

Living Capital: Situating Animals within Capitalist Modes  
of Production in Science Fiction

by

Skye Cervone

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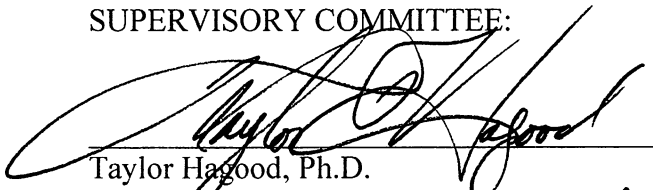
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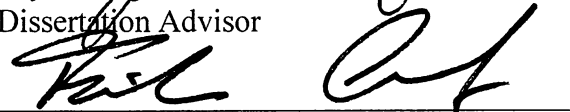
This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Taylor Hagood, Department of English, and has been approved by all members of the supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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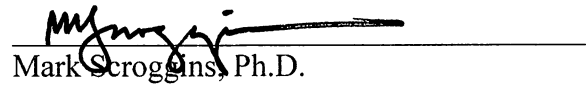
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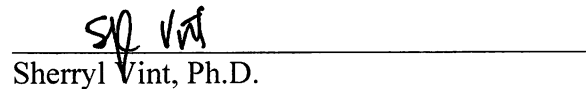
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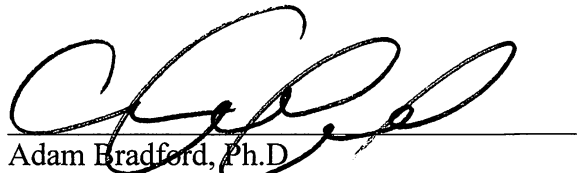
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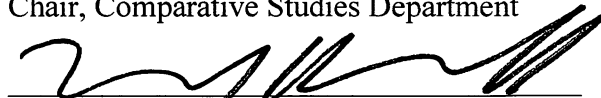
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She would also like to thank Tessie, Morte, and Finney for tolerating their often too busy human companion and loving her anyway.

Most of all, the author would like to thank her husband, Dan.

## Abstract

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This study addresses the relationship between animals and capitalism in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's *We3*, and Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. These texts and their authors attempted to change the conversation surrounding animals and imagine alternatives to traditional thinking surrounding animal subjectivity. Despite their intentions, however, the authors fail to depict non-exploitative relationships with animals within capitalist systems, suggesting an inherently exploitative relationship between animals and biopolitical capitalism.

I begin by illustrating the shifts in thought between pre-capitalism, early capitalism, and late-stage biopolitical capitalism, arguing the exploitation of animals under biopolitical capitalism is quantitatively different from exploitation in previous societies. By explaining the distinct class structure biopolitical capitalism uses to categorize different forms of animal life, I illustrate how the results in animals being classified as biocapital. I give an overview of the state of science fiction scholarship and

how the genre is particularly suited to addressing issues of animal identity and subjectivity.

In Chapter One, I explore the relationship between animals, empathy, and capitalism in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. The novel suggests an emphasis on empathy is not enough to save animals and nature from human exploitation, particularly in an inherently exploitative system such as patriarchal colonial capitalism.

In Chapter Two, I argue the interconnected systems of science, the military, the government, and capitalism in *We3* must reject the evidence they are given of animal subjectivity because acknowledging animal agency and subjectivity would undermine the graphic novel's capitalist system.

In Chapter Three, I argue that violence is an intrinsic part of capitalist systems in the *MaddAddam* trilogy and that violence is partially founded on and justified by the human/animal boundary.

Only with the destruction of capitalism in the *MaddAddam* trilogy or opting out of the capitalist model in *We3* can the animal be recognized as a being with independent agency outside of human constructions. Such characterization from authors inherently interested in animal welfare suggests animal studies scholars who have ignored capitalism's relationship to animal have missed a fundamental aspect to animal exploitation and denial of subjectivity.

## Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated to my mother, Terry, who knew a Ