slippery use of language concerning animals are easily found in most places. Below is a photograph of a well known South African fast food franchise serving a range of food, particularly burgers.



**Figure 19: Local fast food outlet, Grahamstown.**

The name “Steers” is totally acceptable for most people and simply heralds a commercial outlet for fast food. It is unlikely to conjure up pictures of mutilated nonhumans even though it sells their ground up flesh and the name is unlikely to be changed to “Orchidectomised Bulls” even as a step towards greater consumer awareness and retailer transparency.

Another food franchise, this time one specialising in slabs of animal flesh cooked over an open fire, a so called “steak ranch”, uses “steak” instead of flesh in its brand name. Not only that, but in its advertising on radio and television, and with outstanding

although unintended irony, lauds its patrons, who masticate on the flesh of the dead, as being, “people with a taste for life”.



**Figure 20: “Steak ranch”, Grahamstown.**

Another local photograph shows a “Biltong” stall selling various forms of dried flesh taken from “wild animals”. The skins of the animals are on display as well as the head of one animal and the rears of three others. In this case, although there is once again a special lexicon for the flesh of the dead animals, there is no attempt to hide the origins of what is to be consumed. However, the display of the severed head and buttocks is a text in itself, suggesting both the power of the animal which is to be eaten and by implication the greater power of the consumer. There is also an attempt to demean and desentientise the animals by way of displaying and emphasizing their anuses and sexual organs as objects of ridicule.



**Figure 21: Biltong stall during the Grahamstown Arts Festival Grahamstown 2006.**

If there is one single word which conveys a whole world about the domination and oppression of nonhuman animals by human animals, about the way we divide the world in two between humans and every other living being on the planet, it is the word murder. Murder in its early form applied particularly to the crime of killing in secret<sup>9</sup>, open homicide being a private matter requiring compensation or revenge. Today it is defined as the crime of unlawfully killing a person, especially with malice aforethought (“murder” 2003). However the killing of a nonhuman is not usually described as murder and there are two reasons for this.

The first is that no law exists which specifically defines the killing of any nonhuman animal as murder. The second is that the above definition for murder cannot be applied as nonhumans are legally, at the present time, not recognised as persons. Nonhumans are regarded only as property and taking away their lives is perfectly legal and what a person does with their own property is regarded as their own concern. Indeed, carrying out experiments on nonhumans while they are still alive is also perfectly legal, provided the right bureaucratic channels are followed. Even if a

<sup>9</sup> All farmed nonhumans are killed in secret. If this was not the case the situation might be very different overall and we might be willing to ascribe the term murder to their killing.

person is not legally allowed to kill his “own” nonhuman such as a dog or cat himself, he can pay somebody else, a professional, to do it for him. This is unlikely, however, to attract the label of contract killing although there is a contract and the result is a killing.

But murder is much more than just a bare legal definition, it encapsulates a deep abhorrence for the deliberate and calculated act of taking of the life of another, of the destruction of that which is unique and irreplaceable and of the hurt and harm caused to others who still live on. I want to examine further the question of what constitutes murder because it is a question of fundamental importance to the lives of billions of nonhuman individuals.

It might be thought that the crime of murder is something clear and well defined leaving little, if any, ambiguity. Even if special degrees of murder are recognized in law, the deliberate taking of a life is against the law, it is murder plain and simple<sup>10</sup>. However, in reality, the descriptions used for the act of deliberately killing people can be far more flexible than that. Writing about murder in society, Morrall points out that killing is constructed in different ways to serve different interests.

The killing of people by people is narrated (through, for example, government decisions with regard to warfare and criminal justice processes) as ‘heroism’ (the soldier) or ‘infamy’ (the criminal). Murder, therefore, is a social construct in that the very same act or even worse (in the sense of numbers, the vulnerability of victims, and degrees of brutality) can be constructed as legally justifiable and morally necessary if it is deemed so by powerful forces.

(Morrall, 2006: 15)

These elastic properties becomes even more apparent when political expediency dictates that previously heinous crimes must be seen in a different light:

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<sup>10</sup> In some countries the act of assisted suicide may be legal or become legal in the future.

‘Atrocious’ acts are reconfigured as ‘contextually understandable’ when necessary to achieve aims other than those of the legal justice system. The narrative adopted changes from one proclaiming ‘justice’ and ‘retribution’ to one espousing ‘peace’ and ‘resolution’.

(Morrall, 2006: 16)

To highlight this flexibility even more I propose the following not unreasonable scenario. Imagine a situation where a man who is a member of an elite anti terrorist unit arrives home from work to find his wife in bed with another man. Naturally he is shocked but he is totally stunned when he realises that the man in his bed is a wanted terrorist whose name is on a government shoot-to-kill list. The husband draws his weapon and shoots his wife’s lover dead, at the same time, and in the same act, shooting dead a most wanted terrorist. Does he commit murder or is he a hero saving his country from danger? Exactly the same act, with the same agents involved, can be constructed in two totally different ways. His wife may construct it as the heartless murder of her lover, his employers as an heroic act of bravery and a court of law as anything in between these two extremes.

So murder, even in human society, is not a fixed description of the killing of one person by another, it changes with circumstances and has changed through time. Even genocide was not considered a crime until relatively recently (Smith, 1999: 9, 10). The existence of a law does not make an action ethically right or wrong but simply legal or illegal at that point in history and in a specific geographical place. Things could easily be different as another hypothetical case shows.

If a regime held power in a country to such a degree that they were able to pass a law which decreed that certain individuals, perhaps members of a particular ethnic or religious group, could be rightfully and legally killed by other members of the society, including the army and police, then would their deaths be counted as murder or not? Within this hypothetical state and using its own legal framework the answer is clearly no – the definition of murder in that country would pertain only to *some* persons in society, as described in the law but not others<sup>11</sup>. This means that killing those individuals would be an acceptable and perhaps even a laudable act for citizens of the

<sup>11</sup> Alternatively they could decree that these individuals are no longer recognised as legal persons and thus fall outside the ambit of the definition of murder.

country to carry out. Certainly it would carry no legal sanction within that country. However, their killing would, no doubt, be regarded in other countries, and in such bodies as the United Nations, as murder plain and simple. The legal definition of murder is clearly historically and geographically contingent.

Given the above, it is clear that the definition of murder is flexible and, to some degree at least, reflects what those with power wish it to reflect. The withholding of the term murder for the unprovoked and premeditated killing of innocent nonhuman animals by human animals is simply and essentially an exercise of power and naked bias by a physically dominant group wishing to continue their exploitation. It is not therefore unreasonable, although it might be unpopular in some circles, to propose that the premeditated killing of a nonhuman can and should be described as murder.

An objection might be made here on a second point which is that even given the above, nonhumans cannot be counted as persons and it is only persons who qualify in the description of murder. However, once again things are by no means as clear as they might seem. Few people would disagree that animals are individuals. They can be clearly distinguished from each other, they act under their own volition and research findings show many of them to be self conscious and to have complex social lives (Wise, 2003; Farm Sanctuary, 2004). The word “persona”, according to Midgley, did not originally describe a human being at all but a mask and its meaning derives from drama (Midgley, 1985: 54). A person is somebody who is a player, an actor, an agent in the drama of life, a non person is not. Midgley explains:

Not all human beings need to be persons. The word *persona* does not apply to slaves, though it does apply to the state as a corporate person. Slaves have, so to speak, no speaking part in the drama; they do not figure in it; they are extras. There are some similar and entertaining examples about women.

(Midgley, 1985: 54)

She goes on to make clear that who is, and who is not, a person has much to do with our perspective:

The question is actually a very complex one, much more like, ‘Who is important?’ than ‘Who has got two legs?’ If we asked, ‘Who is important?’ we would know that we needed to ask further questions, beginning with ‘Important for what?’ Life does not contain just one purpose or drama but many interwoven ones. Different characters matter in different ways.

(Midgley, 1985: 55)

Indeed in the founding definition of murder in English law there is some hint of an understanding of a person as a reasonable being:

Taking the classical definition of murder used in English law, reference is made to the unlawful killing with malice aforethought of ‘any reasonable creature in *rerum natura*’ (i.e. a living human being).

(Morrall, 2006: 27)

So, if we recognize nonhumans as players in the drama of life, and we recognize slaves as people, even though that recognition was denied to them at that time, and we further recognize nonhumans as individuals, it is insular and discriminatory to withhold personhood from them, at least from those who are sentient.

If the taking of the life of a nonhuman can be murder a further question arises. Humans are not the only killers on earth. Some nonhumans kill other nonhumans and so, if nonhumans can be recognized as being victims of murder, can they also in turn be classed as murderers<sup>12</sup>? If a lion kills an impala, is she guilty of murder?

There are two points to consider here. The first is that the lion acts out of a motivation to save her own life. She has no alternative to killing if she and probably her cubs are to survive. Guilt or innocence can only be assigned if there are alternative and viable choices of action to choose from but for the lion there is no choice if she is to save her life and the lives of her cubs. She is not adrift on a hypothetical lifeboat awaiting a rescue which will bring food and allow her to survive without killing her prey. She is ill equipped physiologically to live from a vegetarian

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<sup>12</sup> There is a history of various animals including rats, bulls, dogs, cows, horses, asses and pigs being found guilty of “crimes” with many of the nonhumans being executed. Wise describes some of the cases (Wise, 2001: 35-40).

diet on the savannah and has no such skills of food gathering. If she is to preserve her life and the lives of her cubs, she must kill. Now if she has the right to protect her own life, which she surely does, and has no other viable choice, there can be no sanction attached to her actions.

Secondly, and from a different perspective, it can be argued, that in this case the lion and the impala are outside the frame of human society and are not subject to human laws and conventions. The killing of nonhuman animals by humans on the other hand is squarely within the construction which is human society and therefore needs to be judged by nondiscriminatory ethical and legal arguments active within that body.

Given the above arguments, the premeditated killing of nonhumans by humans can, quite reasonably and accurately, be described as murder. Even if the laws pertaining to animals at this moment in our history are discriminatory and unjust and refuse to recognize the killing of nonhuman persons as murder, the interpretation is still justified. This is not a new proposal by any means and down the years there have been voices which have portrayed human actions in a truer light than we do today and which have refused to accept the tyranny implicit in the language of domination. Leonardo da Vinci, 600 years ago, expressed his pity for animals saying, "From countless numbers will be taken away their little children and the throats of these shall be cut, and they shall be quartered most barbarously" (Leonardo da Vinci cited in Spencer, 1996: 192). He also wrote, concerning the oppression and slavery of nonhumans:

O asses which are beaten, O indifferent nature, wherefore art thou so partial, being to some of thy children a tender and benignant mother, and to others a most cruel and pitiless stepmother? I see thy children given into slavery to others without any sort of advantage, and instead of remuneration for the services they have done, they are repaid by the severest suffering, and they spend their whole life in benefiting their oppressor.

(Leonardo da Vinci cited in Spencer, 1996: 192)

In a vision of a possible, more compassionate time, he foresaw a monumental change in attitude towards nonhumans.

That the time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men.

(Leonardo da Vinci cited in Pickover, 2005: 168)

Taking into account what has been said up to this point, I will further examine, and simultaneously re-describe, the practice of nonhuman animal farming.

## **4.4. Animal Farming – a recontextualisation**

### **4.4.1. The new picture of animals**

To re-examine the phenomenon of animal farming requires stepping away from our present anthropocentric perspectives. Many societies, particularly the industrialized and rapidly industrializing ones, present a particular view of reality, one which claims as a right the exploitation and oppression of animals and the whole of the natural world, a view which conveniently coincides with powerful vested economic interests. From the arguments outlined earlier my reframing of the phenomenon of nonhuman animal<sup>13</sup> farming uses the following premises:

- No hierarchy exists which places humans above nonhumans or which sanctions the domination and oppression by humans of nonhumans;
- Nonhuman animals are subjects of a life and have inherent value in themselves no matter what their value might be to humans;
- Nonhuman animals are enslaved by human beings and have been for many thousands of years;
- Nonhuman animals can be validly regarded as persons and their premeditated killing as murder.

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<sup>13</sup> These premises could also be applied to similar, complex, multicellular animals who are not presently farmed

Using the frame of reference outlined the above, I will now re-describe nonhuman animal farming to lay the base for retrodution in the next chapter. This re-description, for reasons of ease of reading and brevity, as well as to maintain a clear focus, deals mainly with the farming of cattle. However it should be understood that I maintain it to be applicable to other farming as well which uses pigs, sheep, goats, turkeys or chickens.

#### **4.4.2. The exploiting ape emerges**

Foley *et al.* (1996) describe how hominid evolution probably began around seven million years ago and that, from five million years ago, there were a number of different forms of hominid, the australopithecines, present on the earth. These creatures show a considerable diversity. They have both human and ape characteristics, all appear to have been bipedal, their brain size was around that of an ape but there has been no evidence found of tool making activity in association with their remains (Foley *et al.*, 1996). This diversity was most likely brought about by climatic changes leading to the loss of forests. From around two million years ago, individuals of the genus *Homo* were alive. The earliest know being, *Homo habilis*, had a small body, a slightly changed face and many australopithecine characteristics but also an enlarged brain (Foley *et al.*, 1996).

Over the next almost 2 million years there was greater evolutionary change leading eventually to *Homo sapiens*, which probably arose from a small group of individuals in Africa. After that came the inexorable colonization of the globe:

It is most probably here [Africa] that *Homo sapiens* evolved in a small population, between 150,000 and 160,000 years ago. After 100,000 years ago, these modern humans dispersed from Africa throughout the world, for the first time colonizing Australia and the Americas. There is considerable controversy about the extent to which regional archaic hominid populations from other parts of the world have contributed to the subsequent evolution of modern humans, but it is most likely that multiple dispersals both from Africa and elsewhere over the last 50,000 years have created the pattern of human diversity we see today.

(Foley *et al.*, 1996).

How small that germinal group was, is worthy of reflection. Describing genetic studies carried out by Harpending and others, Aiello and Fagan write:

Arguing from the degree of mtDNA variation in people today, these authors suggest that the population giving rise to modern humans could not have been larger than 5,000-50,000 people (1,000-10,000 effective females).

(Aiello and Fagan, 1996)

What happened to other pre-modern humans is uncertain. They may have faced changes they could not cope with, been absorbed by the ancestors of modern humans or they might have been exterminated by our ancestors. Aiello and Fagan suggest that social organisation played an important part in what happened next:

The factors underlying the evolution of human language, underlying the rapid and virtually simultaneous appearance of the Upper Paleolithic and the Late Stone Age in Eurasia and Africa, and underlying the apparently associated rapid expansion of human populations may better be seen to include fundamental changes in the social organization of the hominids involving economic division of labor, food sharing, greater paternal investment in the offspring, as well as ritual behavior associated with these fundamental changes

(Aiello and Fagan, 1996)

It is estimated that it was around 11 000 years ago that the first enslavements of other animals began as human apes took away young ones after they had killed their parents or simply separated the babies from the rest of the group and drove the parents away (Patterson, 2002:6,11). This process of enslaving nonhuman animals was later given the name domestication.

As humans changed from a wandering existence and began to settle in particular geographical areas, more and more slaves were taken or bred, although some groups of humans took none at all and concentrated instead on the culture of plants, while others stayed with the old ways and continued to hunt nonhuman animals and find plant food where it grew wild.

But the human relationship with nonhumans had significantly changed, affecting both parties. The trajectory was set and nonhuman creatures had begun the transformation from mysterious beings into things:

The point about domestication is that it is not only the animals which become domesticated, but the people as well. The freedom that hunters have to move with the wild herds becomes restricted, in the sense that they now have to consider the needs of the animals. Once the animals are in close proximity to humans they need protection and need to be taken to where water and forage are available. Ultimately the animals become wealth that requires nurturing, and may also become central in inheritance, exchange, and ritual/ceremonial systems.

(Smith, 1996)

The slave owners now used nonhuman animals to provide flesh for eating and sometimes blood to drink. They also consumed the mother's milk of the nonhumans. To refine their slavery, the nonhumans began to introduce practices such as only allowing some male slaves, particularly large and docile ones, to reproduce whilst others had their testicles cut off or ripped out or otherwise damaged. The babies of the slaves were prevented from drinking their mother's milk by having thorns put into their noses or sticks in their mouths or by having the ends of their noses sliced off so that the slave owners could drink the milk (Patterson, 2002: 9). The years that followed showed a rapid increase in the population of the human ape, more complex social systems and greater control over the natural world.

By 400 years ago, the naked ape had spread all over the earth enslaving or killing many of the earth's non human inhabitants and devastating or taking over the areas where they once lived. In the years that have followed, the ape has gone on to develop many new technologies to add to its already impressive arsenal, giving it awesome powers, well beyond its meagre natural physical prowess. It can build massive structures, move faster than any other being, control many of its own biological systems and seek meaning in the universe. At the same time, it can also lay waste to vast areas of the earth, murder, enslave and destroy other beings at will.

#### **4.4.3. Money, technology, power and domination: retelling the story**

Today human apes keep billions of nonhumans in captivity. The slaves are kept incarcerated by the use of technology such as fences, buildings, crates, special trucks and cages and by violent coercion such as the use of electric prods. They are mutilated in various ways and the slaves will all die a violent death at the hands of human animals. Some will be murdered after only a few days of life, others after a few months or years of severe confinement and disablement and yet others after a short lifetime of continuous exploitation. The time of death for each individual is decided upon by the ape who is said to “own them” just as they own any other possessions such as motor cars or vacuum cleaners. The nonhuman animals are totally enslaved, they have no agency and there is no chance of escape or release. The only release, corporeal and spiritual, comes with their death. The overriding criterion for the timing of the ongoing mass murders of nonhumans is the monetary value of the nonhuman animal’s corpse to the slave owners or alternatively the calculation that it is no longer “economical” for the slave owners to keep the slave alive.

Nonhuman animals are incarcerated and murdered primarily as a source of food, in the form of flesh and this is a commodity which is highly prized by many of these naked apes, some of whom have a belief that it is essential for their wellbeing. There are many secondary uses made of the billions of corpses produced in the mass slaughter. These include using their fat to make soap or manufacture of ointments to smear on the ape’s bodies to increase their beauty or make them stay young. The skins of the dead are widely used for everything from footwear, to clothes, to the covers for seats, while their blood and bones are used to make fertilizer. All this ingenious industry increases the amount of money which can be made from each individual’s corpse.

Some female slaves are forcibly and repeatedly impregnated so that their babies can be taken away on a regular basis to be murdered and eaten by the human apes. The humans make the slaves pregnant mainly by electrically stimulating a male slave’s genitals to produce semen and then taking some of this semen and inserting it into the reproductive tract of a female. This cycle of insemination, conception, pregnancy, birth and loss continues over years for the captive mother and, when she is no longer

able to conceive with the ease demanded of her, she too is murdered and her flesh sold for profit. These slaves are essentially used as nothing more than flesh production machines.

These same nonhumans may also be used for milk production. The slave equivalent of human breast milk, after industrial processing, is packaged in containers and sold. It is drunk as it is, flavoured in various ways or made into such things as yoghurt, maas (soured milk), ice cream and cheese. The cheese traditionally requires the addition of the extract of a slave baby's stomach for it to become more solid – just as it would have done in the child's stomach. These products are consumed by both young and adult human apes. The human ape is the only mammal on earth which continues to drink milk throughout its life, although this is not the breast milk of any human female, which would be a totally unacceptable practice, it is the mother's milk of slaves. Although there have been times when humans have been financially coerced into supplying their own breast milk for feeding human babies, human breast milk has never been sold or consumed in large volumes on a regular basis by human adults. Many human females give this milk to their babies instead feeding the babies the milk from their own breasts.

In the milk industry, when her baby has been taken away, the slave mother calls for days but the baby is unable to reach her because she is confined or she is too far away to hear or she is already dead and her small body in pieces. Each day, twice a day, machines made by humans take the place of her dead baby's mouth and mechanically suck out the mother's milk. This happens day after day over the next nine months until the time comes for her to be forcibly made pregnant again and the cycle continues.

The slaves being used for milk or flesh or both, are scientifically monitored so that their mass gain and the amount of milk they produce, as well as the constituents of that milk, can be quantified. The diets of these slaves are carefully controlled and chemicals such as hormones or antibiotics given to increase growth and prevent disease. The goal of all this is to maximize the amount of money the human animals will eventually make from these farming activities.

Some slaves are used specifically for sexual reproduction. Those selected have the characteristics that the humans would like the nonhuman animals to have, such as high milk production or rapid weight gain. In a few cases the slaves might be allowed to reproduce normally but most often the semen of chosen males is collected by the human workers and female slaves are forcibly artificially inseminated or even have an already fertilized ovum implanted into their uterus.

The mutilation of slaves is a commonly accepted practice amongst humans. Using a red hot iron they burn the “owners” mark into their slave’s flesh to confirm which ape owns them. Males not used for reproduction have their testicles cut off or pulled out or the blood flow restricted so that they atrophy and disintegrate. Some babies may have their teeth broken off with pliers and others babies have their beaks severed with a red hot wire. The growing horns of the young slaves may be removed by burning or through the application of corrosive solutions.

While all the nonhuman animals are imprisoned in some way, there are a number of who are held in solitary confinement all of their lives, in a tiny cell so small they are unable to move and are deliberately fed a nutritionally deficient diet. They become sick and are killed after only a few months of existence. Humans enjoy eating their flesh and will pay high prices for this pleasure.

The slaves are separated from their families and are transported packed tightly together in trucks, trains or ships to the places where they will be killed. This journey may take a number of days during which they may or may not receive food and water and often have no shelter from the elements. The killing and dismemberment of the slaves is big business and is done on a large scale in specially designed anonymous killing factories where special designed execution and dismemberment machines are used.

The nonhuman animals have part of their brains smashed using a captive bolt, or are electrocuted and afterwards bled to death. Their corpses are eviscerated and their bodies cut into pieces using knives and saws. These body parts are packaged and may

be kept for some days to mature, that is, to start to decompose, before they are sold. This is a strategy, along with heating the flesh for long periods, used by the apes to make it easier for them to eat the flesh, their teeth not being adapted to the tearing and chewing of flesh in the raw state. This heating, along with the use of spices, makes the flesh more palatable than it would be in its raw form. Some parts of the slave's bodies such as ears, intestines and cheeks are not sold in their original form but processed into "convenience" foods and other delicacies, which bear no resemblance to the slave's body parts.

In conclusion, this re-contextualisation establishes nonhuman farmed animals as a group of beings who have been enslaved for many thousands of years by humans. Latterly this oppression has become far more systematic, widespread, institutionalized and vicious, with science and mechanization allowing billions more slaves to be confined, exploited, genetically manipulated, mutilated and murdered than at any other time in history. From a critical realist position, the question I advance bearing this description in mind is, what must the world be like for this phenomenon of nonhuman farming to exist and be sustained? In the next chapter I use transfactual argumentation to find some answers.

## Chapter 5

*Look, you can see for yourself. They are not like you and me. They do not behave like human beings. They are here to die.*

Rudolf Hoess, commandant of Auschwitz

*Auschwitz begins whenever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals.*

Theodor Adorno

*We continue to ask, why? Why and how is it possible for such deeds to occur? How can the unimaginable become so readily imagined? These are the same questions that have been asked by generations before ours.*

Philip G. Zimbardo

### **5.1. Retroduction – asking what the world must be like.**

Retroduction uses transcendental arguments to move towards a conceptualization of transfactual conditions (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 96). Using this form of inference, I pose the question “What is it in the world, what conditions are there that allow, promote, sanction, excuse and perpetuate the large scale, institutionalized oppression of nonhuman animals in animal farming?”

In order to attempt to answer this question, I use transfactual argumentation but also seek signposts along the way by examining a similar phenomenon, that of genocide. Genocide is a phenomenon which is both extreme and pathological in nature and, because of this, it might be possible to discern more clearly the powers and structures necessary for its existence. Retroduction is to some degree a creative and interpretive process but can yield valuable insights and from these comes the possibility of producing a model, parts of which might be tested.

As stated earlier, there is nothing in human society today or in human history which can be compared to the enslavement, oppression and mass slaughter of nonhuman

animals by human animals, neither in scale, universality, overall suffering or duration. Human genocide is one phenomenon however, which does show similarities. Patterson for example has made extensive comparisons of what humans do to nonhuman animals with what happened to people under Nazi rule (Patterson, 2002).

I will briefly survey examples of genocide, with particular emphasis on the Holocaust, which in many ways was an amalgamation of both genocide and slavery. This is in order to establish what the essential causative and sustaining features of genocide are and, at the same time, to search for resonance with the phenomenon of nonhuman animal farming.

In Bauman's examination of the Holocaust he expresses a similar belief that its examination is able to give insight into otherwise hitherto unnoticed or obscured aspects of society:

I propose that the experience of the Holocaust, now thoroughly researched by the historians should be looked upon as, so to speak, a sociological 'laboratory'. The holocaust has exposed and examined such attributes of our society as are not revealed, and hence not empirically accessible, in 'non-laboratory' conditions. In other words, *I propose to treat the Holocaust as a rare, yet significant and reliable, test of the hidden possibilities of modern society.*

(Bauman, 1989: 12 emphasis in the original)

## **5.2. Genocide**

The outstanding deed which characterizes genocide is mass murder committed against a particular group. There are different opinions of what should be included in the definition of genocide but the United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948 describes genocide as an intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group by:

- Killing the members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily harm;

- Deliberately inflicting conditions which are calculated to lead to physical destruction in whole or part;
- Imposing measures to prevent births;
- Forcibly taking children away to other groups.

(Chorbajian, 1999: xv, xvi)

This captures the essence of genocide although different times and places have seen genocide with its own peculiarities and slightly different descriptions are given by other sources.

There are important differences between the mass slaughter of humans in genocide and the mass slaughter of nonhuman animals in the farming industry. Obviously the first is carried out *within* the human species and the second is done *by* members of the human species to members of specific nonhuman species.

Secondly, in genocide the paramount goal is to destroy a particular group by killing them directly or bringing about conditions that will lead to death and also by taking away the young and preventing further births. In nonhuman animal farming the goal is also to kill every member of the group who is alive today but a second and related goal is to continue to produce young nonhumans so that the killing can continue with no foreseeable end. The young are still taken away from their mothers as in human genocide but coerced impregnation is used to replace those who are murdered. The forced impregnation of women has been a feature in some forms of human genocidal actions but has come about as a result of indiscriminate rape or as a strategy to replace the generation being killed by another generation containing some of the inherited traits of the oppressors.

Another difference related to this but one inextricably linked to the goal of continued killing, is the genetic manipulation of nonhuman animals to make them more easily coerced and better suited for the uses to which human animals wish to put them such as producing calves and chickens who grow faster than normal or cows who will produce milk which is similar to human breast milk (Phillips, 2001:122). A fourth difference is the scale of the killing. The situation with nonhuman animals is far in excess of anything ever recorded as genocide in human history. In the 100 years of

the twentieth century an estimated 60 million men women and children were killed in different places throughout the world “because the state thought this desirable” (Smith, 1999: 3). This figure may even be higher but worldwide in 2005 alone, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, approximately 55 000 million land based nonhumans died in the farming industry and this is probably an underestimate (UNFAO cited in FARM 2006). That is over 150 million a day or 1736 individual’s lives violently snuffed out every second of every day of the year and the numbers are increasing. To put this into context it is the equivalent in numbers of wiping out the whole human population of the earth, every man woman and child, every six and a half weeks or approximately killing the equivalent of everyone in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Norway and France every day of the year (UNFAO in FARM 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2006; U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

The overriding goal, then, of nonhuman animal farming is not the eradication of a group but the controlled and planned ongoing exploitation and murder of billions of individuals many of whom have been genetically manipulated. In essence, the goal of nonhuman animal farming is an eternal slavery-genocide.

One way to categorize genocide is by using the grammar of the motives given to explain it. Using this system it may be divided into four categories: retributive, institutional, utilitarian and ideological (Smith, 1999: 4). Utilitarian genocide most closely resembles the situation with nonhuman animals and is marked by domination and exploitation in order to obtain such things as minerals, timber or land. Smith writes:

They are being killed, were killed, because of a combination of ethnocentrism and simple greed. The basic proposition contained in utilitarian genocide is that some must die so that others can live well.

(Smith 1999: 7)

This description of exploitation and ethnocentrism fits very well with what humans do to nonhuman animals in farming except that the ethnocentrism needs to be replaced by anthropocentrism.

## **5.2.1. Supporting mechanisms for genocide and nonhuman farming**

### **5.2.1.1. Bureaucracy and Organisation**

There is no doubt that even if genocide appears at first glance to be a spontaneous outbreak of mass violence against a particular group, on closer examination it is found to have been both planned and organized. In the Rwandan genocide, the highest authorities in the country took part in its organization. Information was broadcast on the radio stations to incite killings, meetings were held for the same purpose, the government decided who should be killed and local government officials controlled the start and end of the killing:

Prefects transmitted orders and supervised results, but it was the burgomasters and their subordinates who really mobilized the people. Using their authority to summon citizens for communal projects, as they were used to doing for *Umuganda*, burgomasters delivered assailants to the massacre sites, where military personnel or former soldiers then usually took charge of the operation. Just as burgomasters had organized barriers and controls before the genocide so now they enforced regular and routine participation in such activities against the Tutsi. They sent councillors and their subordinates from house to house to sign up all adult males, informing them when and where they were to work. Or they drew up lists and posted the schedules at the places where public notices were usually affixed.

(Des Forges cited in Verwimp, 2006: 29)

The killing of millions of Jewish people in the Holocaust could not have happened without a high degree of organization. The murder of six million people and the subsequent disposal of their bodies was a huge logistical and technical challenge which, in the end, was solved by the power of bureaucracy and the everyday activities

of the modern industrial state. Established companies used their expertise to provide facilities and supplies just as they would have done for any other commercial project:

The construction of Auschwitz required the help of Topf and Sons of Erfurt, who built the crematory ovens; W. Reidel and Son of Bielitz and Joseph Kluge of Geiwitz, which supplied the reinforced concrete; the construction firm of Robert Kohler; and the Dessau Sugar and Chemical Factories and the German Pest Control Company in Frieberg, which supplied Zyklon B gas.

(Glass, 1997: 86)

People carried out their duties as they were expected to. The genocide could not have happened without the help and complicity of many thousands of employees in diverse occupations.

The murder of millions in five years needed the voluntary complicity of tens of thousands. Public and private institutions participated directly or indirectly in the oppression and killings: army, police, civil service, Foreign Office, railroads, postal services, utilities, bureaucrats, corporations, bankers, lawyers, judges, physicians and scientists.

(Weiss, 1997: 342)

Nothing extraordinary or new was needed for the crime of the holocaust, it was all already in place and the mundane simply needed to be redirected to the commission of this atrocity. Feingold writes:

[Auschwitz] was also a mundane extension of the modern factory system. Rather than producing goods, the raw material was human beings and the end-product was death, so many units per day marked carefully on the manager's production charts. The chimneys, the very symbol of the modern factory system, poured forth acrid smoke produced by burning human flesh. The brilliantly organized railroad grid of modern Europe carried a new kind of raw material to the

factories. It did so in the same manner as other cargo.

(Feingold cited in Bauman, 1989:8)

One of the spin offs from the genocidal process was the availability of slave labour for companies such as AEG, Daimler-Benz, Telefunken, and Siemens where people worked under harsh conditions and some victims were even purchased for use in medical experiments (Weiss, 1997: 349).

The killing of nonhuman animals in the farming industry and the subsequent disposal of their corpses far outweighs the organizational challenges of all human genocidal actions including the Holocaust. The more killing there is to be done, the greater the organisation required and the raising, housing, mutilating, feeding, breeding, transporting and killing of nonhuman animals and the dismembering, freezing, drying, canning, drying, cooking, transporting and selling of their body parts takes organization and support on a massive worldwide scale.

Some organisation and bureaucracy takes the form of government agencies and research institutes although much is through private companies. Some examples of British bureaucratic support structures are the British Pig Executive, the Meat and Livestock Commission, the English Beef and Lamb Executive, Hybu Cig Cymru/Meat Promotion Wales and Quality Meat Scotland. The Meat and Livestock Commission describes its role as to:

- Work with the British meat and livestock industry (cattle, sheep and pigs) to improve its efficiency and competitive position;
- To maintain and stimulate markets for British meat at home and abroad, while taking into account the needs of the consumers.

(The Meat and Livestock Commission 2006 web page)

The role of bureaucracy is central to the Holocaust. Weber identifies five major characteristics of an ideal bureaucracy:

- Hierarchy of authority;

- Impersonality;
- Written rules of conduct;
- Promotion based on achievement ;
- Specialized division of labour;
- Efficiency.

(Elwell, 2006)

This powerful mixture allowed the efficient achievement of short-term goals while at the same time distancing those involved from their participation in the overall horror of mass murder. Most people involved in the Holocaust did not deliberately injure anybody, far less commit murder. They simply did their jobs within the bureaucratic system, doing what they could to achieve the mundane goals they had been set within their organization.

It is little different to the farming industry today where, of those employed, the overwhelming majority do not kill nonhumans nor castrate them, inseminate them, use electric prods on them, eviscerate, brand them or directly harm them in any way. They drive vehicles, type letters, build structures, collate information, process accounts, purchase consignments, advertise products and so on. Without them, however, the industry simply could not exist in its present form. So can it be said that all those involved act intentionally to bring about and continue the oppression of nonhuman animals?

#### ***5.2.1.1.1. Intentionality***

The question of intentionality in genocide is complex. What do the perpetrators believe they are doing? Do they believe they have authority and are acting correctly? Are they simply doing their jobs? Do they have any understanding of an overall plan and goal? Some writers even question whether genocide requires state action and intentionality at all (Chorbajian, 1999: xvii). Wallimann & Dobkowski (cited in Chorbajian 1999: xvii) argue that, in this world of corporate bureaucracies and impersonal market forces and where government decision making takes place far from its arena of effect, “the emphasis on intentionality almost appears anachronistic”. Bureaucratic systems can be tremendously powerful but focus on such things as

organization, cost effectiveness, efficiency and problem solving and not necessarily on the moral and ethical outcomes of their actions. They are essentially instrumental systems, finding technical solutions to technical problems. Without the guidance of, and responsiveness to, critical moral and ethical reflection, a slide into the most barbaric acts is possible. This is vividly highlighted in the path which was taken to finding the “Final Solution” - the murder of six million men women and children by the Nazis.

Bauman (1989: 15,16), referring to work by Schleuner, describes how the extermination of Jewish people was never a single minded plan set in motion from the very first and followed through to the end. On the contrary, the plan emerged little by little as situations changed and different “solutions” were examined for each new set of circumstances. According to Bauman, the Nazis wanted the Jews out of Germany and, at first, the emigration of the Jews was looked upon as a way to produce this “judenfrei” Germany provided there were enough countries willing to take the refugees. Poland was one such possibility but when Poland itself came under German rule the bureaucrats there did not want more Jews being imported into the country in addition to the ones they already policed. Eichmann spent a year working on a plan to turn Madagascar into a Jewish principality but logistics and the presence of the British navy made it impossible. As the number of countries under the control of the Nazis increased, more Jews came under their ambit and soon their objective changed from a “judenfrei” Germany to a “judenfrei” Europe, placing an even greater pressure on any planned emigration. Eventually, and following the Nazi failure to ensure the collapse of Russia, emigration was simply no longer a viable solution:

... Himmler ordered on 1 October 1941 the final stop to all Jewish emigration. The task of ‘getting rid of the Jews’ had been found another more effective means of implementation: physical extermination was chosen as the most feasible and effective means to the original and newly expanded, end. The rest was the matter of co-operation between various departments of state bureaucracy; of careful planning, designing proper technology and technical equipment, budgeting, calculating and mobilizing necessary resources: indeed the matter of dull bureaucratic routine.

(Bauman, 1989: 16)

In some way it seems possible that perpetrators are able to diminish what they have done, to justify their acts or distance themselves from those acts in some way. Writing of the genocide in Rwanda and his interviews with perpetrators, Mironko notes:

The flat tone together with the third person the speakers frequently used in their stories suggests distancing devices rather than complete lack of sentiment. What emerges overall, though, is how ordinary these killings seem to the perpetrators and how casually the speakers still seem to regard their participation in them.

(Mironko, 2006: 184)

While our everyday actions, possibly very mundane actions, might contribute to the most horrendous consequences, we are often shielded from the ethical questions arising from them by physical, psychological and temporal distance. We may also be shielded from those questions by commercial interests who prefer that employees and consumers remain ignorant. Alternatively, it might be that we make the choice of ignorance ourselves.

It is not always easy to connect the act of buying a hamburger with extensive animal suffering or the destruction of hectares of rainforests. On the other hand, in the so called information age, it is also not too difficult to put the pieces of the jigsaw together if we so wish and the question of whether we really wish to know has to be asked.

#### **5.2.1.2. Technology**

Genocide cannot happen without technology of some description. On occasions this may take the form of crude weapons such as machetes, of radio broadcasts to orchestrate the killing, trucks to ferry perpetrators around and so on but to confine, transport and murder on a vast scale and over a significant period of time requires appropriate science and sophisticated technological input. It became clear to the Nazi High Command that killing large numbers of people was a major technical problem which required time, money and other resources and which would also take a psychological toll on the perpetrators. Shooting large numbers of people and burying their bodies in mass graves would not have achieved the ends required by the Nazis.

The introduction of technology into the mass killings both increased the efficiency of the process, rapidly killing large number of people, and at the same time reduced the stress on the perpetrators. Technology allowed distance to be inserted between the perpetrator and the victim and the problems to be overcome were no longer personal or moral but of a technical nature:

The Third Reich's use of technology allowed the perpetrator to kill without acknowledging the victim as a person. Killing in gas chambers and crematoria created a vast gulf between killer and victim. In technologizing death, the perpetrator shifts to another level of connection with the victim, one of organization, techniques, the victim important only insofar as he or she presents a problem in organizing death.

(Glass, 1997: 27)

Stillman and Pfaff make the point that the mechanized killing in the German death camps arises out of our society, or civilization:

There is more than a wholly fortuitous connection between the applied technology of the mass production line, with its vision of universal material abundance, and the applied technology of the concentration camp, with its vision of a profusion of death. We may wish to deny the connection, but Buchenwald was of our West as much as Detroit's River Rouge – we cannot deny Buchenwald as a casual aberration of a Western world essentially sane.

(Stillman & Pfaff cited by Bauman, 1989: 9)

The “humane” murder of victims was also an issue for some of the Nazis including Himmler. Patterson observes:

Those who kill ‘humanely’ often contend that their victims suffer minimally or not at all. This contention helps to ease the guilt and makes the continuation of killing more acceptable. Robert Juhrs of the SS, whose job at Belzec was to shoot the arrivals who were no longer able to walk, said that because of the poor condition of the Jews after their long journey in overcrowded freight cars, he

looked on shooting them ‘as a kindness and a release. I shot the Jews with a machine gun from the edge of the ditch. In each case I aimed for the head, so that each one died instantly.’

(Patterson, 2002: 132)

The whole system of nonhuman animal farming was already in place in countries across the world when the Third Reich came to power. The nonhuman animal ghettos, the transport systems and the organization and mechanisation of slaughterhouses had been commonplace for years. It was no great leap to find new victims for the Machine and Jewish people were taken from the ghettos and transported in cattle trucks to the killing plants. Patterson describes the uncanny similarities between today’s slaughterhouse system and what took place in the death camps. Even the final path leading to the point where the actual murders took place, the “chute”, “kill alley” or “funnel” is the same. Drawing on work by Donat and others he describes how:

At Treblinka the “tube”, which was eighty to ninety yards long and five yards wide, led from the “disrobing rooms” in the lower camp to the gas chambers in the upper camp. After going about thirty yards toward the east side of the camp, the tube made a sharp, almost ninety-degree turn and went straight up to the central opening to the gas chamber building in the upper camp ... Guards used fists, whips and rifle butts to force their naked victims to run four and five abreast with their arms raised through the tube.

(Patterson, 2002: 113)

Science and technology are omnipresent in the nonhuman animal farming industry and involve the careful calculation of nutrients that go into a slave’s food for maximum growth and profit, the calculated malnourishment of veal slaves, the application of antibiotics to food and veterinary care to maximize profits, genetic manipulation, chilled transport systems for the dead and factories that can murder, dismember, chill and pack in a matter of minutes. The present industry is a child of science and technology and the parents are ever-eager, under hypercapitalism’s guiding hand, to find ways to help it continue to grow.

### **5.2.1.3. Coercion**

Victims of genocide are coerced in one form or another and this can range from verbal abuse to living in fear of being rounded up, being confined, having family members threatened and being physically abused or murdered. Nonhumans are coerced and incarcerated as a matter of course. They have no physical power of resistance and there are no societal or legal powers which might be invoked on their behalf to oppose such coercion. The coercion begins at birth and ends with their violent death on the killing floor. A great deal of planning and effort go into designing places of incarceration depending on the requirements of their oppressors. In some places the slaves can hardly move at all. Urine and faeces accumulate all around them and their lives are spent in semi darkness. They may be caged, shackled, confined in crates, barns, feedlots or fields and have no true freedom. They may be surrounded by electric fences and physically coerced with prods, whips, metal bars and electric shock batons.

Human animals may also be coerced into being part of the system although this is usually in the form of economic coercion with previously unemployed people and immigrants working under appalling conditions in some slaughterhouses.

### **5.2.1.4. The Law**

Within the prevailing ideology of a group, some acts may be acceptable while others are unthinkable. For the Nazis, sex with a Jewish woman was unthinkable because it might lead to a dilution or contamination of the genes of the master race should the rape result in the birth of a child. The murder of Jews was acceptable, however (Weiss 1996: 333, 334). However abhorrent this might appear today, it has historical precedent as genocide itself has not always been seen as a crime:

... the slaughter of whole groups has occurred throughout history, it is only in the past few centuries that this has produced even a sense of moral horror, much less been thought of as 'criminal'. Indeed from ancient times until well into the sixteenth century, genocide was not something that men were ashamed of, felt guilt for or tried to hide; it was open and acknowledged.

(Smith, 1999:9,10)

Perpetrators of genocide may believe they are acting legally and indeed that might be the case. It is an important aspect of genocide that it is collective in nature, individuals do not act alone, there is state authority and legal sanction and so the perpetrators are relieved of any feelings of guilt (Horowitz, 1999: 26).

When the Nazi leadership wanted a legal answer to the "Jewish Question", decrees were issued excluding Jews from business, schools, universities, sports facilities and so on (Weiss, 1996: 333). In addition, murdering a Jewish person was no longer looked on as a serious crime. After attacks on Jews during the night of November 9<sup>th</sup> 1938, some SA (Sturmabteilung) members were punished for theft, a violation of the code of honour, and some for rape, a transgression of the ban on interracial intercourse, but 24 SA members who had killed Jews were only reprimanded, with the court requesting Hitler to take no further action (Weiss, 1996: 333, 334).

The mass gassing in the camps was supposed to be legal, systematic and controlled with Himmler claiming the "right to annihilate this people" (Weiss, 1997: 339). SS guards in the camps were told they were valuable soldiers and not murderers and Himmler informed them that "any guilt they felt was because their conscience had been distorted by centuries of Judeo-Christian ethics" (*ibid*: 339). It is part of our socialization process that we believe, in a general way, that those in authority, who make the law, make just laws and that they will only ever act lawfully themselves. Of course this is naive to say the least.

Concerning the genocide in Rwanda, Cook, referring to Mironko's research, writes:

By recounting their actions using words that imply authorization by some higher power, Rwandans who have confessed to genocide

thus appear to take no personal responsibility for murdering innocent men, women and children.

(Mironko cited in Cook, 2006: ix)

Drawing on the work of Browning and Mosse, Glass discusses the reasons for the apparent ease with which the Holocaust atrocities could be carried out, identifying the power of the group, in some form or other, as likely to be a contributory factor although he finds this an incomplete explanation (Glass, 1997: 58, 59).

Almost every country of the world gives little or no protection to nonhuman animals. Weak laws do exist concerning cruelty to nonhuman animals but the right to incarcerate and murder nonhuman “farm” animals is never in doubt. There is no question that the enslavement and murder of nonhumans is totally legal all over the world. As the slaves are legally classed as property they have no opportunity for legal representation and may be disposed of at the will of the slave owner.

#### **5.2.1.5. Authority and power**

Power is implicit in authority and in turn authority sanctions the use of power and is impotent without it. Authority directs and empowers agents while at the same time absolving the individual agent of the consequences of their actions. In the Rwandan genocide perpetrators believed they had authority to do what they did:

To the extent that these ordinary people saw themselves as participating in *ibitero* organized and sanctioned from above, it becomes much harder to establish genocidal intent on the part of ordinary perpetrators.

(Cook, 2006: x)

For some the Holocaust is seen as a “failure of civilization”, as a stumble on the path of an ever upward climb, leaving behind base behaviour and gaining increasing human reason and enlightenment. Bauman has doubts about this civilizing “myth” and those who enthusiastically support it, however:

Behind the alliance stands fast the modern 'gardening' state, viewing the society it rules as an object of designing, cultivating and weed-poisoning.

(Bauman 1991: 12, 13)

He proposes a different view suggesting the Holocaust exposed a weakness in our society whereby things such as guilt, abhorrence of murder and a general disinclination to violence were subordinated to technology, efficiency and a pragmatic approach to matters of the economy and effectiveness and asserts "[m]odern civilization was not the Holocaust's *sufficient* condition; it was, however, most certainly its *necessary* condition (Bauman, 1991: 13 emphasis in the original). These instrumentalist disciplines have their own authority and intrinsic power, which are all the more pernicious for it being hidden in the commonplace.

Bauman draws attention to the work of Millgram on authority and Zimbardo on power (Bauman, 1991: 151-168). Millgram's work strongly suggests that people are likely to obey authority figures even if it means that another person will get hurt – possibly severely. Millgram's hypothesis, not surprisingly, failed get a good reception when it was first advanced and Bauman observes:

A particular disquiet and rage were caused by this hypothesis that cruelty is not committed by cruel individuals, but by ordinary men and women trying to acquit themselves well of their ordinary duties: and his findings that *while cruelty correlates but poorly with the personal characteristics of the perpetrators, it correlates very strongly indeed with the relationship of authority and subordination*, with our normal, daily encountered, structure of power and obedience.

(Bauman, 1991: 153,154 emphasis in the original)

This work also showed that the greater the psychological and physical distance from the act, the greater the willingness to cause pain under direction from authority.

Bauman continues:

The meaning of Millgram's discovery is that, imminently and irretrievably, the process of rationalization facilitates behavior that is inhuman and cruel in its consequences, if not in its intentions.

*The more rational is the organization of action, the easier it is to cause suffering* – and remain at peace with oneself’

(Bauman, 1991:155 emphasis in the original)

Thirdly, it also showed that the incremental use of violence is a powerful way to induce people to carry out acts they normally would not. This is how Sabini and Silver theorize the mechanism involved:

Subjects enter the experiment recognizing some commitments to cooperate with the experimenter; after all, they have agreed to participate, taken his money, and probably to some degree endorse the aims of the advancement of science ... When the learner makes his first error, subjects are asked to shock him. The shock level is 15 volts. A 15 volt shock is entirely harmless, imperceptible. There is no moral issue here. Of course the next shock is more powerful, but only slightly so. Indeed every shock is only slightly more powerful than the last. The quality of the subject’s action changes from something entirely blameless to something unconscionable, but by degrees. Where exactly should the subject stop? At what point is the divide between these two kinds of action crossed? How is the subject to know?

(Sabini & Silver cited in Bauman, 1991: 157,158)

If the subject decides the next shock is not permissible, then why was the last shock acceptable as it was only slightly less severe? Was there any justification for giving that shock? If this present action is deemed to be wrong it implies the need to re-evaluate all previous, very similar actions condemning them also as wrong and by implication condemning the person who carried them out. The subject is trapped – either carry on doing what he knows is wrong or stop and admit that he has already been committing wrong. I will return to the work of Millgram and others working in this area later as it is of crucial importance.

Bauman also maintains that the inherent power of science must be taken into consideration. Science has its own authority. Put crudely, decisions are made by those who know and understand the problems and proposed solutions, in other words by experts who have the technical knowledge others do not have. It is for others to

carry out these decisions but not to make them. Deferring to experts is a way of relinquishing responsibility for actions and is an example of what Gee refers to as holding deferred theories (Gee 1991: 18). All manner of high minded, self sacrificing, courageous, stupid, self serving, banal, heroic and sadistic acts have been carried out in the name of, and with the implied authority of, science. Concerning the high moral authority of doing things in the name of science, Bauman observes that:

What is not pointed out, however, is that more than any other authority science is allowed by public opinion to practice the otherwise ethically odious principle of the end justifying the means. Science serves as the fullest epitome of the dissociation between the ends and the means which serves as the ideal of rational organization of human conduct: it is the ends which are subject to moral evaluation, not the means.

(Bauman, 1991: 159)

In the case of nonhuman animal farming, science and technology and the authority they provide are everywhere, from forced pregnancy through to efficient murder and disposal of the bodies. The challenges are of a purely instrumental nature, the outcomes are in terms of profit margins, efficiency, production levels, more productive slaves and so on.

#### **5.2.1.6. Secrecy**

During the Holocaust Jewish people were confined to ghettos or incarcerated in concentration camps. This removed the victims from view and essentially from the consciousness of the population. The gas chambers and crematoria were far away from densely populated areas and access was strictly controlled. Certainly, members of the German population would have seen cattle trucks filled with people but this was not the same as seeing them stripped naked and gassed. Secrecy was essential so that the truth could be hidden, or at least pretence made of hiding it. This then allowed people the alibi that they did not know what was happening.

Schnurer notes that:

For both Nazis and the animal oppression industries, it was essential that the general public never comprehend the vast system used to divert responsibilities away from consumers and participants in the process of destruction.

(Schnurer, 2004: 117)

If the practice of nonhuman slavery and genocide is to continue, people should not be confronted directly with its bloody and oppressive character. It is essential that a charade of ignorance be maintained even though this is clearly ludicrous in a world society which describes its members as living in the information age. Traditional farms are usually far from centres of population, intensive farming operations are housed in anonymous industrial buildings as are the murder and dismembering plants tucked away on the outskirts of cities; body parts no longer even resemble pieces of a watchful mother or a beloved child as they are reduced to amorphous cartilage, muscle and bone. This is the big secret that we all know and, by excluding it from consciousness, we give ourselves the alibi of ignorance and the feeling of blamelessness.

#### **5.2.1.7. Discourse**

Even given the view that genocide can be driven by a bureaucratic momentum, each individual perpetrator must have some sense, however vague, of their complicity in the atrocities. It is stretching credibility to suggest that, in cases of genocide, those who were involved did not know what was happening and could not have found out more had they wished. Glass (1997: 17) notes that while there were those in the Nazi command who bear an enormous responsibility for what happened “[i]t is naïve to suggest that only a few thousand individuals were responsible for the deaths of millions”. He further points out that many people enthusiastically endorsed what was happening (Glass, *ibid*: 28, 29).

In order to counter people’s natural abhorrence of murder, mutilation and cruelty, genocide needs some type of rationalization for the actions carried out, some justification, some way in which people are understood to be doing the right thing. For the perpetrators, the victims must become “Other”, “Alien”, “Non-beings”

thoroughly deserving of their terrible fate. The genocidal actions need to be apprehended as part of the natural process of the universe. Discourse and the ideology bound in it play a pivotal role in this process.

Haidu (1992: 287, 289) points out that the concept of ideology allows contradictions such as the murder of thousands of victims to sit alongside claims of decency on the part of perpetrators and "... informs the discourses and actions of agents and representatives of various kinds including administrators and soldiers". The point has been made that if Nazi Germany had won the Second World War, those who served in the concentration camps would never have been charged as war criminals and might well have been seen as playing a vital role in the improvement of the world. This would have been consistent with the prevailing Nazi ideology with its own internal value system.

Ophir stresses the importance of understanding:

... the technology of power and the modes of 'excluding' discourse which made the Holocaust possible: the discourse which made it possible to exclude a group of people from within the borders of the human race and the technology which made it possible to massively deport them to their deaths.

(Ophir cited in Biagioli, 1992: 201, 202)

In the Holocaust there was an existing discourse of anti-Semitism but this was combined with a relatively new discourse from the "science" of eugenics. Eugenics, according to Charles B Davenport, one of its leading figures, is "the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding" (Friedlander cited in Patterson, 2002: 83). The idea that the human race could be "improved" by "better" breeding was supported by many well-placed adherents in Germany, the United States and elsewhere and was a discourse transplanted, almost without alteration, from farming. Patterson describes how, by the end of the nineteenth century, American and German scientists had accepted a rigid theory of inheritance which generally left aside social

influences on people and ranked human groups in a hierarchy with the allegedly inferior ones being “immoral, depraved, criminal, or simply sufficiently different to be threatening” (Patterson, 2002: 81). Eventually both the United States and Germany introduced compulsory sterilization and, in 1932, the Third International Conference of Eugenics was held in New York with its theme “A Decade of Progress in Eugenics” (Patterson 2002: 81– 90). This “science” maintained that “defective” people in society, which meant the disabled, the mentally ill, criminals, homosexuals and the “feeble minded”, posed a threat to the purity and future strength of the stock. There was a continual fear of contamination of good stock by bad and of the weakening of the stock by the introduction of “bad blood.” Patterson further records that, following the First World War, the doctrine of racial hygiene took hold in German medicine and science. This meant that institutionalised patients could be described as having “lives without purpose” and as “human ballast”, “semi humans”, “defective humanity”, “mentally dead”, “empty shells of human beings” and those who were “unworthy of life” (Patterson 2002: 89). The ground was prepared for not only the sterilization but the killing of undesirable elements. The United States, Germany, Denmark and other Scandinavian countries all enacted legislation to allow compulsory sterilization (Patterson, 2002: 88).

Lack of moral concern, Glass maintains, was in part because of the climate created by German science, portraying killing Jewish people as simply part of a health policy (Glass, 1997: 31-33). Jews were portrayed as vermin:

Science had established its dominance over the belief structure of Nazi Germany. Race lay at the centre of this scientific edifice; and racial hatred elaborated itself as a set of scientific principles obsessed with blood cleanliness, genetic purity, and a phobic reactivity to the potential of race contamination. These beliefs exercised an enormous influence over scientific, professional, political, and administrative practices.

(Glass, 1997: 33)

Proctor claims that:

... science set the stage for the Final Solution long before the arrival of National Socialism. When the Nazis took over, the preexisting scientific discourse allowed the doctors to become the

priests of the cult of the German blood as well as its medical keepers and the exterminators of its potential polluters.

(Proctor cited in Biagioli, 1992: 193)

Behind the idea of the sterilization or murder of “defectives” lies the implicit argument that this is being done for the greater good of all members of the group alive today and those generations to come, an argument long used for the scientific practice of vivisection. In vivisection, perhaps even more than in nonhuman animal farming, the animals are stripped of all sentience being morphed into abstracted muscles, brains, tissues and, that epitome of abstraction, models.

Victims of the Holocaust were also changed from living beings into objects by the tattooing of numbers onto their bodies, further removing them from the ambit of moral care. When they died the authorities in charge of record-keeping would often not use the word corpse but refer to figures or pieces (Lang cited in Glass, 1997: 29).

The desubjectification of the victim was a programmed precondition enabling the perpetrator’s enactment of the narrative program of extermination.

(Haidu 1992: 291)

Glass notes that, in the Nuremberg Report on German medical experiments, some of the outstanding features were the lack of any recognition of suffering of the victims, the absence of a moral context for the experiments, the wide-ranging participation of technical, professional and business people and the disconnection between the technical activity of the science and the suffering of the victim (Glass, 1997: 91). The victims were simply objects of scientific enquiry and that was their only value - they did not exist as experiencing beings.

So the discourse of science or, more specifically, eugenics was used as a tool for the objectification of the victims. It portrayed the perpetrators as scientific guardians of a better future, a future where those with weak blood, degenerates, the defectives, the handicapped, the criminals, the racially impure and the homosexuals would no longer

exist. Victims were portrayed as potential contaminants to a healthy race. They were unclean and a public health operation was needed to avert future disaster.

This ideological removal of personhood through discourse is not confined to the Holocaust alone. In genocide generally and in other forms of genocidal activity the victims will often be dehumanized by referring to them as things such as “rats”, “lice” and “gavours” (Smith, 1999: 4). This also happens in conflicts situations. In the Second World War, Japanese soldiers were described as “monkeys”, “baboons”, “gorillas”, “dogs”, “mice”, “rats”, “vipers”, “rattlesnakes”, “cockroaches” and “vermin” (Dower cited in Patterson, 2002: 39). In the war between Japan and China in the 1930’s, the Japanese referred to the Chinese as “pigs”. In the Vietnam War, General Westmorland described the Vietnamese as “termites” and in the Iraq War Iraqi civilians running for cover were described by American pilots as “cockroaches” (Patterson, 2002: 43).

The reduction of victims to creatures which, under prevailing ideologies, deserve no moral concern or who are actively despised is a major step towards removing any qualms which may arise from a perpetrator acting against his victims. The ideological work has already been done on the construction of these creatures and all that is needed is to amalgamate the intended victims with them.

In the Rwandan genocide, in excerpts from perpetrator’s statements, victims were described as *inyenzi* (cockroach) (Mironko, 2006 177-182). Victims were also portrayed as creatures to be hunted. This leads Mironko (2006:180) to point out that “[i]n order to understand the genocidal process in Rwanda it is important to understand the use of hunting terms in relation to the narratives of the killers”. In statements given by perpetrators of the genocide, acts of genocide are often referred to in terms of hunting metaphors such as ‘kwihisha’ (to stalk), ‘kwichira ku gasi’ (to kill in full view), “gushorera” (to herd wild animals together), “guhiga” (to hunt or chase), “kuvumbura” (to flush out of hiding) and “gutera” (to attack) (Mironko, 2006:180).

This is how Neou Heang, a nun in the province of Kampong Chhnang, describes life under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia: “We had no rights; only they had rights. They

killed and got rid of us as if we were animals. Before, the people could eat their own rice and work their own fields and not have enough on their own. During the Pol Pot regime they herded us like cows. If they wanted to kill us they could kill us” (Mam, 2006: 135).

In summary human and nonhuman genocide, especially large scale genocide, must have organization and bureaucracy along with the relevant science and technology to reach its goals. There must be complicity of those involved directly and indirectly with appropriate discourses to reify the victims and place them outside the sphere of moral concern, as well as a population willing to accept authority and follow its commands even against what might be their better judgment.

Smith’s words sum this process up well:

Genocide must be legitimated by tradition, culture or ideology; sanctions for mass murder must be given by those in authority; the forces of destruction have to be mobilized and directed; and the whole process has to be rationalized so that it makes sense to the perpetrators and their accomplice.

(Smith, 1999: 4)

However for nonhuman animal farming there are two more essential and inextricably linked conditions. These are consumer demand and the drive to make money.

#### **5.2.1.8. Consumer demand and economics.**

The engine for nonhuman animal farming might simply be presumed to be consumer demand but the true situation is far more complex than that. Consumer demand is a very malleable entity and in western orientated societies for the most part certainly does not represent consumer needs. The advertising industry exists to create wants in consumers and does so using a whole range of strategies such as an implied requirement for people to be “progressive”, playing on the fear of being different and the creation of myths that proclaim that some things are absolutely essential for wellbeing. Advertising is an indispensable part of capitalism and, with globalization and neoliberalism, it is ubiquitous as TV, radio newspapers, magazines, billboards and traditionally public spaces such as schools and universities show (Klein, 2000: 87-

105). Consumer demand for nonhuman products is also massaged by government subsidies which create artificially lowered prices – not that the original prices reflect a true cost in any way insofar as environmental, human and nonhuman costs are concerned.

Schnurer (2004: 117) argues that industrial capitalism was essential for the Holocaust and is essential today for the widespread oppression of nonhuman animals.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) the consumption of nonhuman animal flesh is set to increase worldwide:

The past three decades have seen major shifts in human diets. The share of animal products has risen, while that of cereals and other staples has fallen. And within the meat sector there has been a dramatic rise in the share of poultry and, to a smaller extent, pig meat. These trends are likely to continue over the next 30 years, though in less dramatic form.

(UNFAO, 2002)

In a world where starvation is widespread, the production of flesh for the rich is fatal for the poor. Cereals are grown for nonhumans captives so that some humans can slake their desire for the oral delights, they claim, only the dead can supply:

Globally, some 660 million tonnes of cereals are used as livestock feed each year. This represents just over a third of total world cereal use.

(UNFAO, 2002)

### **5.2.2. Essential conditions for the existence of nonhuman animal farming**

For the phenomenon of nonhuman animal farming to exist in its present form the following essential conditions/mechanisms must operate:

- organization and bureaucratic practice;
- consumer demand;
- capitalist system;

- consent from the human population;
- government support;
- secrecy;
- legal support;
- science and technology;
- enabling discourses at all stages of the nonhuman animal farming process from the rearing of the slaves and their killing, to the consumption of their bodies and their secretions.

Without these mechanisms the phenomenon of institutionalized nonhuman animal farming in its present form could not exist.

### ***5.3. The centrality of discourse***

#### **5.3.1. Discourse as a mechanism in critical realism**

Nonhuman farming is not a natural scientific phenomenon. It is deeply affected and sustained by what people think about it - if they think about it at all. The meanings people make and the actions they take, or fail to take, depend upon how they understand the phenomenon and their part in it. This is where discourses are so important in sustaining and supporting all those involved in the phenomenon, from the consumer to the farmer to the breeder, the slaughterhouse owner, the seller of flesh.

I maintain that the majority of people would not be deliberately cruel to a nonhuman animal if they came into contact with her or him. Many people even profess deep love and care for nonhumans yet we live in a world where we sponsor, on a daily basis, acts of institutionalised violence on a scale of immense proportions. In some way people must either not question what is being done or believe that what is being done is acceptable and natural. This is where the power of discourse is essential to the phenomenon as discourses construct a reality which not only sustains the phenomenon but also actively promotes its burgeoning growth.

From a critical realist point of view, discourse can be seen as a mechanism which gives rise to events, which in turn give rise to effects, some of which we are able to experience empirically. In a generalized picture the events produced by discourses are such things as reasons and feelings and the empirical effects are actions actually taken.

Discourses are affected by other mechanisms so the effects of a particular discourse are not predictable as a direct relationship, always causing exactly the same effects in the same way, but as having a tendency to cause those effects. Accepting this rider, it can be claimed that some discourses are generally benign, some are neutral and some are pejorative.

The discourses supporting nonhuman animal farming must clearly be classed as pejorative yet they do not contain overt calls for violence or revel in sadistic fantasy or anything of the sort and usually only portray a sense of humdrum everydayness or even peaceful rustic life. They appear relatively neutral or even benign, so the questions of how they support harm being done to billions of nonhumans each year and through what mechanisms need to be addressed. For an answer to these questions we need to look at work carried out in experimental social psychology on how good, moral individuals can be influenced to carry out reprehensible acts against other people.

### **5.3.2. The contribution from experimental social psychology**

Philip Zimbardo describes two approaches to examining the “antisocial behavior of individuals and violence sanctioned by nations” (Zimbardo, 2004: 21). One focuses on the individual in order to identify errant behavioural traits or psychological risk factors or some such internal defect. This is described as the “dispositional approach”. The alternative is to look at the situations which people find themselves in and the influences they have on these people. This is described as the “situationalist approach” (Zimbardo, 2004: 21). The situationalist approach has the important virtue of being amenable, to some extent, to laboratory investigation although its results may not always be popular.

Locating evil within selected individuals or groups carries with it the ‘social virtue’ of taking society ‘off the hook’ as blameworthy; societal structures and political decision making are exonerated from bearing any burden of the more fundamental circumstances that create racism, sexism, elitism, poverty, and marginal existence for some citizens. Furthermore this dispositional orientation to understanding evil implies a simplistic, binary world of good people, like us, and bad people, like them. That clear-cut dichotomy is divided by a manufactured line that separates good and evil.

(Zimbardo, 2004: 25)

Lee *et al.* interviewed and tested psychologically 19 murderers in prisons in California (Lee, Zimbardo and Berthoff cited in Zimbardo, 2004: 24). They found that, while ten of the prisoners had long histories of violence, were generally extroverted, had a strong masculine identity and showed poor impulse control, the other nine had never committed any criminal offences whatsoever and, indeed, had excessive impulse control, were mostly shy and had a gender identity which was feminine or androgynous (*ibid*).

Zimbardo notes:

These ‘shy sudden murderers’ killed just as violently as did the habitual criminals, and their victims died just as surely, but it would have been impossible to predict this outcome from any prior knowledge of their personalities, which were so different from the more obvious habitual criminals.

(*ibid*)

I will now examine the work of three major researchers in this area, Stanley Millgram, Philip Zimbardo and Albert Bandura.

### ***5.3.2.1. Millgram and authority***

From 1960 to 1963, Millgram carried out experiments which looked at the obedience level of experimental subjects in following commands, some of which they believed would cause suffering to another person or even put their life in danger (Millgram, 1974). A number of these experimental investigations had, as their central *modus*

*operandi*, an experimental subject being told by the experimenter to give a person electric shocks of varying levels (*ibid*). The reason for doing this, the subjects were told, was to try to understand how people learn. The overall results were surprising in that they suggested that ordinary young Americans were willing to follow commands from an authority even if it meant causing severe pain and possibly killing another person (*ibid*):

Many subjects will obey the experimenter no matter how vehement the pleading of the person being shocked, no matter how painful the shocks seem to be, and no matter how much the victim pleads to be let out ... It is the extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority that constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation.

(Millgram 1974: 5)

Following his original work, Milgram went on to carry out further laboratory simulations on over a thousand subjects in different situations and Zimbardo describes some of the “influence principles” he found which enable people to act in an abusive way counter to their own and other’s expectations as:

- The presentation of an acceptable justification or “cover story” for the actions to be carried out;
- Some form of contractual obligation;
- Having the participants take up a meaningful role which carries learned positive values;
- Providing rules to be followed, even if at some point those rules no longer make sense;
- Changing the semantics of what is being done such as from “hurting” a learner to “helping” a learner;
- Reducing the likelihood that the actor will be personally held responsible for any possible negative outcomes of any of the acts;
- Using small increments in the violent acts and increasing them gradually;

- A gradual change in the authority from, say, just reasonable and rational to unjust, unreasonable and irrational;
- Making the “exit costs” high.

(Zimbardo, 2004: 27, 28)

### **5.3.2.2. Zimbardo and deindividuation**

Zimbardo has investigated the process of deindividuation, whereby perpetrators and or victims have their individuality removed and which then changes the agent’s willingness to inflict pain and discomfort on the patient (Zimbardo, 2004: 29). The procedure followed in one investigation was that of having young women deliver electric shocks to other young women. Half of those delivering the electric shocks had been deindividuated by being given identifying numbers and having their appearances concealed. Members of the other group were made to feel unique and were called by their names. Both groups were given the same cover story “the big lie they never questioned” (*ibid*). The deindividuated women delivered twice as much shock as the individuated ones with no differences between victims previously rated as pleasant and others although the individuated women shocked “pleasant victims” less (*ibid*). Zimbardo concludes:

Anything that makes a person feel anonymous, as if no one knows who he or she is, creates the potential for that person to act in evil ways – if the situation gives permission for violence.

(*ibid*)

Similar work, although in the very different settings of a children’s Halloween party on the one hand, and young men going to war on the other, have supported this thesis (Fraser and Watson cited in Zimbardo, 2004: 30, 31).

In the Stanford Prison Experiment, Zimbardo looked at how ordinary young men reacted to being placed in a prison environment either as guards or as prisoners

(Zimbardo, 2004: 28). The men were all volunteers and were all screened beforehand to make sure they had no history of drug use, crime or violence and no experience of playing the roles of prisoners or guards (Zimbardo, 2004: 39). The twenty four healthiest individuals were chosen to take part and randomly assigned the roles of prisoners or guards with a realistic prison situation being created at Stanford University Psychology department (Zimbardo, 1999). The researchers attempted to create a mindset comparable to real prisoners and guards and Zimbardo makes a crucial identification of the issues in play:

Central to this mind set were the oppositional issues of power and powerlessness, dominance and submission, freedom and servitude, control and rebellion, identity and anonymity, coercive rules and restrictive roles.

(Zimbardo 2004: 39)

The prisoners were made to wear a smock with their ID number on it and a hat made from a women's stocking so that they did not have any obvious distinguishing hairstyles. The guards wore military style uniforms and reflecting sunglasses with the prisoners originally being "arrested" and "charged" by the Palo Alto Police Department (Zimbardo, 1999; Zimbardo 2004: 37, 38). The experiment was scheduled to run for two weeks but had to be terminated after only six days as:

Pacific young men were behaving sadistically in their role as guards, inflicting humiliation and pain and suffering on other young men who had the inferior status of prisoner. Some "guards" even reported enjoying doing so. Many of the intelligent, healthy college students who were occupying the roles of prisoner showed signs of "emotional breakdown" (i.e., stress disorders) so extreme that five of them had to be removed from the experiment within that first week.

(Zimbardo, 2004: 40)

Zimbardo records that he decided to terminate the experiment not only because of the increasing degradation and violence taking place but also because he was also becoming affected himself and was taking on the role of a rigid authority figure of a Prison Superintendent looking after "his" prison (Zimbardo, 2004: 40).

Important aspects of this experiment, which I have only very briefly summarized, are the anonymity of the participants, both guards and prisoners, as well as a social structure which allowed for and condoned certain attitudes and actions. Essentially the situational forces triumphed over the positive dispositions of the people involved (Zimbardo, 2004: 40). Zimbardo also notes a crucial difference between the research paradigm in Millgram's experiments and his own. In Millgram's work, there is a formal authority prompting the subject to obey but in this research on deindividuation there is not:

Rather, the situation is created in such a way that subjects act in accordance to paths made available to them, without thinking through the meaning or consequences of those actions.

(Zimbardo 2004: 33)

### ***5.3.2.3. Bandura and moral disengagement***

Albert Bandura describes a model having "mechanisms of moral disengagement" whereby a person's own moral control mechanisms can be disengaged from the actions they are carrying out (Bandura, 1999; 2002). Briefly outlined, these mechanisms are as follows (some of the examples are mine).

- **Moral justification:** where a person's actions are justified by making them appear to serve morally and socially good causes.
- **Euphemistic labelling:** where the description of the violent action is changed into something more opaque, neutral or even positive. In vivisection living, feeling nonhumans become "models" and in war zones dead children are "collateral damage".
- **Advantageous comparison:** a form of utilitarian calculus where the actions taken by the perpetrator are held to be causing less harm than what would happen if he did not act.
- **Displacement of responsibility:** where responsibility is not taken by the individual but by a recognized authority. The responsibility for the outcomes of a person's actions are therefore not their own because they are not seen as the active agent. In reality this is seldom done in a clear and open way with

the authority being far more subtle such as wanting something done but having no wish to be informed of the methods used. Two levels of responsibility are apparent; one where the perpetrators feel no responsibility for the actions carried out and a second where they do feel a strong responsibility to their superiors to act as they have been instructed. Cultural hatred can also lower the threshold for the disengagement of moral self-sanction and the perpetration of the abusive acts becomes easier.

- **Diffusion of responsibility:** where personal responsibility is weakened by, for example, the division of labour, so that people concentrate on their jobs but not on the outcome of the total operation, or through the use of group decision-making with the result that the person does not feel personally responsible and also becomes anonymous.
- **Disregard or distortion of consequences:** where the outcomes of the actions can be minimized or totally discredited so that it becomes much easier to morally disengage from terrible deeds. If the suffering of others is remote it is much easier to harm them.
- **Dehumanisation:** where the empathy people have for others who are like them and who feel and suffer in the same way is stripped away using various methods. Modern bureaucratic systems are one example of such methods.
- **Attribution of blame:** where a person's or their adversary's own circumstances allows moral disengagement. People thus come to see themselves as "faultless victims driven to injurious conduct by forcible provocation." Victims are blamed for bringing the abuse they receive upon themselves
- **Transformative power of progressive moral disengagement:** where the process of moral disengagement is not a sudden one but happens over time with minor acts of abuse repeated again and again and building up in small increments to worse and worse violence until originally unthinkable acts can be performed with little moral self censure.

(Bandura, 2002: 103-110)

It seems relevant, considering this enquiry about nonhumans to consider one experiment on dehumanization in particular. Bandura *et al.* (cited in Zimbardo, 2004:

31, 32) set up an experiment where college students were able to “overhear” a research assistant telling an experimenter that college students from another college were ready to start the experiment and either not describing them at all or describing them as either “nice” or as “animals”. The original college students were asked to give electric shocks to the students from the other college. The results showed the effects of labelling and “dehumanisation”:

The subjects gave the highest level of shock to those labeled in the dehumanizing way as “animals,” and their shock level increased linearly over the 10 trials. Those labeled “nice” were given the least shock, whereas the unlabeled group fell in the middle of these two extremes. Thus, a single word – *animals* - was sufficient to incite intelligent college students to treat those so labeled as if they deserved to be harmed.

(*ibid*)

Bandura describes how this work is deeply relevant:

The findings from research on moral disengagement are in accord with the historical chronicle of human atrocities. It requires conducive social conditions rather than monstrous people to produce atrocious deeds. Given appropriate social conditions, decent, ordinary people can do extraordinarily cruel things.

(Bandura, 2002: 109)

### **5.3.3. How some discourses can bring about harm**

Although I have treated the research outlined above in a compartmentalized way, it is really interlinked, complementary and in some places overlapping. Taken as a whole, it gives a rounded understanding of the factors which can contribute to otherwise moral individuals carrying out abusive actions. I maintain that many of these enabling factors can be enacted either in part or totally by the exercise of relevant discourses. This is one of the ways I claim discourses supporting nonhuman animal farming actually work to influence people who would not normally be cruel, to support cruelty and murder on a monumental scale.

In order to get an overview of what I am proposing I will compare the work described above and show how discourses can contribute to the production of the relevant conditions which enable good people to do very bad things.

Of the 23 factors identified by Millgram (1974), Zimbardo (1999, 2004) and Bandura (1999, 2002) and which were described earlier, 21 may be facilitated or constructed by discourses as shown in the table below.

Millgram	Zimbardo	Bandura
Justification, rationale, cover story <b>D</b>	Deindividuation of perpetrator <b>D</b>	Moral justification <b>D</b>
Contract	Deindividuation of victim <b>D</b>	Euphemistic labeling <b>D</b>
Meaningful roles <b>D</b>	Established social/societal channels <b>D</b>	Advantageous comparison <b>D</b>
Basic rules even if they become unreasonable <b>D</b>		Displacement of responsibility <b>D</b>
Altering semantics <b>D</b>		Diffusion of responsibility <b>D</b>
Diffusion of responsibility <b>D</b>		Disregard or distortion of consequences <b>D</b>
Small beginning and small increments of abuse		Dehumanisation <b>D</b>
Influence authority changes from reasonable to unreasonable <b>D</b>		Attribution of blame <b>D</b>
Exit costs are high <b>D</b>		Transformative power of moral disengagement <b>D</b>

**Figure 22: Factors which can be facilitated/constructed by discourse. D = can be facilitated/constructed by discourse.**

It is certainly possible that more factors than this can be construed as discourse assisted but the table gives some idea of the congruence between possible harmful discourses and the conditions they are able to facilitate.

Here are some examples of how this creative action can work.

- **Justification and authority.** Discourses justify actions because in the ideology within them acting in a particular way is the correct or moral or justifiable way to act. Even though individuals may have authority, authority comes through them from the discourse and directly from the discourses themselves.
- **Roles.** Social roles are partly constructed in discourse. As a person uses certain types of words and ways of addressing people and uses particular constructions depending on the situation, they enter into their role. The same man will use different discourses as he enacts being a father, a husband, a policeman and an amateur football coach. Many roles have high social standing and elements of trust attached to them.
- **Deindividuation.** Some discourses can bring about deindividuation of victims by constructing an “out” group consisting of the nameless, faceless, identical, without family or individual worth. The “out” group, in other words, are “Others”. On the other hand, perpetrators act as one of a group along with all those who share the discourse.
- **Diffusion of responsibility.** Being part of a discourse with other people who think alike diffuses responsibility. This then means that individuals are assigned less responsibility for their actions. Discourses which have become common sense may remove all responsibility from the agent as their actions are merely a response to common sense and moral doubt is not an issue.
- **Dehumanisation.** I take this to mean the removal of the conception of a being, not necessarily human, with whom one can have empathy, who is seen as having an individual identity, feelings, social attachments, and positive and negative interests in life. Some discourses are able to do this very effectively, a fact evidenced in the discourses present in genocide, racism and sexism.
- **High exit costs.** Renouncing a discourse might be a painful thing entailing the loss of self esteem as well as social support and acceptance of friends or colleagues and so the “exit costs” can be very high.
- **Euphemism and changing semantics.** Discourses use special words and descriptions to portray the world in a particular way – one which supports the

world view of the discourse. These practices can also be used to distort the perception of the outcomes of actions

- **Societal channels and basic rules for behaviour.** It is implicit within discourses that there are ways to act which are acceptable and others which are not. Being in or a part of that discourse allows some options in so far as behaviour is concerned but closes off others.
- **Blaming and displacement of responsibility.** Attaching blame to others, including the victim, is a way of taking away the personal responsibility from the perpetrator.
- **Advantageous comparison.** Elitism in a discourse allows the victim to be stripped of their inherent value, to become worthless or even something which needs to be disposed of
- **Transformative power.** Because of their pervasiveness and continual use, discourses are able to bring about incremental changes in ethical and moral viewpoints.

What I am proposing, in terms of the research which underpins this thesis, therefore, is the following:

1. Discourses are one of the essential mechanisms for the practice of nonhuman animal farming; from the farmer right through to the final user of the “products”. They are present at the level of the real.
2. These discourses are mechanisms which generate the production of those events or conditions, outlined above, which make it possible for people to act in ways which are morally incongruent for them. They bring about states of moral disengagement at the level of the actual.
3. These states of moral disengagement, interacting with the products of other mechanisms, facilitate people sanctioning by word, action or silence, or being actively involved in themselves, the maltreatment and murder of billions of nonhumans at an empirical level.

Albert Bandura makes this insightful comment:

Edmund Burke's aphorism that, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" needs a companion adage under our technologically specialised realities: "The triumph of evil requires a lot of good people, doing a bit of it, in a morally disengaged way, with indifference to the human suffering they collectively cause."

(Bandura, 2002:113)

I would only add to this, that it also applies to nonhuman suffering writ large by orders of magnitude.

In the next chapter I analyse texts from *Farmers' Weekly*, a popular South African farming magazine, searching for the discourses present and looking at their possible effects including ways in which they socially construct nonhuman animals.



## Chapter 6

*I picture the reality in which we live in terms of military occupation. We are occupied the way the French and Norwegians were occupied by the Nazis during World War II, but this time by an army of marketers. We have to reclaim our country from those who occupy it on behalf of their global masters.*

Ursula Franklin.

*An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.*

Mohandas Gandhi.

### 6. Discourse analysis

A number of writers have identified the importance of language with regard to the oppression of nonhumans. Spiegel (1996) has examined language which is oppressive of both nonhumans and black people, especially in relation to slavery. Dunayer (2001) has written extensively of the linguistic strategies employed to oppress nonhumans, her work ranging over a wide field including zoos, farming, vivisection, hunting and aquaria. Kaloff (2000) surveyed the various discourses of animal concern as well as discourses surrounding sport hunting, sex, animals, women and weapons (Kaloff *et al*, 2003; 2004). Stibbe (2001) examined the oppressive role of discourses in the exploitation of animals by the animal products industry (2001), the discursive construction of the relationship between pigs and humans (2003), and the discursive construction of fish in ecological discourse (2006). Glenn (2004) has also documented the immense power of discourses supporting the factory farming industry.

The analysis given below both complements and extends this body of work as it examines discourses concerned with what might be described as “traditional commercial farming” as opposed to “factory farming”. Interestingly, similar discourses to those found in intensive agricultural systems are also found here suggesting that they might be widespread both geographically and over different forms of farming.

Farmers' Weekly is a well established farming magazine and, while it covers many different aspects of agriculture, it also has features on such things as cooking, buildings, motoring, indigenous trees, a section for classified advertisements and the "Hitching Post" for those readers seeking partners. It is printed in colour in South Africa and distributed over Southern Africa.

The articles I analyse all concern nonhuman animal farming in some way or other although they range over many perspectives such as the importance of good pasture to dairy farming to how to kill animals on a game farm to obtain the best meat. Details of the texts analysed appear in Appendix I.

As mentioned earlier, the 22 articles contain a total of over 22 000 words and are written by 11 authors. They were published over a six month period between 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005. To simplify reading, extracts are referenced by their article number in Appendix 1.

Mc Kee explains how it can be helpful as an aid to seeing things from a different aspect to change the sex or colour of actors in particular texts (McKee 2003: 107-110). I have taken the first article, concerning cattle for the Botswana bushveld, transposed the nonhumans into humans and written a shortened version of the text. Of course there are significant differences between nonhumans and humans but there are also many crucial similarities and the "new" article makes chilling reading. Both versions of the text are found in Appendix II.

Following on from the earlier abduction and retroduction, I now refer in this chapter to farmed nonhumans, when appropriate, as slaves and to their "owners" as slave owners.

### **6.1. *Lexicalisation of discourses***

I use lexicalisation as a primary identification tool for discourses. The words coded are part of what might be described as the mainstream lexicon of a particular discourse, that is, words which would be expected to be used in that discourse. For

example, a football discourse might be expected to contain words such as *back four*, *offside trap* or *striker*. If such words were used in, say, a business presentation about sales teams, these words would signal the presence of a football discourse and the possible portrayal of a sales team as akin to a football team. It might even be said that a football discourse had, colonised the sales discourse (Fairclough 2001:163,164).

The words coded in the lexicalisation do not represent the entire extent of any discourse but only flag the presence of it. The discourse itself can extend far beyond those words and may be detected and active in numerous ways such as the choice of pronouns, types of argument and the backgrounding or foregrounding of specific actors, events and arguments. For example a pacifist discourse might use words such as “non-violence” or “ahimsa”, which would be part of its expected lexicon and signal its presence, but it might also use arguments suggesting that violence leads to further violence or it might describe all parties as victims rather than some as perpetrators and others as victims. Similarly, it might list poverty as a form of violence. This is just as much a part of the discourse as any key words. The discourse, then, may present itself in multiple ways.

### **6.1.1 Numbers**

Although I present some data in mathematical form it should not be understood as something akin to physical measurement such as measuring the wavelengths present in the emission spectrum of sodium. There is an element of interpretation in the production of this data in a number of areas. For example, the word *antibiotic* and the term *pH* are part of the mainstream lexicon of science and when they are used in the articles as scientific terms rather than, say, metaphorically, they are coded as part of the lexicon of science in the analysis. However, the case is not always so clear cut and there are grey areas about what words should or should not have been included as part of a particular discourse. Where there is doubt I have relied on the context of the usage as the guide to the classification which I have assigned. Bearing this in mind, it is likely slightly different figures would be produced by others examining these texts in the same way as I have done but I propose that the overall findings would be little changed and any conclusions I draw are still equally valid.

### **6.1.2. Overview**

Firstly I discuss the discourses I have identified and give examples of texts which illustrate each of them. After this I go on to look at how nonhuman animals are constructed in the texts. Following this, I examine how the ideological powers of the discourses can explain and support one possible critical realist view of how they are essential to the phenomenon of nonhuman animal farming.

Three major and one minor discourse were identified in these articles. These discourses do not exist in isolation but are intertwined and overlapping. They are conjugated and, in some cases, the same word or words are representative of more than one discourse. This is to be expected as, in daily life, language and practice are continually changing, borrowing and synthesising.

I have given names to each of the discourses intended to illustrate the dominant ideology embedded in each of them and the way they construct the world. For each discourse I give examples which illustrate different aspects of their ideology. In examples, the lexical selections for the particular discourse are written in italics.

### **6.2. *Discourse of production***

The production discourse uses words which are commonly found in the manufacturing and extractive industries such as gold mining, iron production, motor car manufacturing, and the manufacture of plastic bags. Words such as “rate”, “product”, “process”, and “profit” signal the presence of the discourse. The lexicalisation analysis shows there is a strong discourse of production in all of the 22 articles.

The words “production”, “producing”, “product”, “producers” or “produced” appear 122 times in all and are found in every one of the articles - an average of over five times for each article.

Here is one example showing the lexicalisation in the production discourse. This piece concerns the nonhuman known as the “Belgium Blue” which has extremely large muscles due to a genetic defect

For beef *producers* the *value* lies in being able to *produce* calves with low birth weights, but over a shorter gestation period, and with a higher *feed-conversion rate* and a high beef *index*.

(11)

Beef “producers” is the name given to the slave owners who are running a system which produces nonhuman flesh for sale. The “value” referred to concerns the profits which the humans can get by using cows which have short gestation periods, meaning they are able to produce more babies in a given amount of time who can be killed and their bodies sold. Not only that but these babies will gain weight rapidly and at a relatively low cost meaning faster, cheaper flesh production and bigger profits.

The next example extols the value of using artificial insemination in the process of producing goats:

The risk of diseases, which are normally associated with live boars, are minimised with the use of AI. *Cost of production* is lowered, as there is a *saving* of housing space, feed, *labour*, veterinary *costs* and boar *depreciation*.

(9)

The phrase “boar depreciation” transforms a male goat into a financial asset and his aging is described in the same way as the financial depreciation of a motor car or other machine as it wears out with use over time. The excerpt overall is about production risks and costs and ways of keeping them both down.

In this next example, Dohne sheep are themselves the product, although the example is mainly concerned with sales:

The relationship of fleece to body weight (WPP%) is at an *optimal level* of 6% to 7%. Loyal *clients* return year after year to Michael's farm: at each of the past five *sales* the Swarco Stud has consistently achieved the highest *average price* and at four of these *sales* the highest *top price* at Dohne *production sales* in South Africa.

(3)

The table below, which is from the same article, is titled as “production data” and gives detailed information on the various parameters which are used to measure the product. The nonhumans are transformed into mathematical data.

Average production of rams at May 2004 sale

	Sept ‘02 drop	Jan ‘03 drop
Number offered	31 rams	44 rams
Body wt at 12 months	66.8kg	64.1kg
Clean fleece wt 12 months	3.78kg	4.57kg
Fibre diam 12 months	20.2 $\mu$	19.3 $\mu$
Body wt on sale date	93kg	87.5kg
Fibre diam on sale date	20.9 $\mu$	1.8 $\mu$
CV% of fibre diameter	1.43%	19.0%
Comfort factor	99.9%	99.3%
Scrotal circumference	35.9cm	35.6cm

(3)

This is also an example of a quality control system, an essential part of any production system, being used to alert the manufacturer to problems and guarantee the customers satisfaction. Implicit here is the idea of a standard product for sale and individual living beings do not exist in this calculus. This is also an example of how two discourses combine or overlap or hybridise as this table is also highly scientific in nature.

As mentioned earlier, it is not only the individual words present in the lexicalisation which form the discourse but a much wider matrix. Words which are not normally counted as part the lexicon of a discourse can become transformed, as can be seen in the example below, where a flock of sheep becomes a “high producing flock”, while the prevention of babies from feeding from their mothers, the process of weaning, is transformed into a rate and given a mathematical index. In this way words such as “flock” and “weaning” are hijacked and subsumed into the discourse. The extract also refers to facilities, efficient systems, handling, quantities and economics which are all part of the lexicon of production:

Being one of the highest *producing* flocks in South Africa, with a weaning *rate* of **210%**, it earned him the Voermol Sheep Farmer of

the Year 2004 award. The feedlot was started as a natural extension of the flock, and the *facilities* have been designed for easy feeding and *handling* of the sheep. An *efficient system* of mixing feed in large *quantities* ensures, that all the animals on the farm are correctly and *economically* fed.

(6)

Should there be any question that farming in the production discourse is really about money and profit margins this dense financial extract leaves little doubt.

The *base cost structures* of *successful* dairy farms are *5% to 15%* lower than *average*. According to Beca, the *base cost structure* per cow is defined as all *expenses* after *adjustments* for *capitalised expenses* and feed on hand, including *depreciation on management costs* but excluding *purchased feed costs* and nitrogen. This is divided by *peak* cow numbers. (*Peak* cows have completed three months of a lactation.)

Pasture-based dairy *production* has a high proportion of *variable costs*, which normally constitute *70% to 85%* of *operating expenses*.

(12)

Cows and their bodily functions, eating and producing milk, are reduced to variables in the financial calculations about the production system

### **6.2.1. Nonhuman animals as machines in the production process**

In these articles, the nonhuman animals are often described in the same way as machines might be in a factory or other workplace. The machine construction of nonhuman animals is clear in the extracts below. The first concerns cattle in Botswana

Cattle bred for the Botswanan veld have to be *hardy, structurally efficient and fertile*. They also have to *produce good carcasses* and meat of a high quality.

(1)

The nonhuman's task is to "produce good carcasses" which have the qualities the farmer desires. They also have to function well in the prevailing environmental conditions - the Botswanan veld - and thus need to be "hardy", "structurally efficient" and "fertile". In other words, the nonhumans are constructed as machines for the job

which needs to be done and which will perform well under the conditions where they will be employed.

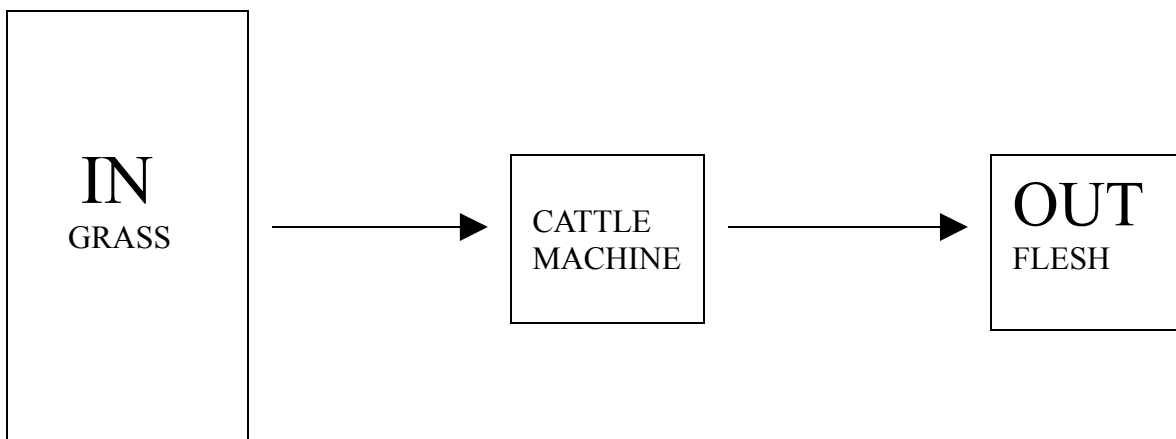
Much of this particular article is about the farmer “upgrading” his cattle to “Beefmasters” (a breed of cattle) using imported semen and artificial insemination. The South African Livestock and Stud Book Association (SASBA, 2005: 3) confirms the construction of these animals as machines and says about Beefmaster cattle “[t]he Beefmaster is a meat machine. The more effective the better. Any other goals are merely for show”.

In another of the articles, this time about a woman cattle farmer, a similar scenario is portrayed:

[The farmer] is a great believer in the fact that cattle farmers are not simply *raising beef*, but are rather selling grass that has been converted into beef by their cattle.

(19)

In common usage the term “beef” refers to the flesh of an ox or similar nonhuman animal. “Beeves” is a term sometimes used for cattle whose bodies will provide flesh but this is not a common usage and it is most likely to occur in the plural form and in the U.S.A. (“beeves”1989). So in this extract the meaning of “beef” in “raising beef” refers to the flesh of the nonhuman animal. In other words, this is a statement referring to nonhuman animals as machines whose task it is to transform grass into flesh.



As mentioned above, the Belgium Blue is a breed of cattle whose members have a genetic disorder causing muscular hypertrophy which results in large, very muscular bodies. Although this may have drawbacks for the nonhumans, such as difficulty in giving birth, it has come to make them valued flesh production for humans. The extract below extols the virtues of the Belgian Blue as a flesh production machine:

Today the Blue has become a *highly specialised beef animal* with the valuable traits of uniformity, tender meat, efficient feed conversion, good fertility and high maternal aptitude. Aided by the muscular hypertrophy gene, animals are large.

(11)

The paragraph changes a sentient nonhuman animal, into a “highly specialized beef animal” whose mission in life is to produce tender flesh, in the form of their own body, for consumption by human animals at a low overall cost and with few technical problems in the production system. Although named as an animal this sentient nonhuman is clearly apprehended as a machine.

The verb “has become” implies some kind of agency on behalf of the nonhuman, which is obviously untrue and is euphemistic in that it stands instead of a more accurate description such as “has over years been genetically modified”.

The term “the Blue” is a form of mass noun in the same way that, for example, some writers might discuss the habits of “the elephant” or describe going out and seeing “elephant” rather than seeing elephants. Stibbe notes that using mass nouns instead of count nouns “... removes the individuality of the animals, with the ideological assumption that each animal is just a replaceable representative of a category” (Stibbe, 2001:151). In the above case the nonhuman animals are just that - replaceable machines.

Another example of this device appears in part of the article shown below which is about the “best” way to kill animals on game farms. The mass noun “impala” is used instead of the count noun “impalas” and the activity being carried out is described

unequivocally as “game-meat production” with an entire species defined, not this time as machines, but as suitable raw material for this process.

*Impala* are one of South Africa’s most important game species. The wide distribution and relative abundance of *impala* make the species suitable for *game-meat production*.

(2)

As might be expected there are many references to stock or livestock in the articles reducing the nonhumans to economic units.

Mass nouns are a common way of making members of another group into faceless non- individuals. This, as already noted in earlier chapters of this thesis, is an important condition for oppression and is found in, for example, racist discourse with terms such as “the Jew”, “the Negro” and “the Black”.

When the nonhuman animal is described in these articles, directly or indirectly as a machine this not a form of analogy or metaphor but a simple statement of practical use and ideological belief. As might be expected there are many references to stock or livestock in the articles which reduce the nonhumans to economic units.

Eventually, production machines, whether they produce motor cars, eggs, milk or flesh begin to wear out and become uneconomical and there comes a point where they need to be replaced. However, economics dictates that the machines are used to the maximum before being sold off themselves as shown in the two examples below:

... we have an 18-year old cow that is pregnant with her 15th calf. There's nothing wrong with her teeth and I think she is good for another three calves.

(20)

John stops mating his cows once they turn 11. At this age the mothers are allowed to wean their calves and regain body condition before they're slaughtered - so that John still gets a good price for them.

(1)

Once the machines are of no further use or alternatively, at a time when they will command the best price, they are sold off and *replacements* obtained (emphasis is mine).

Bertus knows he still has a number of years to go before the 600 cows, 200 heifers and 200 15-month-old *replacement heifers* in his beef herd are all Red Brangus-type stock.

(18)

The sheep enterprise consists of the stud of about 700 ewes, a commercial flock of around 2 000 ewes and their replacements.

(3)

### **6.3. Discourse of science**

This discourse was coded for, not only by a range of scientific words, but also scientific terms such as masses (often referred to as weights in the articles) and percentages. There were some instances when the numbers did not appear to represent scientific discourse and in those cases they were not coded. The lexicalisation analysis reveals science as a prominent discourse in these articles with 1740 instances of scientific terms being used and the discourse, like that of production, being present in all 22 articles.

Here is an example from an article on dairy farming showing scientific lexicalisation:

It is more difficult to reduce the cost of concentrates, as there is less opportunity to produce these on the farm. But smart purchasing decisions and good management of *supplements* - eliminating excessive use of *protein, minerals, trace elements* and other *additives* - can reduce costs.

(12)

This next article discusses breeding a particular type of cattle and how the effects of

the environment need to be taken into consideration:

“The *environment* will *determine* the animal's size within its *genetically pre-determined* limits (*genotype*). But it can't affect an individual's *genotype*,” says Wilhelm. “A change in frame size can only be done where there is enough *genetic variation* within a herd to select for this *trait*. It doesn't make sense to select for a smaller frame size in a harsh *environment*, as selection is a long-term *process* with long-term implications.” There is a positive link between frame size and *ADG* [average daily gain]. The larger the frame, the higher the *ADG*. The *Indu-Brazil* tends to be long in 'the leg with weaned calves tall and slim. “By selecting against size, we sacrifice growth ability and other characteristics. If a smaller-framed *genotype* is put in a favourable *environment*, it will develop to its *genotypical limit*.”

(20)

This is a longer example and shows how dense the text can be with scientific terms. The word *environment* is coded here as it has a specific scientific meaning in this context although the same word can be used in a non-scientific way. *Indu-Brazil* is coded as it is the name for a breed of cattle; breeding being a process of genetic manipulation, practiced in different forms over thousands of years, which uses scientific principles and methods to produce nonhumans with particular characteristics. Collins dictionary describes a breed as, “A group of organisms within a species, esp. a group of domestic animals originated and maintained by man and having a clearly defined set of characteristics” (“breed” 1979). There is no such thing as a natural breed of cattle or dogs or sheep or any other nonhuman animal, they have all been artificially produced by human manipulation of their reproduction. In the past this took the form of preventing some members of the group from reproducing, by separation, killing or castration but now artificial insemination, embryo transplantation and cloning are also available.

Once again, lexicalisation is only used to flag the discourse but does not represent the full extent of it and the texts not only use scientific terms but also use scientific forms of argument drawing on a presumed understanding of scientific theory. This may also be seen in the following example from a different article but which is also about breeding:

One of Bertus's current *breeding* herds is made up of *Brahman-type* cows running with *Bovelder-type* veld bulls. The resulting calves are 25% *Brahman* for hardiness, from the cow's side, with a red colour and good milk production from the *Bovelder-type* bulls. The other herd is made up of *Bovelder-type* cows running with *Brangus* veld bulls. The cows provide their calves with the red colour, the good milk production and high *fertility*, while the *Brahman genetics* in the *Brangus* bulls give the calves hardiness and a smooth coat.

(18)

Words such as “genetics” and “Bovelder-type” signal scientific discourse but the extract is doing far more than just using scientific words. It is describing taking one genetically manipulated group of cattle and mixing its genetic complement with another group so that the offspring will have certain qualities desired by the farmer. It describes using scientific method, directed and supported by scientific theory, to produce nonhumans with the inherited traits of “hardiness”, “good milk production”, “red colour” and “high fertility” and quantifies the outcomes in terms of the percentage of inherited characteristics from each grandparent.

Scientific discourse runs in a matrix through all of these articles, sometimes combined with the production discourse but also in more traditional forms such as pure research. The three ways in which scientific discourse appears are:

- as an integral part of the production process;
- in the solving of production problems;
- as part of research and development of the production process.

I will look at each of these in turn.

### 6.3.1. Science in the production process

Here science is used as part of the production process itself to maximise the amount of product and the speed with which it can be produced. This example is about an automated milking system. Once again the lexical markers have been emphasised:

The *system* consists of two bins, each running on its own *suspended rail* on each side of the parlour. There are 30 milking *points* on a side, and each bin *dispenses a predetermined* amount of

*pelleted concentrate*, between *1kg* and *6kg*, into each cow's feeding trough. The *quantity* of concentrate is *manually set* with a *computerised switch* and is *varied* according to whether it is an early or late *lactation* herd being milked at that moment. It is also dependant on pasture *protein levels* as *determined* by regular *readings* by means of a *New Zealand pasture meter*.

(14)

The nonhumans are part of the entire scientifically based production system with pelleted food concentrate dispensed in predetermined amounts calculated by the cow's stage of lactation as well as pasture protein levels. Concentrate is fed to the cow at one end while milk is extracted by a machine from another extremity.

This next example is about semen which has been "tapped", a quaint euphemistic term, from boars for use in artificial insemination and shows how science is used to monitor the quality of this valuable product:

Every *batch* of *semen* in the *Pig Gen lab* is meticulously *screened* for *mass motility*, progressive movement of *spermatozoa*, *percentage* of *live sperm* and *sperm concentration*, as well as *pH* if this is necessary. Hence there should be no reason why better results cannot be achieved with *AI* relative to natural service. There is a high *uniformity* and *consistency* of performance and carcass quality in pigs from different units using the same source of *seedstock*. There is less *variation* with a few superior boars than with a lot of commercial boars of differing standards.

(9)

It is claimed in this excerpt that the product has high uniformity and consistency of performance leading to less variation in the offspring and good carcasses. In short, science offers a quantifiable, reliable product to the customers, one that they can trust. Not only that but it makes the claim, even before this fragile new life has begun, that her or his corpse will have the desired economic qualities. Science offers the conception of a new life but in truth it nominates the new individual's death as its ultimate objective.

This small extract sells scientific methods over natural sexual reproduction, a point of view clearly emanating from a position of power and self interest.

In the next example, quality control takes the form of measurements of another type of product, this time male sheep, who are to be used for reproduction purposes. Specific scientific tests, one of which is carried out by a veterinarian, a scientifically qualified person, are done to ensure the product is up to standard.

Michael ensures that the rams he supplies to his clients are not only of superior *genetic* merit but that they are *fertile*, *fit* and ready to mate. To qualify to be offered on auction, Michael's rams have to pass a number of rigid *tests*, including a second *fibre-diameter test*, a *genital-soundness test* and a *libido* and *mating-dexterity test* carried out by a *vet*. No ram failing these *tests* is offered for sale.

(3)

Once again, science is used to evaluate the quality of the product using multiple measurable parameters and any product (a sentient nonhuman animal) which is sub-standard is not offered for sale.

Another example, high in scientific lexical density and showing similar sentiments, is given below:

Once the *tests* are done, all rams are subjected to a rigorous intermediate *inspection* and *veterinary examination*. *Performance indices* are *calculated*, and each ram is *classified* according to its *figures* and *conformation*. To qualify for a Merit Certificate, its *growth index* must *exceed 115* and the *scrotum circumference* must be at least *1cm* above the *peer group average*. Rams that don't meet the minimum requirements of a *growth index* of *85* and a *scrotum circumference* of more than *4cm* below the *average* are eliminated.

(16)

In this world, failing to meet the required standards, a high enough growth index or a large enough scrotum means you are eliminated – and that can have very bad consequences.

Science is not only used to monitor the quality of the product but the efficiency of the production process itself which is essential for maximizing profits. The example

below, from an article about poultry terms, describes how efficient each machine, that is the different types of birds, can be expected to be:

Feed *conversion* - This is usually expressed as a ratio of feed consumed to liveweight of eggs or meat produced. This *efficiency indicator* is often as low as **2:1** for broilers; **3:1** for liveweight turkeys; **2,4:1** for white egg layers and **2,5:1** for brown hens.

(4)

### 6.3.2. Science solving problems

Science is used to solve problems in the production system. Below is an example of a chicken farmer who was using essential micro-organisms (EM) but having problems with his production system and asked for scientific help:

Then Jannie called in the help of Ikuo Yoshida, director of the **EM Research** Organisation of South Africa (Emrosa). Ikuo suggested adding *sulphuric acid* to the EM (to help stop black *algae* growth), and putting EM in the feed mix. 'That did the trick,' says Pieter. 'We now spray EM on the poultry food as it's offloaded from the trucks, at a rate of **4,5 litres of multiplied EM per ton**. This means **1 200 litres of EM - two litres of stock EM, 10 litres of molasses and 188 litres of water** - are sprayed on the feed.

(17)

Science comes to the rescue of the capitalist enterprise and the birds do not die before they are murdered.

Another example shows how science is used to pick up and diagnose problems, in dairy farming.

**Mastitis** is the largest eroding factor on the profitability of a dairy farm. Milk *recording* is an invaluable tool in managing milk quality as the farmer gets regular *feedback* on the *somatic cell counts (SCC)* and *bacteria counts* of his milk. An **SCC** of less than **350 000** and a *bacteria count* of less than **50 000** should be regarded as the *norm*. Milk *recording data* makes it possible to identify cows suffering from unacceptably high *counts*. Having identified the cows, the farmer can rectify the situation. The most common cause of high *counts* is usually related to the milking

machine - either a *fault* in the *machine* or a faulty practice on the human side.

(21)

The final example in this section is about game farming and a professor of Animal Science describes his research and why a different method of production will produce a better quality product.

Similarly, if a buck has been chased - or is wounded and runs a distance - the *energy* is used up and there is none left to form *lactic acid* when the animal dies. The meat will then have a high *pH*, and will be dark, firm and dry to the taste. Hoffman says most of South Africa's game meat is dark, firm and dry because the animals are *stressed* when they are killed.

The lower the *adrenaline* in the animal carcass, and the *cooler* the *conditions* on culling, the slower the *pH decline* and the higher the eventual carcass *pH*. The *pH* of a live animal is around *7,0* and that of a carcass around *5,6* about 24 hours after death, says Hoffman. A rapid *decline* over a *period* of 24 hours and/or a *pH* above *6,0* produces meat that is tough and dry. A moderate *decline*, to around *pH 5,6*, over a period of 24 hours produces tender meat.

(2)

The article goes on to suggest changing the normal production process and instead of murdering the nonhumans during the day, doing it at night.

### 6.3.3. Science as part research and development

A role for science in research and developing the production process is also constructed in the articles. In this first example the farmer is improving or “upgrading” his production machines using scientific methods based on scientific theory, so that their offspring will produce more flesh for him to sell. “Upgrading” is a term which might be expected to be applied to things such as mobile phones or computers but here refers to nonhuman animals, who are once again reified as machines:

John established *purebred Bonsmara* and *Hereford* herds in 1980 to breed his bulls, so the cows were traditionally mated to these *breeds* in the commercial herd. Today, however, he no longer uses

*Herefords* in the commercial herd and has upgraded the *Bonsmara* herd to *Beefmaster* by means of *AI*. John has also moved over to using self-bred *Beefmaster* bulls on his commercial cows in multi-sire herds at the *ratio* of *one* bull to *40* females. He's in the process of upgrading his entire commercial herd to *Beefmasters*.

(1)

The excerpt below describes how another farmer is attempting to develop “functionally efficient animals”:

*Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) breeding values* allow Ansoria to fine tune her *breeding* goals, "I want *functionally efficient* animals that are *genetically* and *phenotypically* sound. That's why I don't depend entirely on *computer figures*. When I've done the *computer* work I go out and study the animals before deciding on which bull must go to which cow.

(19)

#### 6.3.4. Breeds as brands

There is a major theme of breeds running through these articles where science, or more specifically the discipline of genetics, is used to engineer the development of better machines of production, each with its own particular specifications and special attractions for the slave owner. Science acts in the service of production to “improve”, “upgrade” and “develop” the nonhuman animals who are its disposable machines.

Although I code the different breeds of cattle in the science lexicon they are an integral part of the discourse of production as well and, in many instances, could also be coded there. The discussion of breeds is so pervasive that there are 246 instances of breed names found in 18 of the 22 articles (over 80 %), with an average of over 13 instances for each article. The science of genetics is prominent with words relating to genetics appearing over 90 times in 17 of the 22 articles.

As mentioned earlier, breed is a term for living beings which have particular characteristics desired by, and brought about by, human animals controlling the reproduction of nonhumans. One article on chicken farming explains:

Dual-purpose - All commercial hybrids are specifically bred for meat or egg production. The heavier brown-egg strains are the closest thing to a dual-purpose breed.

(4)

Breeds are manufactured to have specific characteristics so that they can be used for specialised purposes and are described in terms of specifications, in the same way as a brand of motor car, washing machine or vacuum cleaner.

Here one of the articles describes some of the specifications for one brand of cattle, the Indu-Brazil:

The build and quality should meet Indu-Brazil breed standards, namely: conformation with muscling, length, depth and width; a strong topline and well-placed hump on top of the shoulders; a strong and sloping pelvic structure with widely spaced pin-bones and thurls; and a wide chest open between the forelimbs. The animals must be calm and easy to handle. The cows must have enough milk to raise a good calf and must have well-developed maternal instincts. Colours can be mostly white, grey and red but all have strong pigmentation.

(20)

In this next example, information is given about which brands of cattle are best for particular environmental conditions:

The European *Bos taurus* beef breeds are classified by animal scientists as metabolic types, as they are rounded at the shoulders in order to keep in their body heat in the cold northern hemisphere. The African *Bos indicus* breeds are classified as respiratory types because their narrower shoulders allow them to get rid of excessive heat.

(15)

In this article there is discussion about the possible registration of the Charbray as a breed in its own right. This is remarkably similar to the way in which a new brand of machine such as a motor car might be evaluated:

An example is the *Charbray* study, which includes comparison tables of pre-weaning weights, weaning weights, feedlot results and

carcass characteristics of different breeds like the *Charolais*, *Brahman*, *Brangus* and *Braford*. In all these tables the *Charbray*

performed well, thus substantiating the viability of registering it as a new breed.

(7)

Exchange “torque”, “cornering” and “efficiency” for “weaning weights”, “carcass characteristics” and “feedlot results” and the paragraph would not be out of place in the consumer/lifestyle genre of publication - perhaps a *What Cow?* magazine.

The creation, development and production of these brands is no informal affair but is closely monitored and controlled by authorities. The articles refer to various breeders’ associations and, in addition, they mention the *Registrar of Animal Improvement* (7), the *Animal Improvement Act* (7), the *Animal Improvement Institute* (11), the *SA Registrar of Livestock Improvement* (11), and the *ARC Animal Improvement Institute* (16).

The improvement referred to offers nothing fundamentally beneficial to the nonhuman animal of course - often just the opposite. In fact what might be described as improvement may well be severely detrimental to the slaves themselves such as rapid mass gain or abnormal breast development in some breeds of chickens.

Although breeding has been practiced for thousands of years, major advances in genetics over the last 50 years, including starting to understand what genes are, how they are inherited and how they work, have opened up many new possibilities. For the makers of living brands, i.e. breeders, building new production machines requires the incorporation of genes and there are specific genes which are sought for insertion into the final machine to give it the qualities which are desired. This is now very sophisticated and the articles mention “muscling” genes, “marbling” genes, “tenderness” genes and “stress” genes.

So the possession of a particular gene might pay significant dividends making the use of high tech testing to identify it worthwhile:

DNA samples from 100 *Ngunis* were sent to Australia for GeneStar testing. As many as 97% of them had the tenderness gene, but lacked the marbling gene, seemingly suggesting the benefits of crossing *Ngunis* with the *Pustertaler*, which has both genes.

(7)

The importance of the genes is represented in the excerpt below merely in terms of the effect they will have on the extent of the pleasure humans will enjoy as they consume the flesh of the nonhuman:

He said two genes that influence the taste of meat - the tenderness gene and the marbling gene - are both found in the *Pustertaler*. Marbling is the fine, evenly distributed flecks of fat found through the muscle fibre. Studies have shown that marbling has a significant beneficial influence on juiciness and flavour. In many countries premiums are paid for high levels of marbling.

(7)

The ideological notion of actually building a specific brand of live production machine is taken even further in the next examples. The extract below is very specific about the proportions of each brand needed to go into the final mix to produce the required machine:

Finally, all of the selected heifers from Bertus's original crossing programme are put to *Red Brangus* bulls only, bought from sales around KwaZulu-Natal, to achieve his intended *Red Brangus*-type breed of  $3/8$  *Brahman* x  $5/8$  *Angus*.

(18)

Then, in this final example all conception of the nonhuman animals as living beings is lost as they morph into nothing more than fabricated composites:

Any livestock owner can cross animals with anything else and develop new composites ... Ramsey said that as people were developing a 50:50 / 25:75 composite using the *Nguni* and the *Pustertaler*, it was necessary to decide ...

(7)

So, the nonhuman animals serve as production machines but different types of machine have their own special qualities. Nonhumans become constructed as brands

and variations on a brand are made by selecting and incorporating the required genes by one method or another. The nonhumans are both the machine and the product it produces

#### **6.4. Discourse of slavery**

The third discourse present in all articles is that of enslavement. As mentioned earlier a number of writers have drawn parallels between slavery and the treatment of nonhuman animals today (Spiegel, 1996; Wise, 2002). However, a straightforward lexical analysis reveals relatively few traces of any such discourse in these articles. There are no slaves, no plantations or slave ships, whips, masters or overseers, although branding is mentioned.

All this might mean that there is simply no discourse of slavery at all or it could mean that this specific discourse has become so deeply entrenched it has its own peculiar lexicon for nonhuman animal slavery which has become invisible as part of a slavery discourse. In other words, the lexicon has become so unremarkable, so normal, it is difficult to discern or even imagine that there is anything resembling slavery here. This would also be true for the discourse as a whole.

In order to search for traces of this discourse, it was necessary to define exactly what the characteristics of an enslavement discourse must include, and to use these as a frame for further examining the text. I propose that a discourse of slavery, human or nonhuman, is characterized by at least six major indicators:

1. Ownership by another being
2. Loss of liberty
3. Loss of personal identity
4. Lack of protection or rights including rights protecting bodily integrity and the right to life.
5. Lack of any significant agency.
6. Lack of respect for the integrity of family units.

### 6.4.1. Ownership

There is no question about ownership in these articles examined since it is understood that every single nonhuman mentioned is owned by a human. In these articles not only the nonhuman's bodies but the products of their bodies - wool, milk, semen, eggs, babies, flesh, skin and bone, genes and even faeces, are claimed to be owned by humans.

The ownership of every aspect of nonhumans by human animals is shown in such phrases as, “*my* first Beefmaster semen” (1) “*his own* breeding cattle” (5), “*his* meat conforms to” (5), “*His* first Pustertaler - Nguni calves were born” (7), “*custodian* of the breed” (7), “enlarge *their* gene pool” (9), “*their* genetic material” (9), “*their* boars” (9), “know that *our* semen” (9), “*My* goats' adaptability is part of *my* breeding success” (13), “I've had conception rates, of between 80% to 95% in *my* cow and heifer herd” (18), and “working with *my* cattle” (19), (emphasis has been added to all these quotations).

Just as human slaves were first and foremost property, so are nonhuman slaves. Not only are nonhuman slaves themselves property, any offspring the slaves may have is owned by the slave owner just as it in human slavery.

The ownership of the nonhuman animals is a taken for granted fact, beyond question or argument, and does not even have to be stated, indicating that the discourse has become naturalized and is regarded as common sense. This is what Fairclough describes as ideological common sense or “common sense in the service of sustaining unequal power relations” (Fairclough, 2001: 70).

Total power and ownership are symbolically and practically displayed in article 1 by the action of branding; the burning of the mark of the owner into the animal's flesh. This type of mutilation was also done to human slaves (Spiegel, 1996: 28-32). It is described in the article as follows:

During the process each animal is:

- branded laterally on the left buttock with John Kempf's brand and the year;
- branded on the left cheek with the zone brand 012.

(1)

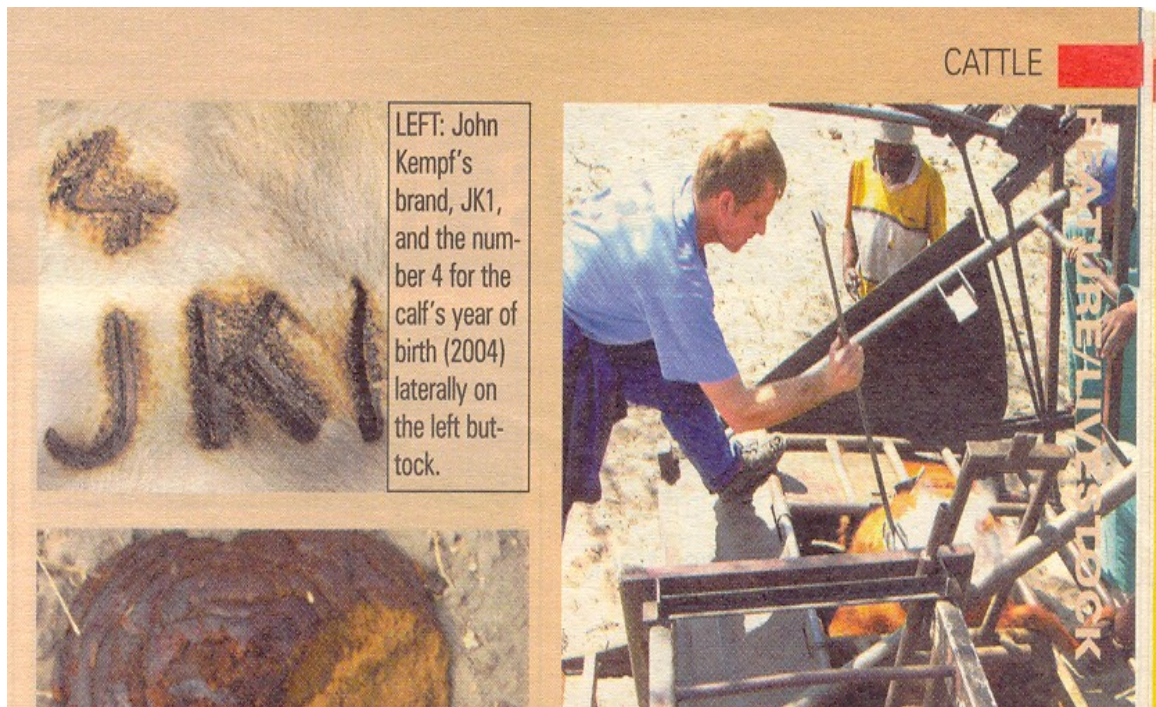


Figure 23: Putting a hot iron on to a nonhuman baby and the burn scars which are produced (*ibid*)

### 6.4.2. Liberty and agency

The nonhuman animals lack any real agency and the articles detail how their feeding, reproduction, and movements are controlled, how they are bought and sold, their family groups are broken up and they are mutilated. The nonhuman animals have no choice about when they will reproduce or who with whom and may be subjected to artificial insemination or embryo transplantation. Even during natural sexual reproduction between nonhuman animals, the human animal is portrayed as the active agent:

He first used Red Poll and Simmentaler bulls on the animals and then put Afrikaner bulls on the crossbred cows.

(1)

Without agency from birth to death, the slaves are conceived and murdered at a time and a place decided upon by the slave owners; they live a life devoid of any authentic agency, existing only as the possessions of others.

### **6.4.3. Family**

For human slaves, families could easily be broken up purely at the whim of the slave owner and this is the situation for the nonhumans described in these texts. Cows, sheep, cattle, pigs, chickens and goats have been shown, amongst other things, to communicate, to bond with their young, to display pleasure and to form social relationships including hierarchies (various authors cited in Farm Sanctuary, 2004: 8-15). Slave mothers have their babies taken away year after year after year. There is little, or no chance, of a secure family group despite that fact that these nonhumans would, under normal conditions form social groups. When the time is deemed appropriate by their owner, they are sold off to other slavers or to be murdered.

The articles relate how nonhuman animal families are continually broken up but what this means for the nonhumans is never addressed. Calves are sent to the abattoir, sheep are sold off, male and female separated, chickens removed on “slaughtering day” but there is nothing in these articles to suggest that destroying nonhuman families is either a cause of suffering or an ethical wrong. It is something which is normal and natural thing to do; a non issue, which means it is taken as ideological common sense. The pain and suffering of nonhumans either does not exist or is of no consequence.

This total denial of family ties was also a convenient “truth” for the slave trade.

... Europeans saw little reason to imagine that the slaves had left behind anything worthwhile in Africa. Though the more observant of the slave-traders (especially those who subsequently repented of their ways) acknowledged the grief displayed by the slaves, few thought that they had come from societies where family ties, with their resulting emotions and affections, played any significant role.

(Walvin, 1993:198)

#### **6.4.4. Loss of individuality and “humanity”**

Human slaves were possessions; things to be bought and sold and used as the owner saw fit. Human slave traders would look at slaves, and physically examine them before purchasing. Slaves were things which might or might not make a good investment. In these articles the nonhumans are described and treated in a very similar way. Below are two excerpts from an article on “beef adaptability” describing how to choose good nonhuman animal slaves for reproduction purposes:

A fertile cow has the correct proportion to all her body parts and looks feminine. High levels of oestrogen produce these feminine traits, which include a slender face on the line between the eye and the point of the jaw, a slender neck, no meat or fattiness on the shoulders, no prominent brisket and a clearly visible neck skin fold, great capacity with the largest girth around the mid-rib area, a smooth and even- coloured hair coat according to the season, a full udder with well-developed and well-placed teats (the hair on the udder should be short and soft), and a long vertical tail.

“Fertile cows also have shorter vertebrae at the shoulder blades than less fertile cows”, says Oom Danie.

(15)

Later, it describes how to choose a good male nonhuman animal slave.

“Visual selection for fertility in bulls”, says Oom Danie, “should be based on scrotum size and shape as well as on secondary male characteristics such as a darkening of the hide, a rough crown of hair on the head and back of the neck and long hair on the penile sheath.

The testicles should be of good, equal size, should not be twisted and should be firm when palpated. The scrotum should be properly attached, but not long and pendulous. A thick scrotum neck indicates excessive fat, which generates heat and kills sperm. The penile sheath should be short and neat so that it is not irritated and inflamed in long grass, with no thickening at the opening and no prolapse.”

(15)

The nonhuman animals are not normally given names although one article does contain named non humans and in another a nonhuman animal is given a cipher.

Winner of the performance test at the 2004 Pretoria Show for her  
bull ANS 02-088,

(19)

In an article on goats and breeding (13) not only are three goats actually named as “Jacob”, “James” and “Joshua” but James is described as the *son* of Jacob and Joshua as Jacob’s *grandson*. This is the only time in the articles when animals are given names and is also the only time when a nonhuman animal’s offspring are referred to as relatives. This personalisation might reflect a closer relationship from a bygone age or the importance of breeding-goats to humans, or both. All of the goats mentioned in this way are male.

With the exception of the above, the nonhumans have no individual identity in the articles. The loss or non-existence of identity is emphasized in a number of ways, such as the nonhumans being described as replaceable parts or by the use of mass nouns or by employing metonymic constructions.

Metonymy refers to something being described by only one particular aspect and it is a common device in this discourse, as well as the others so far mentioned, when referring to nonhuman animals. It is revealing that the metonymic descriptions are not intrinsic aspects of the nonhumans as such but derive from the use humans make of the nonhumans. For example, the term “layers” for chickens describes these birds only in terms of being prolific in laying eggs which are then used for human consumption. The nonhumans are reduced to a one dimensional entity. Other examples are “weaners”, “broilers”, “commercial calves”, and “slaughter lambs”. The term “game”, in the texts, is not only a form of metonymy but is also euphemistic. It refers to a group of species of nonhumans who some humans find it entertaining to hunt and kill, often having their photographs taken with the corpse and the fatal weapon and/or cutting off body parts as memorabilia. Interestingly, this is often looked upon by many people as normal, rather than pathological, behaviour.

#### **6.4.5. Bodily integrity**

Every nonhuman referred to in these 22 articles will meet a violent death and her or his corpse will be sold for profit. Almost all will have been mutilated before death by, for example, having their testicles removed, being dehorned, burnt with a hot piece of iron, or having their beaks cut off with a red hot wire. Many of the females will have been forcibly made pregnant again and again. All of these practices are referred to in the articles and the nonhumans have no protection of bodily integrity whatsoever to the extent that this integrity is violated again and again as a normal practice.

In the articles, references to killing and sites where killing takes place occur 53 times in 14 of the articles (over 63%). “Culling” and “slaughtering” occur 39 times but the word “death” occurs only three times and “life” only once.

Despite the ever present, although often obscured, killing and mutilation of nonhuman animals, the word “suffer”, in relation to nonhuman animals, is mentioned only three times, “care” twice and “love” only once. Incredibly, there is not a single reference in the 22 000 words to “pain”.

#### **6.4.6. Silence**

What does not have to be stated in these texts, what is already understood and accepted is critical to understanding what is going on. Paradoxically it is the silence which speaks volumes. There is a clear discourse of slavery in the total but unstated acceptance of the right to own, use, mutilate and dispose of nonhumans in whatever way a human sees fit. The ideology of the discourse is never obviously stated, never examined or discussed. It rests upon what is understood already, what has been said, written and very importantly, practised, over thousands of years. Here is the exercise of absolute power, which has no problems in manufacturing its own ideological common sense; and the victims can never resist.

## **6.5. The strange discourse of achievement**

In the articles there is a minor, although quite widespread, discourse which, taken at face value, seems nonsensical. It constructs the idea that the nonhuman animals are bound by certain standards, which they are responsible for attaining, and even that they are willing participants in some form of competition. Some examples are:

...but the calves didn't meet expectations. As Wilhelm says, "They seemed to be behaviorally challenged."

(20)

A bull has to show its worth in a specific herd.

(21)

Holstein heifers should gain between 700g and 800g per day to reach the target weight of 350kg at 13 to 15 months of age for insemination

(21)

The nonhumans here have implied duties: gaining weight, meeting expectations or showing their worth. It is clear from the examples below that failure is not acceptable:

Any that fail to conceive go for slaughter.

(6)

... he culls any animal lacking the desired traits.

(7)

Male kids without the potential to become breeding rams are sold at auctions for meat.

(13)

Rams that don't meet the minimum requirements of a growth index of 85 and a scrotum circumference of more than 4cm below the average are eliminated and not sold.

(16)

Cows and their offspring must pass my selection or they are culled.

(18)

Thereafter, however, a cow has to calve each year, or else it is slaughtered, a Lasater principle John adopted in the 1980s and has used ever since.

(1)

... and heifers with bad temperaments are also culled.

(1)

Cows that fail to calve are easily identified by a condition score - fat cows have usually failed to calve and conceive and are culled.

(1)

The penalty for nonhumans who fail to achieve is death or, to be more precise, being murdered earlier than planned and the responsibility for any failure is placed firmly on the slaves themselves. This is so even though, in reality, their lives may depend upon such things as a human's visual appraisal of them, their ability to conceive, their "bad" temperament or the size of their scrotum. These are examples of blaming the victim, a common device in unfair discrimination where the victim is allotted blame which justifies the oppressor's unjust actions.

For some of those who survive and make it there is hope of a better life. The articles use "qualify", "pass", "results", "promoted", "excellence", "achieved" and "merit" – words which are every day currency in educational institutions and business.

To qualify for a Merit Certificate, its growth index must exceed 115 and the scrotum circumference must be at least 1cm above the peer group average.

(16)

To qualify to be offered on auction, Michael's rams have to pass a number of rigid tests, including a second fibre-diameter test, a genital-soundness test and a libido and mating-dexterity test carried out by a vet.

(3)

Most qualify as prime slaughter lambs, with a liveweight in excess of 36kg. The few who do not reach this weight are highly sought after by feedlotter and finishers.

(3)

... best performing weaners in their feedlot.

(20)

The reader is left to ponder how heartening it must be to qualify as a slaughter lamb or, even if you miss the cut, to be popular with feedlotter and finishers, or perhaps, at the very least, to be one of the best performing weaners in your feedlot.

But there is hope in this discourse; even those of humble stock can succeed and, in so doing, gain access to the higher echelons.

The top 20 to 25 flock ewes identified on the basis of both visual and measured excellence are promoted annually to the stud. Ewes promoted in this way have achieved excellent results, producing top progeny, and many have eventually achieved Merit Ewe Status.

(3)

The SASBA document enthuses over the achievement of a Beefmaster cow in winning the *Farmers' Weekly* trophy for outstanding performance by producing eight calves in an ICP of 362 days, and goes on to record, "At last year's Rand Easter Show a Beefmaster steer won both on the hoof and on the hook championships" (SASBA, 2005: 3). In this ideology it is clearly important to be a champion even if you need to be dead and your eviscerated body hanging on a meat hook to achieve the desired status.

## **6.6. Constructing animals**

From the discussion of the above discourses it may be seen that the nonhuman animals are constructed through discourse as objects of production, machines in the production process, objects of science, slaves, brands and willing competitors. I now look more closely at the social construction of the nonhumans in the texts and examine transitivity and structured silence to gain further insight into how the discourses construct nonhumans.

According to Halliday, our most powerful conception of reality is made up of things that happen, and transitivity specifies the “different types of process that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed” (Halliday, 1985:101). Verbs not only build a picture of how individuals act but also may imply limits to the capabilities of some actors. Janks feels that transitivity is not easily visible to producers or consumers of text because of the complexity of its encoding:

I would argue that because transitivity is less obvious, deeper in the syntax, it suggests less conscious control by the writer and it requires more conscious effort for the reader to analyse it.

(Janks, 1997:338)

### **6.6.1. Human verbs and nonhuman verbs**

The number and type of verbs directly relating to nonhuman animals, as opposed to human animals or their agents such as farm workers, is revealing. In this analysis I only count verbs which clearly and directly apply to the subjects concerned but not those appearing in the passive voice.

There are 777 verbs directly relating to humans, farmers, farm workers, breeders and so on and, as might be expected in a magazine which uses interviews, many of these verbs relate to speaking, such as, “John said”. A smaller number of verbs, 283, relate to nonhumans.

The transitivity system views experiences in the world as being of different process types (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004:170). These describe internal, mental processes and external, material processes as well as a third class which is relational and relates one part of experience to another (*ibid*). Two further minor categories are also described, the existential and the behavioural. The latter is somewhere between the mental and material and includes physiological processes as well as processes close to the mental such as “watch” and close to the verbal such as “argue” (*ibid* 171, 251).

Of the human verbs, 371 deal with material processes (47.7% of total human verbs) while, for nonhumans, 113 verbs (40% of total animal verbs) relate to material

processes but there is a qualitative difference between the two as can be seen below.

Examples of material process verbs for the humans are:

- discovered
- refined
- buys
- found
- tests
- bought
- imported
- develop
- used
- handling
- produce
- breeding
- managing

Material verbs for non humans, on the other hand, include:

- reach
- fail
- move
- gave
- meet
- get
- performing
- averaged
- weigh
- achieved

The material verbs for humans show control, action and agency, those for the slaves are more passive, many of them dealing with measurements and achieving.

The verbs denoting physiological and behavioural processes show a marked difference between the slaves and the slave owners. Although some verbs in the texts might not appear to be physiological, on further examination they are found to relate to physiological processes, For example in one article the cattle “lose” weight, “gain” weight, “stabilise” and “fall pregnant”, all of which convey physiological processes.

For humans, a very small number, only seven verbs in total (0.9%), relate to physiological or behavioural functions but for the nonhuman animals there are 63 (over 22%). In relative terms there are over twenty five times more of this class of verb relating to non humans than to humans.

The nonhuman verbs tend to be about the physiological processes of bodily function: eating, becoming pregnant, giving birth, growing and dying. Nonhuman animal verbs include:

- calve/ing
- lamb
- conceive
- suckle
- die
- producing/ed
- grow
- mate
- graze
- hatch
- lay
- develop

The human related physiological and behavioural verbs are mostly linked to perception and communication:

- laughs
- hear
- see
- breathe
- seen
- saw
- speak

In relation to nonhumans, the verbs tend to be about the physiological processes required for production in farming: eating, becoming pregnant, giving birth, growing and dying.

Overall, verbally, the humans are portrayed as doers, organisers, buyers, and experimenters with the nonhumans as one dimensional physiological producers.

### **6.6.2. Actors and patients: hiding who does what to whom**

The way in which the same verbs have different meanings in the articles depending upon whether they are applied to the nonhumans or humans is extremely interesting.

The verb “produced”, for example, when applied to a human, is a material verb and describes his work of “producing” cattle, meat, wool or eggs. In this form it is really describing control, organisation, coercion and so on, as the human himself actually produces none of these things but rather controls and modifies the production done by the nonhumans as parts of their life processes. When this verb is applied to nonhumans, as in “many of the cattle produced twins”, it clearly describes a physiological function – that of giving birth. Similarly “breeding” is a material verb for the human animal when he is said to be “breeding” animals and once again this has to do with control and relates to controlling the reproduction of nonhumans. However, for the nonhuman animals it is a physiological verb as, for example, when cows are allowed to “breed” with the bulls.

The way a sentence is structured can obscure the reality of what is really happening such as when the verb appears to relate to one party but in fact relates to another. In the examples below the verb “fetched” portrays the nonhuman animals as being active as they are said to “fetch” a good price or a particular amount of money:

At a recent auction, one of Albert's stud goats fetched a price of R21 000 . . . “At this age they fetch the best prices on the hoof”, says Albert.

(13)

In reality, the nonhumans are not the actors at all, it is the human who sells the nonhumans and obtains a good price from the buyer. The human is the actor throughout and the nonhumans are the objects of his actions, although the sentence is structured in such a way as to portray the nonhumans as the active participants and obscure the actions of the human. For good measure, in this example, the euphemism “on the hoof” takes the place of “alive” its euphemistic antonym, “on the hook”, meaning dead. So the sentence is also stating the understanding that the nonhuman animals at this age can be sold for more when they are alive but would be killed if that would obtain a better price.

In a similar vein:

Large framed animals have a higher dressing-out percentage, putting more money in the farmer's pocket.

(20)

Here nonhuman animals seem to be involved in the benevolent act of “putting money into farmer’s pockets” but of course play no active part in the transaction whatsoever. Not only is the agency of the human totally absent in the sentence, but the euphemism “dressing-out” is used to hide the fact that after being murdered the slave’s body will be slit open, intestines removed and her or his head and feet sawn off.

The final example is about how a farmer chooses which bulls to use in “his” breeding programme by having scientific tests done on them. It shows how in a short sentence the truth can be completely twisted.

The few bulls marked for culling pay for the testing, increase the efficiency of the herd and give John a small profit.

(1)

The bulls are portrayed as being active in three ways: in “paying” for the testing, in “increasing” the efficiency of the herd and in “giving” John a small profit. Of course the bulls do none of these things. What really happens is that the farmer has the bulls killed to stop them reproducing, thus preventing their genes from being present in any further offspring. The money he gets from the sale of their dead bodies allows him to pay for the testing that was done on all the bulls originally and at the end of the day he has made a profit out of the entire business. There is no mention of the farmer genetically manipulating a group of nonhumans or of getting a profit from their deaths.

Writing in the third person is another very common way of obscuring the actions of actor and patient. With this form of writing it is not explicitly clear who does what to whom, although, in some cases, this information might, on reflection, be inferred from the rest of the text or if the reader has sufficient intertextual understanding and background.

Although the presence of the word “are” is not the only way agency on the part of humans and the lack of agency on the part of nonhuman animals is signalled, 256 instances of phrases containing the word “are”, indicating passive usage, were found in the texts. These verbs do not form part of the direct analysis of verb numbers mentioned earlier. In 109 of the instances (41%), it may be inferred from the context that the farmer acted towards a nonhuman or nonhumans in some way or other although this is not explicitly stated and the active agent is hidden. Some examples of such hidden agency are:

- commercial sows in SA *are serviced* by AI. (9)
- when the kids *are weaned*, the does *are moved* to a neighbouring. (13)
- ... all rams *are subjected* to a rigorous (16)
- Some 99 000 chickens *are reared* in five-week cycles... (17)
- ...before the chickens *are removed to be slaughtered* (17)
- Heifers from this herd *are mated* from 1 November to ... (18)
- Non- pregnant heifers *are culled* immediately, while non-pregnant cows *are put* back on (18)
- ... the cows *are only put* to the bulls at ... (1)
- ... with bad temperaments *are also culled*. (1)

- ... 12 months of age, rams *are classed* visually and almost half *are culled*.

(3)

- At the hatchery they *are culled, sexed* and *vaccinated*.

(4)

Phrases constructed in this way imply the actions they describe are normal inevitable and natural.

### **6.6.3. Special words: creating division and distance**

Human animals and nonhuman animals have different lexicons to describe the same things, one language for us and one for Them. Humans have babies but sheep have lambs and pigs have piglets although, in the sense that baby means small or a young one, sheep have baby sheep and pigs have baby pigs. Naming living things differently from humans creates distance and makes them alien. This is imperative in order to emphasise and even fabricate perceived differences between human and nonhumans. The ideological work this does may be to support a view of human supremacy or to remove the ethical responsibility falling upon humans with respect to their actions against nonhumans.

Even the simple noun “food” is transformed into “feed” when describing food for the nonhuman slaves, exposing the implicit ideology which places humans above nonhumans. Humans are never given “feed”, only nonhumans. “Feed”, as a description of food for nonhumans, is used 44 times in the texts, with phrases such as “feed bins” (14), “expensive feed” (14, 4), “cut feed costs”(12), and “efficient feed conversion”(11). A human animal may have “expensive food” but a nonhuman animal has “expensive feed”.

Many of the descriptions are euphemistic and I now look at some of the specialised language used for describing nonhumans in these texts.

### **6.6.4. Family**

In the texts, words relating to family, “father”, “mother”, “child”, “son” and

“daughter” occur 12 times. Of these, only 2 refer to nonhumans and both of these are related to goats with, one “son” and one “mother”. Nine referred to human animals, all of them male, with the word “father” occurring seven times and the word “son” twice.

For some reason goats seem to be closest to human animals in the words used to describe them and in these texts they have “sons” and “grandsons” and three goats are given names. Why this relationship should exist is not clear.

One way in which nonhuman families are distanced from human families is by the use of different terms for nonhuman parents as well as their offspring. Female parents are not usually mothers but “cows”, “does”, “dams”, “hens”, “ewes” and “sows” while males are not fathers but “bulls”, “boars”, “cockerels” and “rams”. Their children are “calves”, “lambs”, “chicks”, “poults”, “heifers”, “day-olds”, “weaners”, and there are also those nonhumans who have been orchidectomised such as “oxen” or “steers”.

#### **6.6.5. Flesh**

The remains of a dead nonhuman animal are not referred to in these texts as a “body” or a “corpse” as “the deceased” or even “the remains of the departed” but only as a “carcass”. The word “flesh” or descriptions such as “body parts” are never mentioned in the texts but the words “meat”, “beef”, “pork” “veal” and “mutton” appear a total of 102 times. There are other descriptions of slave flesh, which has been specially treated for human animal consumption, such as “boerewors”, “biltong”, “poultry products”, “sosaties” and “droewors”.

There is not only an obsession with flesh but also with mothers’ milk: the words “milk”, “milked”, “milking” or “dairy” appear 95 times and are spread over 12 of the articles.

#### **6.6.6. The ideology of purpose: use, explanation and justification**

One of the most pervasive and insidious ideas embedded in these texts is the understanding that nonhuman animals have a purpose and that is to serve and be used

by human animals. The idea of dual-purpose nonhuman animals is explicitly referred to six times in four of the articles. Here are two examples:

... where it has proven its value as a dual-purpose breed for milk and meat production.

(7)

... high wool quality, which complements a high level of reproduction and lamb-growth rate in the stud - true dual purpose sheep.

(3)

The life of the slave is defined in terms of a purpose - that is, the use which will be made of her by the slave owner. "Dual-purpose" slaves may provide such things as wool and meat or eggs and meat or milk and meat. The description both reifies a sentient being and justifies her total exploitation.

The fact that this concept is only clearly enunciated on relatively few occasions does not mean it is absent from the rest of the texts and the true extent of this idea is really seen when examining descriptions which use metonymy to describe the nonhumans.

As mentioned earlier, metonymy is when a word or phrase denoting something such as an object, action or institution is substituted by a word or phrase denoting a property or something associated with it ("metonymy" 2001). "In cognitive linguistics metonymy refers to the use of a single characteristic to identify a more complex entity and is one of the basic characteristics of cognition"( Metonymy 2007). *Sweat*, that is, perspiration, can be used to mean *hard work* and *the press*, derived from the printing press, used to describe the news media (*ibid*). Instead of using the name Cape Town, the city may simply be described by some as Africa's "gay capital", thus promoting a one dimensional representation of it.

It is common in these texts to describe animals by employing metonymy and describing them specifically in terms of the use to which they are put or will be put, by the slave owners. There are 95 instances of this ranging over 86% of the texts.

Examples are:

- breeding cattle
- slaughter lambs
- meat cattle
- stud cattle
- teaser rams
- commercial boars
- replacement heifers
- beef calves
- stud, show and herd goats
- beef animal
- wool sheep.
- red beef animals
- red beef cows
- game
- slaughter lambs,
- layers
- commercial hybrids
- broilers
- brown egggers.

The nonhuman animals are changed from living beings into objects specifically described in terms of the use human animals make of them.

From the perspective of intertextuality it is interesting to note that the video referred to earlier about life on a veal farm titled “The Good Life”, despite arising on another continent also carries this implicit message of purpose (OVA, 2003b). Visuals show a family with young children working on a veal farm, dairy cows in fields and lots of calves in rows of stalls. It then goes on to describe the genesis of the veal industry:

(Male voice over).What most people don’t know is the veal industry grew right out of the dairy industry. You see in order to keep producing milk a dairy cow gives birth once a year. Naturally just about half of those births will be male. Now the majority of those male calves are of little or no use to the dairy farmers and their milk producing business.

(Female voice over) *And those are the calves that have found a useful purpose in the veal industry.*

*(ibid, emphasis mine)*

This suggests that the dairy cow is motivated to keep producing milk, (her purpose) and so that she can do this she gives birth once a year. Her useless male calves find their “useful purpose” by becoming veal calves.

### 6.6.7. Euphemism

Euphemism obscures what actually takes place. In the articles, it is commonly employed to denote sexual activity (emphasis mine):

... bought a Pustertaler bull from Ken Baxter and *used* it on several of his Nguni cows.

(7)

These boars have *performed* exceptionally well *on* at least five or six herds.

(9)

... they can be moved to another group for the bull's *attention* after they have been checked for sickness.

(10)

But why doesn't Bertus *put* a pure Angus bull *on* his Brahman-type cows?

(18)

Heifers *run* with the bull for 45 days.

(19)

Other phrases have more sinister connotations:

Most of the lambs rounded off in the feedlot are sold to a major chain store group that has EurepGap accredited quality control.

(6)

As already noted in chapter three of this thesis, a “feedlot” is a space where large numbers of animals are confined and fed on a high kilojoule diet of grain or the by-products of crop processing. Their reduced movement and their high kilojoule intake results in weight gain. This process of fattening up is known as “rounding off”.

When the animal has reached a certain weight it has been “rounded off” and can then be taken away and killed.

Other euphemistic phrases hide much more violent and practices, as in the following examples:

The difference is that all *meat processing* is now done in a *neatly designed plant*

(5)

and:

The *abattoir group* was loaded and transported with minimal fuss and *good feedback* was reported from the processing facility.

(8)

“Meat processing” describes the murder and dismemberment of the slaves. The “abattoir group” has the innocuous ring of a tour party of old-age pensioners on a day out but in reality describes a group of nonhuman animals who are being sent to a violent death. The “good feedback” refers to the weights and descriptions of the animal’s dead bodies and the likely profits from their sale. “Neatly designed plant” and “processing facility” are carnal houses where nonhuman animals are killed and cut up into pieces in a mechanized killing and dismemberment system.

As already noted in chapter three, in these killing plants a bolt is driven into the animal’s skull rendering it unconscious or at least unable to stand. It does not always work the first time. As the animal lies on the floor a chain is fastened around its leg and it is pulled up to be suspended from a moving belt. The animal, hanging upside down by a back leg moves along to the next employee who cuts open its neck and the carotid artery and the animal bleeds to death. Further along other employees slit open its body and cut out its intestines, cut off its head and feet and in other ways cut its body into pieces. (Schlosser, 2001; Dunayer, 2001; Patterson, 2002).

Below is an example of a sentence containing neither euphemism nor double speak but with a chasm of experiential disconnection:

The live cattle are taken to the abattoir in an open truck, and the carcasses fetched in a trailer with cooling facilities.

(5).

A miraculous transformation takes place. Without blood, violence, pain or suffering, in a brief moment, a living animal becomes a carcass and the article continues with its theme.

Dunayer describes how the U.K's *Meat Trades Journal*, in an editorial entitled, "Let's Kill 'Slaughtering'", told its readers to replace the use of "slaughterhouse" with "meat plant" or "meat factory", while *Meat Processing* has warned that the term "slaughtering" hurts the industry's image. In addition, the NCA [National Cattlemen's Association] told its members to purge the word "slaughter" from their vocabularies and substitute instead "process" or "harvest" (Dunayer, 2001: 137).

### **6.7. Ideological work of the discourses**

The texts manifest three major discourses concerning nonhuman animals: the discourses of production, science and enslavement. All three are similar in that they objectify the nonhuman animals as production machines and products, as objects of scientific study or as slaves. The nonhumans are not seen as individuals but members of a group or class and their lives have no inherent value. Their pain, both physical and mental, is not mentioned and is apparently of no consequence. They are constructed as passive, one-dimensional producers. Humans, on the other hand, are in control and continually display a great range of agency. Much of what happens to the slaves is hidden by euphemism, in the use of the passive speech and rests in the silence drawn from thousands of years of condoned enslavement. Justification for the oppression and murder of the nonhumans is simply not required and never arises. It is taken for granted that their use is both legitimate and sanctioned. The underlying ideology of the nonhuman animal's purpose being to serve humans is clear with direct references to purpose and the extensive use of metonymy.

Given the above ideologies, nonhuman animal farming is normal, natural, acceptable and laudable in that it is making efficient use of those creatures available to it and it is a practice which it is unthinkable to question.

Everything which is done to the nonhumans, from castrating them to killing them is justified within the discourses, whether, for example, it is to make the stock stronger

(a discourse also used by the Nazis) or to make a better profit. The idea of purpose, both overt and covert, as in metonymy is a common form of justification. “Slaughter lambs” are made to be slaughtered and “dual purpose sheep” are made to give wool and flesh to humans.

Despite all of the above, the abusive acts carried out are not acts of individually motivated violence against individual nonhumans but something which is generally accepted within the discourses as being done by humans as a group naturally to nonhumans as a group and as a matter of course. The humans who abuse and murder the nonhumans are, at least to some degree, deindividuated by being part of a generalised practice and the nonhumans themselves are deindividuated in the perception of the humans. Authority to act is beyond question, as is the power of life and death over the slaves. There is a special lexicon for the nonhumans varying with each discourse which places them at increasing psychological distance with linguistic conformations used to obscure what happens to the nonhumans and who does what to the nonhumans. All this highlights similarities with the conditions necessary for moral disengagement as outlined earlier and it is to this critical link that I will turn next.

### ***6.8. Roots of oppression***

In terms of the social science research of Millgram (1974), Zimbardo (1999, 2004), Bandura (1999, 2002) and others referred to earlier, I maintain these discourses create, co-create, facilitate or support conditions for, in Bandura’s (1999: 193) term, “moral disengagement”. In order to more easily collate which of these conditions are created or supported by the discourses, I have made a combined list as follows:

#### Combined list of conditions for moral disengagement

1. Justification of some sort for the acts carried out.
2. Meaningful positive roles.
3. Basic rules exist to be followed or there are existing societal channels.
4. Change of semantics or euphemistic labelling.
5. Diffusion of responsibility/ deindividuation of perpetrator.
6. Displacement of responsibility.
7. Deindividuation of victims.

8. Authority which changes from reasonable to unreasonable.
9. Exit costs are high.
10. Advantageous comparison between perpetrator and victim.
11. Disregard or distortion of consequences.
12. Dehumanisation or as explained earlier, more relevant in this context, reification.
13. Attribution of blame.
14. Transformational power of moral disengagement.

In order to match the effects of the discourses with the relevant conditions I first describe what the discourses do and then put in brackets the number from the list above to which those effects most closely align.

### **6.8.1. Discourse effects**

- The construction of nonhumans as machines or the objects of science totally reifies them and even as slaves they lose their true nature and become things, which only happen to be living (12).
- Science, and a great deal in the texts relates to science, carries its own very powerful justification and authority by way of its search for truth, which feeds the engine of progress which in turn will take us all to a better place. Production and slavery also have their own authority. In a world saturated by neo capitalism and globalisation greater efficiency, innovation and increased output have authorisation which is beyond question, while this slavery has the historical authority of the taken-for-granted (8).
- Transitivity in the texts paints a picture of the nonhumans as lacking real agency and merely being physiological producers. Mass nouns remove any individuality and one batch of nonhumans is replaced by another in the farming practice. Overwhelmingly only the humans have names. The nonhumans are deindividuated (7).
- The roles of the people in the discourses, farmer, scientist, breeder economist and so on, are all positive and socially acceptable (2).

- Implicit in each of the discourses is the justification for the acts carried out with reasons such as the increase of productivity, the production of a new composite animal or the use of slaves simply as they are supposed be used (1).
- The total reification of the nonhumans allows an obvious advantageous comparison as well as a distortion of any consequences which might follow from coercive and violent acts against them. Destroying or mutilating a thing cannot be compared to doing the same to a sentient being (10,11).
- Euphemism makes a major contribution to obscuring and normalising the violence, pain and suffering in the phenomenon (4, 11).
- The use of indirect linguistic constructions removes any agency from the humans who “wean”, “cull”, “class” and “slaughter”, both diffusing and displacing responsibility (5, 6).
- A whole lexicon of words is present with which to describe the nonhuman equivalents of human existence such as “mother”, “father”, “daughter”, “mother’s milk”, “food”, “sex”, “flesh”, “body parts” and “dead bodies” as if they are radically different things when applied to nonhumans. This has the effect of creating a view that nonhumans are totally “Other” and allows for an advantageous comparison as well as justifying and diminishing the perceived consequence of actions (1, 10, 11).
- The ideology that the nonhumans have purposes which are, in various ways, to serve humans and which is present in the discourses either overtly or in such things as metonymy, provides a justification for what is done to the nonhumans and subtly attributes blame and displaces responsibility on to them (1, 6, 13).
- Strangely, it is the silence of the texts which has such an overwhelmingly powerful effect and they are heavy with the unspoken authority of ten thousand years of farming practice. All that has gone before today gives permission for these acts. To question this phenomenon, or to turn away from it because it is the oppression of the powerless, is to do the unthinkable and risk personal ridicule and financial loss. The exit costs are high (1, 3, 9).
- The everyday nature of the discourses combined with their pervasiveness facilitates small, incremental changes to moral and ethical positions, eroding them until the unthinkable becomes thinkable (14).

So here is an insight, however incomplete, explaining how some discourses of nonhuman farming might, if widespread be contributing towards inducing billions of people, year after year, to be part of a massive world wide industry involving cruelty, mutilation and endless murder, which destroys the innocent and powerless in numbers which are beyond comprehension. Further work both in both discourse analysis and social psychology can help to clarify and expand this perspective.

In critical realist terms these discourses are active at the level of mechanisms and give rise to conditions which are able to induce people to morally disengage. The conditions themselves exist at the level of the actual and doubtless involve semiosis and ideological constructions in some way. Given the activation of other suitably enabling mechanisms, such as consumer demand, supportive legislation and so on, people may be facilitated to act in ways, and support actions by others, they would, under different circumstances, find totally reprehensible. Without such supporting discourses, I maintain, nonhuman animal farming could not continue. If discourses which recognise nonhumans as sentient beings, having such things as individuality, families, interests and inherent worth, were ubiquitous, most people would find any involvement whatsoever in the nonhuman animal farming industry utterly repugnant.

## Chapter 7

*We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. Remote from universal nature, and living by complicated artifice, man in civilization surveys the creature through the glass of his knowledge and sees thereby a feather magnified and the whole image in distortion. We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and we err greatly. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.*

Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*.

*Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.*

Voltaire (1694-1778).

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1. Discourses and deception

In 1977, not far from the site of the first Nazi concentration camp, Dachau, McDonald's opened one of their fast food outlets. This caused a wave of complaints and the curator of the Dachau concentration camp museum even protested that the company was handing out leaflets in the museum car park (Schlosser, 2001: 233). Without any apparently intended irony, those leaflets from the flesh-purveying multinational proclaimed, "Welcome to Dachau and welcome to McDonald's" (*ibid*). The company did halt the practice perhaps to avoid hurting people's feelings or perhaps because the message in the leaflets was simply too close to the truth. But do we want to hear the truth or at least a truth more congruent with the observations available?

The practice of nonhuman animal farming, from the merchants of nonhuman semen to the purchasers of the victim's bodies or the products of their bodies, requires a complicit cast of billions of people. It speaks of many things but particularly of our incredible ability to hide from ourselves, or more precisely to pretend to hide from ourselves, the consequences of our actions in order to remove any sense of guilt or responsibility we may feel.

The research reported in this thesis provides some explanation of how billions of people, good, honest, caring, moral, essentially non-violent people, are able to be part of an ongoing atrocity of gigantic scale asking few, if any, questions about their own part in it. It must be said, however, that this is not all about self-deceit. Many mechanisms drive the practice and, in the present world, such is the utterly pervasive use of nonhumans that it is very difficult for any person, meat eater, vegetarian or vegan not to have some degree of complicity with the industries of oppression.

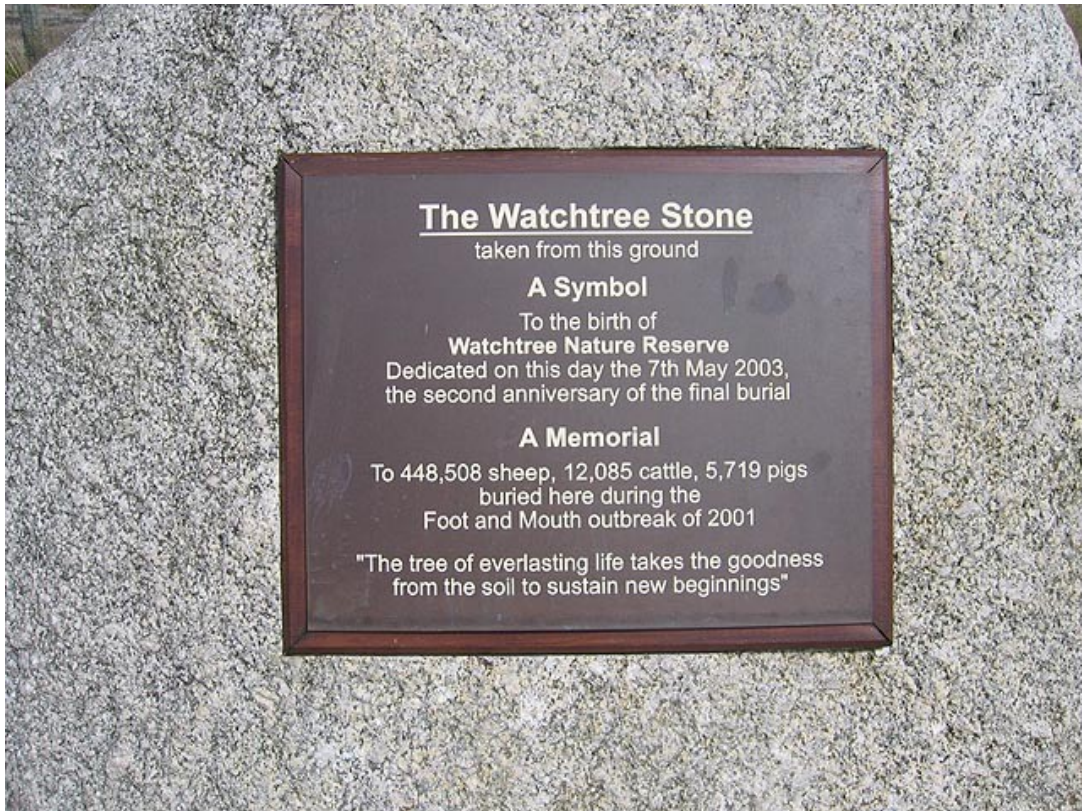
Discourses are a part of all of our lives and while discourses which support animal oppression are clearly, if subtly, dominant in society, other discourses do exist and have existed for thousands of years (Animal Rights History: 2007). Individuals and social groups enact many discourses some of which might even be totally opposed to each other. This schizophrenic mindset seems to be normal insofar as our relationship with nonhumans is concerned, but alternative discourses concerning nonhumans are there in our collective psyches as became vividly clear a few years ago in Britain.

## ***7.2. Alternative discourses***

In the United Kingdom, in 2001, there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The disease affects a range of cloven hoofed nonhumans including farmed nonhumans and, although the mortality from it is quite low, especially in adults, it does cause a slower weight gain and the production of less milk, “While FMD is not normally fatal to adult animals, it is debilitating and causes significant loss of productivity; for example milk yields may drop or the animals may become lame” (United States Department of Agriculture 2002; United Kingdom Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2007).

The British government attempted to arrest and contain the epidemic by carrying out a massive cull of both affected animals and those healthy ones in the area around affected farms (Allender, 2002; Visit Cumbria, 2005). This caused much anger, mistrust, protest and genuine heartbreak from people in all walks of life. In the epidemic, there were 2030 recorded cases of foot and mouth disease and, depending upon which figures are used, the number of slaughtered nonhumans was between 6 million to 20 million (The Royal Society cited in DEFRA 2004; Visit Cumbria, 2005). Some of the nonhumans slaughtered would have been those used for breeding purposes and a few might even have even been pets but the majority would have been destined for the slaughterhouse sooner or later. Yet there were genuine expressions of grief at the time, not only for the families affected and for a way of life at risk, but also for the nonhumans themselves who were killed.

At Great Orton Airfield in Cumbria, 466, 312 nonhumans are buried in 26 trenches with a hidden wall 12 metres deep surrounding the site to prevent the seepage of fluids (Visit Cumbria, 2005). Such is the scale of this mass grave that up to three tanker loads of fluid a day were still being removed from it in 2006 for transportation to a waste treatment works (*ibid*). The site has now become a memorial and wildlife reserve known as “Watchtree” and has, at its entrance, a large stone bearing a plaque of remembrance for the nonhumans.



**Figure 24: The Watchtree stone and plaque (ibid)**

Allender's book, *Fields of Fire*, is a collection of prose, poems and postings from a foot and mouth internet discussion group she was part of during the epidemic (Allender, 2002). She describes the group as being made up of a wide range of individuals including, "farmers, smallholders, vets, scientists, journalists, teachers, outdoor activity instructors, photographers, playworkers, pilots, toy makers, antique dealers, housewives, bookshop owners, publicans, artists, coach drivers, photographers, to name but a few ..." (Allender, 2002). The book makes harrowing reading, as people speak of their anger against the government's policy, the incompetence of slaughterers, the distress of the animals, the smell of the rotting corpses and the pyres burning in the countryside and often they do no more than simply describe what they have witnessed. There is an outpouring of love for the nonhumans in this tragedy as if they were all companions, members of families, individuals, mothers and their children.

In some cases, slaughtering was not carried out efficiently with some animals, often young ones, remaining alive (Allender, 2002). Browne writes about Phoenix, the calf

whose mother was slaughtered in the cull, but who somehow managed to survive and had been with her dead mother for five days before being discovered (Browne, 2001). When the story came out, the Ministry of Agriculture insisted she must be killed and a slaughterer went to the farm in the company of a policeman to carry out the directive but the owners refused and informed the official he would have to get a court injunction.

By this time the story was in the public domain and people responded vigorously to the nonhuman's plight. Browne records:

But pleas to spare Phoenix flooded in. The *Mirror* launched a campaign to 'Save Phoenix from the Ashes'. Animal rights groups and actress Carla Lane threw in their support. Anthony Gibson, regional director of the National Farmer's Union, said the calf's slaughter would 'make King Herod look like a humanitarian'. Tony Banks, Labour MP and former Government Minister, spat: 'I was extremely angry. The idea of slaughtering this animal was totally unacceptable. The officials from Maff [Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food] are Daleks.'

(Browne, 2001)

Such was the countrywide sympathy for the survivor that newspapers and backbench MPs warned that her slaughter could mean a loss in the general election for the ruling Labour Party (*ibid*). The *Sun* newspaper had a picture of Prime Minister Tony Blair and a gun sight focused on Phoenix with the caption, "Vote Labour or the calf gets it!" (*ibid*). Policy was changed. Although the government insists the timing was a coincidence and nothing to do with this case, the change meant that Phoenix was allowed to live and did so as an international celebrity (*ibid*).

Perhaps in the end, as a country, it was the apprehension of farmed nonhumans as individuals, or possibly it was the very public transportation and slaughter which affected people, witnessing what is normally done quietly, out of mind, behind closed doors and, in the words of Rudkus, "... some horrible crime committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and out of memory" (Sinclair cited in Patterson, 2002: 61). Perhaps it was the great funeral pyres and the mass graves which gave meaning to the enormous numbers of the dead:



**Figure 25: Massive pyres of dead nonhumans fill the air with smoke (Simon Ledingham in *ibid*)**



**Figure 26: The upturned legs of dead nonhumans seen through the smoke of the pyres (ibid, no photographer named)**

Whatever the reasons it is clear that very conflicting discourses were enacted in communities and by individuals, resulting in the paradoxical actions of eating flesh as a mass produced commodity, while at the same time seeing nonhumans as individuals and their deaths as a tragedy worthy of remembrance and grief. Yet I wonder, and I do not wish to demean in any way the emotions evoked and expressed by people, as they were surely genuine, whether those who grieved at the horrors of the foot and mouth cull agonized about it over a breakfast of bacon and eggs or a Sunday lunch of roast beef.

### **7.3. The promise of change**

This work offers pointers for a path which can help bring about change and some tools with which to erode and weaken the mindless complicity of many humans in the worst genocide on the planet. In the model I propose in this study, discourses about farmed nonhumans construct, partially construct, or facilitate conditions for moral disengagement.

With this knowledge it is possible to emphasize and promote discourses which do the opposite. It is possible to see nonhumans as individuals who have inherent worth, with families and the deep emotional ties which go with them, with lives to lead for their own purposes, who suffer pain and loss and experience pleasure and joy and to apprehend them as sentient beings and not goods for economic exchange. Equally, the knowledge assists in the deconstruction of those discourses which promote harm and helps to make explicit their unspoken assumptions as well as making clear some of the mechanisms facilitating that destructive endeavour.

Further work looking at discourses concerned with such abusive practices as vivisection, “sustainable wildlife management” (animals as resources), hunting and other forms of nonhuman oppression will, I am sure, identify similar supporting discourses and provide channels for resistance. I hope this work will contribute towards interventions to address violence against nonhumans, such as the educational materials, training and offender rehabilitation courses offered by the *Society and Animals Forum* (Society and Animals Forum, n.d.). It can also provide an oppositional view to the dominant discourses about nonhumans thus promoting debate in educational and training institutions and society generally.

It is important to note that this model does not only apply to nonhumans and I hope it may be able to make a contribution to studies on genocide and other forms of abuse and oppression. The victims may be of different species but some of the mechanisms are certainly similar and the struggle to resist the oppression of the powerless by the powerful is one struggle.

Further theoretical work might be carried out on the semiotic systems which allow the different aspects of harmful discourses to be translated into those conditions facilitating moral disengagement.

Without doubt, there is a growing movement worldwide to liberate nonhumans from their oppression and it takes many forms including religious organizations, the formation of political parties, welfare organisations and liberation organisations. There are already political parties which specifically support the recognition of the rights of animals including the “Partido Antitaurino Contra el Maltrato Animal” in Spain, “Partei Mensch Umwelt Tierschutz” in Germany, the Dutch “Partij voor de dieren” or “Party for the Animals” and in the U.K., “Animals Count” (Animals Count, 2007).

Amongst the obstacles to change will be a move to a different way of living and looking at the world in a more holistic way, but also there needs to be an admission of the extent, severity and duration of our crimes against non humans, our present complicity in them, and our responsibility for all the lives we have blighted and ultimately stolen over the years. This might prove too great a psychological and spiritual burden for many of us to accept. As Millgram’s experiments (1974) suggest, it might be easier to go on doing what we are doing rather than to stop and take responsibility for our past actions. On the other hand, there will be many of us who will find in change, great joy and support as well as liberation from the gnawing guilt of being part of the tyranny practiced by our species.

Such a change will also, of necessity, deeply challenge the underpinnings of the neocapitalism raging on a global scale, fundamentally calling into question its values and practices. To do so will be to confront massive commercial and academic interests, who have access to a wide range of communication channels and who are essentially in a position to impose their own discourses and who are able to manufacture, in capitalism’s image, society’s common sense.

#### **7.4. Signs of liberation**

It is likely that change will come in many ways, local and international, formal and informal but power is not relinquished easily. The Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA) in the U.K. wrote into its policy document a section essentially supporting, at a very basic level, the rights of animals (BBC News, 1998). It was informed by the Charity Commission, an agency run by the British government, that the RSPCA risked losing its status as a charitable organisation because the declaration “could be seen as placing greater emphasis on the fate of animals than humans” (*ibid*). The society has withdrawn the relevant section.

The movement to end the oppression of nonhumans is part of a larger, diverse social movement concerned with the pollution of the planet, the destruction of its ecosystems, the exploitation of the living and nonliving world, globalization, human exploitation and rampant capitalism. There are already activists in prison for their actions in this area, political prisoners of the struggle. Both the U.S. and the U.K. have enacted severe laws against animal and eco activists. These include, in the U.S., the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act along with the Patriot Act and, in the U.K., the extension of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act, 2005 and the extension of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (U.S. Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act in Michigan State University 2007; McKie & Townsend, 2005; Best 2004: 306-312). In the publication *Protecting People from Animal Extremists: A Progress Report*, issued by Her Majesty’s Government of the U.K., it is explained that:

The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, introduced on 1 July 2005, strengthened the police’s ability to deal more effectively with the intimidatory tactics employed by animal rights extremists. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was extended to tackle the harassment of people connected to organisations, universities and companies. The police were given additional powers to deal with harassment and intimidation of people in their homes. And two new offences of ‘economic damage’ were established to protect targeted businesses.

(HM Government of the U.K., n.d.)

It is notable that such activists, the overwhelming majority of whom would not injure any human or nonhuman, are being constructed as terrorists. Those responsible for the exploitation of billions of nonhumans and humans, with its concomitant loss of life and immeasurable suffering, are portrayed as guiding commercial and academic lights in society. Some see this as just the beginning of a greater conflict. Paul Watson a long time ecological activist and Director of the Sea Shepherd Foundation writes:

Right now we're in the early stages of World War III. It's the war to save the planet. [Direct] action will be getting stronger. Eventually there will be open war.

(Watson in Best, 2004: 300)

Rayson also sees looming problems as the capitalist machine destroys all who stand in its way:

We know that for capitalism to survive, it must endlessly expand, as its whole *modus operandi* is driven by the quest for the profits of the elites, not the needs of the world. Mountains of non-biodegradable garbage, plastics, metal and radioactive material continue to accumulate, as global capitalism devours and depletes dwindling natural resources. All the while, wars, or talk of more wars are looming in the battle of the "fittest" for territory and scarce resources. It's a planetary ecological and social tsunami in the making.

(Rayson, 2006: 241)

Steven Best says this of the new conflict which focuses on the liberation of billions of nonhuman slaves and the taking back of the earth for the benefit of all its inhabitants:

Without question, the major conflicts of the day in many nations such as the UK and the US are not about gender, race, class or the war in Iraq, but rather globalization and the exploitation of animals and the earth. The class struggle is over; mainstream feminists, gays and lesbians, and people of color are safely marginalized in their fragmented identity politics; and Leftists and postmodernists posture as "radicals" and harmlessly conjure up theory-babble in

seminars and conferences. Meanwhile the new ecowarriors light up the night skies with their demands to free animal slaves and protect the earth.

(Best, 2004: 302)

It is clear that changes are taking place and I hope the research described in this thesis will make a contribution, however small, to the struggle for the eventual emancipation of the billions of our powerless and viciously oppressed nonhuman sisters and brothers; those who are present in this world in diverse but equally valid ways to ourselves, yet who have been our prisoners, our silent, innocent victims, for far, far too long.

# Appendix I

## **Referencing and description of source documents**

All articles appeared in *Farmers Weekly*.

The number for each article is the reference cited in the in text referencing

**1. A quest for the ultimate bush-suited steer.** - C. Nel pp.36, 37 26 November 2004.

This is about a farmer who farms on the Botswanan veld and how he has changed his herd by the use of Beefmaster semen. It describes his system of farming in the area.

*Word count 1495.*

**2. Why wise hunters work in the dark.** - S. McVeigh pp. 39, 39. 3 December 2004.

Concerns scientific research carried out about the way to kill impala so as to provide meat of the best quality. *Word count 1016*

**3. Quest for excellent Dohnes.** - C. McMaster pp.32, 33. 10 December 2004.

This describes how a sheep farmer has improved his farming operation by changing from Marino sheep to Dohnes and how he runs his successful stud. *Word count 1020.*

**4. Getting to grips with poultry terms.** - R. Billet p.44. 17 December 2004.

An article giving basic information about a range of terms in chicken farming including such things as “deep litter”, “de-beaking”, “egg bound”, “*E. coli*” and “fat deposits”. *Word count 806.*

**5. Fattening up feedlot profits** - C. Louw. pp.38, 39. 28 January 2005.

Describes a farmer who runs a feedlot but has decided to carry out his own meat processing to make a better profit. *Word count 1019.*

**6. A firm finger on the farm's pulse.** - C Gittens. pp. 34, 35. 4 February 2005

This is about how this particular farmer has both cattle and sheep on his family farm and how he keeps a close watch on things to make it a success. *Word count 1229.*

**7. Supertaler causes rift between breed societies.** - G Miles. pp. 36, 37. 11

February 2005.

Concerns a breed of cattle known as the Supertaler, the characteristics of the breed and opinions about whether it should become registered or not. *Word count 1128.*

**8. Less stress, more cash.** - L Phillips. pp. 36, 37. 18 February 2005.

Stress can be harmful to animals and reduce the farmer's profits. The article describes ways to avoid stress. *Word count 995.*

**9. Ensuring the best in pig genetics.** - C. Gittens. pp. 42, 43. 18 February 2005.

Describes the work of PigGen, the selection of boars, the breeds used and the advantages of artificial insemination. *Word count 1005.*

**10. Good feed = good fertility.** - C Gittens. pp. 36, 37. 25 February 2005.

About a farmer who has built up his farm over a number of years and uses a mix of animal and crop farming. *Word count 697.*

**11. The Muscles from Brussels.** - L Phillips. pp. 36, 41. 4 March 2005.

The Belgian Blue is a breed of cattle with very large muscles and the article looks at some scientific work and some opinions about its suitability for South Africa. *Word count 624*

**12. Maximise pastures, minimise costs.** - G. Gleason. pp. 28, 29. 11 March 2005.

The profitability of pasture based dairy systems is the subject of the article which gives guidance about some key parameters. *Word count 852*

**13. Earning a healthy income from boer goats.** - C Louw. pp.36, 37. 11 March 2005.

This concerns a farmer who realised the potential for goat breeding and has built up a successful goat stud. The article gives tips and compares goat meat to other meats.

*Word count 1216*

**14. Modern parlour for a medium dairy farm.** - L Phillips. pp. 34, 35. 1st April 2005.

About a farmer who has expanded his dairy herd and needed to increase the milking capacity of his farm. Contains a lot of technical information about the milking parlour.

*Word count 1211.*

**15. Beef adaptability: its in the eye of the beholder.** - L Phillips. pp. 34, 36. 8 April 2005.

About the environmental conditions cattle live in and their functional efficiency, how to visually assess some animals and why some breeds do well and others do not. *Word*

*count 981*

**16. How to test for hardy, veld-adapted rams.** - C Nel. pp. 35, 36. 8 April 2005

Veld selected and veld tested rams are promoted as being better than artificially prepared animals. Information is given about veld ram tests as well as some performance data. *Word count 893*

**17. Impressive poultry with EM.** - C Louw p. 40. 15 April 2005.

Effective microorganisms (EM) can be used in chicken production to keep chickens healthy and this article describes some of the problems encountered and the benefits.

*Word count 661*

**18. From mixed bag to hardy breed.** - L Phillips pp. 34, 35. 22 April 2005.

A farmer is working producing towards producing his own specialised breeding herd using different breeds of cattle. *Word count 993*

**19. Good grass; better cattle.** - C Gittens pp. 40, 41. 29 April 2005.

About a woman farmer who has developed her cattle farm by paying attention to the types of soil and the vegetation on her farm. It also looks at her breeding system.

*Word count 1479.*

**20. Don't short- change the Indu-Brazil.** - C Nel. pp. 38, 39. 6 May 2005.

How one farming family is developing a herd of Indu-Brazil cattle, the ways they are doing this and their goals for the herd. *Word count 1011.*

**21. Tips for running a top dairy.** - J Wasserman. pp.36, 37. 20 May 2005.

Offers a range of suggestions concerning management principles for running a profitable dairy farm including such things as weighing, machine maintenance, herd health and hoof care. *Word count 1313.*

**22. Despite drought and the rand, livestock looks good.-** J Kupka. p.30. 14

January 2005.

Current and projected financial farming information is given with suggestions about what to do to make the best of current trends. *Word count 842.*

## Appendix II

This is a copy of the text of the original article (1) followed by a shortened version in which nonhumans are substituted by humans.

### A quest for the ultimate bush-suited steer.

Cattle bred for the Botswanan veld have to be hardy, structurally efficient and fertile. They also have to produce good carcasses and meat of a high quality. Many years ago cattle farmers in the Ghanzi district in western Botswana also milked their cattle and sent the cream to Gaborone, as milk production and butter-fat content was an important secondary consideration in the early days of cattle farming in this area.

John Kempf started out farming with Tswana cattle in the Ghanzi district in the 1960s. He first used Red Poll and Simmentaler bulls on the animals and then put Afrikaner bulls on the crossbred cows. He discovered they produced excellent F1 crosses, but, as they became more like Afrikaner cattle, their frames became smaller and their hooves longer, a typical problem with Afrikaner cattle on sand-veld, John says.

At that time, the first Santa Gertrudis cattle were being imported from the US. "I tried Santa bulls, but, in terms of temperament and hardiness, this was disastrous", John says. Hereford bulls gave a good F1 cross with Afrikaner crossbred cows, but in the F2 generation, the progeny leant too much towards an ill-suited *Bos taurus* type. "By alternating Bonsmara with Hereford bulls, we made good progress", he says. "We branded the heifers with a B or an H, according to their sire, and mated them to bulls of the opposite breed."

Then, on Tony Brink's farm near Derdepoort in the Marico district in SA, John saw Beefmaster crossbred cattle, bred "by artificial insemination (AI), and was immediately impressed." In 1985 I imported my first Beefmaster semen from the US," he recalls, "and started a programme on upgrading the progeny of selected basic, cows to purebred Beefmasters, using the "best semen available."

"Each year Dale Lasater - son of the breed's developer, Tom Lasater - would select three top bulls from his Colorado ranch, test their semen and use the best of the three. Due to quarantine regulations, the bull could not be returned to Dale's ranch instead it was sent to his brother Laurie's ranch in Texas. "I was fortunate enough to obtain some of that bull's semen for my upgrading programme", John says. "Over the years I had the opportunity to use semen from 15 of the finest Beefmaster bulls in existence."

Xumgai's breeding programme.

The Beefmaster stud herd on John's ranch, Xumgai, currently consists of 600 cows. Two hundred of these are bred by AI and the balance to John's own purebred Beefmaster bulls. John uses a single breeding season from 1 April to 30 June, but, as most calves are born in the first two months of the calving season, he is planning to reduce the season to two months for it to end on 31 May. John established purebred Bonsmara and Hereford herds in 1980 to breed his bulls, so the cows were traditionally mated to these breeds in the commercial herd. Today, however, he no

longer uses Herefords in the commercial herd and has upgraded the Bonsmara herd to "Beefmaster by means of AI. John has also moved over to using self-bred Beefmaster bulls on his commercial cows in multi-sire herds at the ratio of one bull to 40 females. He's in the process of upgrading his entire commercial herd to Beefmasters.

Heifers are run in separate herds from the cows. Because the operation runs solely on veld grazing, the cows are only put to the bulls at the age of 2 years and calve when they're 3. Thereafter, however, a cow has to calve each year, or else it is slaughtered, a Lasater principle John adopted in the 1980s and has used ever since. John stops mating his cows once they turn 11. At this age the mothers are allowed to wean their calves and regain body condition before they're slaughtered - so that John still gets a good price for them.

All of John's commercial animals are branded with a year mark - for example, they'd be marked with a "4" for the year 2004 - and John's distinctive and registered brand, JK1. It's impractical to record the birth of each calf, its identity and the identity of its dam on such a large scale. Carrying out pregnancy checks is equally problematic - but neither procedure is really necessary. Cows that fail to calve are easily identified by a condition score - fat cows have usually failed to calve and conceive and are culled. Self-bred heifers replace culled commercial cows, and heifers with bad temperaments are also culled.

Most of John's farms are five morgen in size and divided into four camps. The home farm encompasses 10 000 morgen and comprises numerous camps on which the stud herd is run. Another 10 000 morgen farm, Xauxara, is divided into six camps where steers are grown out into oxen and old cows are fattened. The third 10 000-morgen farm is divided into 10 camps and used by the commercial breeding cows. The commercial herd is divided into a number of separate breeding herds of 400 females and 10 bulls; each run on 5 000 morgen divided into camps that are used in rotation. Each one has a centrally situated watering point, kraal and handling facility.

#### Ranching cattle in wild country

Because John has never had game fences on his lands, wild animals have been free to roam the property. Over the years, kudu numbers have increased, as have duiker and steenbok, while gemsbok and hartebeest - which previously populated the area - have disappeared. Steenbok do well with cattle, as they are selective feeders, and cattle open up heavy vegetation for them, John says. The Kempfs use natural methods to control predators when they become problematic. The cheetah population has increased but wild-dog numbers have dropped, although these animals are occasionally seen on the lands. Spotted hyena or lion also wander through the camps at times. Black-backed jackal and caracal are common and are actually beneficial as they eat large numbers of rodents. They are seldom a threat to cattle, although they are a problem for small-stock farmers. "However, about two years ago, a number of jackals formed a pack and started killing my calves", John says, "so we had to destroy them.

They killed 40 lions on Xumgai between 1961 and 1964. They came in from the Hainaveld, an area towards the northeast, which is rich in pans. Now their neighbours

on the new border farms between them and the Hainaveld serve as a buffer, so they have all the problems.

Due to the Kempfs' short calving season, they have few problems with leopard, 'although they're quite common on the ranch. During the calving season, the cows are aggressive towards leopards. "I once followed the spoor of cows that chased a leopard for some distance", John remembers. "Interestingly, our neighbours, who don't use a fixed breeding season, have calving cows and young animals on the veld all year round - this seems to attract leopards like a magnet".

Concentrated lambing or calving over a short time period has a crucial survival advantage in the Ghanzi district. It also ties in with the sage advice of Mabukushu, a grizzled old tribesman from the Okavango: "Let your goats lamb at the time of the year when the maretlwa [*brandybush*] has many berries. The jackals will leave your lambs alone."

At weaning time, commercial calves are rounded up and processed, at a rate of around 200 a day, for weeks on end. John and John-John do the more skilled work, while an efficient team of stockmen back them up. During this process, each animal is: branded laterally on the left buttock with John Kempf's brand and the year; branded on the left cheek with the zone brand, 012; dehorned; and identified by having the tips of both ears clipped and notched. Bull calves are castrated, while all animals are injected against black quarter with an Onderstepoort vaccine.

The semi-arid Ghanzi area is ideal for beef rearing. Diseases in the area are confined to occasional outbreaks of anaplasmosis and black quarter. Ever since they concreted the apron areas around drinking troughs and watering points to eliminate standing water, and rotated camps, the Kempfs have had few parasite problems. Before this change, John had to regularly dose all his animals. All bulls are tested annually for semen quality, with spot tests for the trichomonas infection. The few bulls marked for culling pay for the testing, increase the efficiency of the herd and give John a small profit. The herd is currently infected with bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD). During the last few years they experienced a drop in fertility and have seen a number of abortions, and blood tests have confirmed the presence of BVD antibodies. "As the herd has been a closed herd for many years, the source of this outbreak is a mystery", John says.

### **New Article**

A shortened version in which nonhumans are replaced by humans.

### A Quest for the Ultimate Bush Suited Human

People bred for the Botswana veld must be hardy, structurally efficient and fertile. They must produce good carcasses and meat of a high quality. Many years ago farmers also milked their girls as milk production and butterfat content were important considerations in the early days of human farming in the area.

This farmer started farming with various types of people but they did not do well in the arid sandy environment. In a number of experiments he put different types of men on the girls but the offspring did not have the required characteristics. He then had some success breeding two different races together. Each of the girls would have a mark burn into their skin to show which race their father came from, a B or an H, and then the girls were mated with a man from the other race.

The farmer, visiting another farm saw some people who had been conceived using artificial insemination from Musclemaster men and was immediately impressed. "In 1985 I imported my first Musclemaster semen from the US", he recalls, "and started a programme on upgrading the progeny of selected basic girls to purebred Musclemasters using the "best semen available." He used it for artificial insemination of some of the girls. Now he has his own group of Musclemaster men and uses them to make the girls pregnant although some of the girls are still made pregnant by artificial insemination.

Girls are mated once a year and have their babies around the same time. They are impregnated at the age of fourteen and will have one pregnancy each year for the next ten years. With this last pregnancy they are allowed to breast feed their baby until it can eat solid food and it can look after itself and they have recovered from their pregnancy. Once they have regained their weight the farmer can get a good price from their dead bodies and they are sent off to be killed. Girls who fail to fall pregnant in any year or who have bad temperaments are also killed.

Babies who are going to be sold for meat are taken away from their mothers as soon as possible; they are collected together and processed. Each one has a mark burnt into its skin on the buttock and the left cheek using a red hot iron. This shows who owns the children and the year they were born. Their ears have pieces cut out of them as a form of identification and the boys have their testicles cut off. All the children are vaccinated against a range of diseases.

The small group of men who are used for breeding have yearly quality tests done on their semen. Some of the men are marked for killing but the money obtained from the sale of their bodies is sufficient to pay for the testing of the men and also to give the farmer a small profit.

## Appendix III

### ***Example of part of a coding report for the node “metonymy” generated by NVivo 2.0.161***

NVivo revision 2.0.161      Licensee: Les Mitchell

Project: Les flash update 7    User: Administrator    Date: 2007/07/17 - 05:06:57 PM

NODE CODING REPORT

Node: metonymy  
Created:      2005/12/13 - 09:21:58 AM  
Modified:     2006/01/10 - 11:15:54 AM  
Documents in Set:    All Documents  
Document 1 of 28    03a feedlot  
Passage 1 of 5 Section 0, Para 6, 13 chars.

6: dairy calves

---

Passage 2 of 5 Section 0, Para 7, 15 chars.

7: breeding cattle

---

Passage 3 of 5 Section 0, Para 8, 11 chars.

8: meat cattle

---

Passage 4 of 5 Section 0, Para 18, 4 chars.

18: game

---

Passage 5 of 5 Section 0, Para 18, 4 chars.

18: game

---

Document 2 of 28    04a farm~year  
Passage 1 of 13     Section 0, Para 3, 26 chars.

3: commercial Gelbvieh cattle

Passage 2 of 13	Section 0, Para 4, 30 chars.
4: commercial Mutton Merino sheep	
Passage 3 of 13	Section 0, Para 4, 16 chars.
4: slaughter lambs	
Passage 4 of 13	Section 0, Para 4, 4 chars.
4: game	
Passage 5 of 13	Section 0, Para 7, 11 chars.
7: stud cattle	
Passage 6 of 13	Section 0, Para 7, 17 chars.
7: easy care' cattle	
Passage 7 of 13	Section 0, Para 7, 16 chars.
7: commercial herd.	
Passage 8 of 13	Section 1, Para 9, 15 chars.
9: §1 slaughter stock	
Passage 9 of 13	Section 1, Para 10, 13 chars.
10: Breeding Ewes	
Passage 10 of 13	Section 1, Para 11, 11 chars.
11: teaser rams	
Passage 11 of 13	Section 1, Para 11, 11 char

**Examples of some of the nodes coded for such as “brands” or “animal” verbs.**

document	achievement	animal verbs	animal-mat	animal-phys	brands						
	euphemism	farmer verbs	farmer-mat	farmer-phys	interesting						
	metonymy	production-lex	purpose	sci dev	sci prob	science-lex					
	sci-prod	slavery	special animal terms	(1) /Search Results	(1 1)						
/Search Results/gene, genetics, genome	(1 2)	/Search Results/genetics trait	(1 3)	/Search Results/culls etc	(1 4)	/Search Results/produce~	(1 5)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 2	(1 6)	/Search Results/dual purpose	(1 7)
/Search Results/cull all w doc	(1 8)	/Search Results/culled all w doc	(1 9)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup	(1 10)	/Search Results/genes etc	(1 11)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 3	(1 12)	/Search Results/Union 2	(1 13)
/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 4	(1 14)	/Search Results/Union	(1 15)	/Search Results/Union 3	(1 16)	/Search Results/Single Node Lookup 5	(1 17)	/Search Results/Union 4	(1 18)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 5	(1 19)
/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 6	(1 20)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 7	(1 21)	/Search Results/Single Text Lookup 8	(1 22)	/Search Results/Single Node Lookup totals					
Results	12	13	6	0	41	33	8	6	0	15	24
	166	15	6	5	339	4	16	30	0	17	20
	1	13	3	2	2	0	1	2	1	0	0
	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	0	0	811	
04a farm~year 1		13	2	10	5	14	62	47	0	6	
	13	67	9	0	0	49	1	3	30	0	1
	1	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
	0	0	3	8	3	2	2	0	0	49	416
46a bots cattle 7		41	17	10	22	26	60	23	1	6	
	12	39	12	1	0	94	0	19	12	0	1
	1	4	3	25	0	3	2	0	0	1	6
	0	4	5	26	6	0	0	0	0	94	583
14a mixed breed		3	15	10	0	31	10	44	20	0	
	4	10	26	6	1	0	78	0	9	23	0
	2	4	3	6	14	0	3	2	0	4	0
	3	0	0	3	4	3	2	2	0	0	78
	423										
47a hunters		0	12	8	3	0	29	18	7	0	4
	9	32	8	0	1	69	0	4	19	0	0
	0	12	5	14	0	12	2	0	0	14	15
	3	0	15	11	15	0	0	2	0	69	412
49a poultry terms		0	9	1	7	0	7	4	3	0	
	1	9	38	5	0	0	96	1	9	19	0
	0	0	1	7	15	2	1	1	0	0	2
	1	0	0	1	7	1	0	0	1	0	96
	345										
12a1 Beef adapt		0	20	8	2	2	5	22	6	1	
	3	7	18	7	0	1	84	0	7	5	0

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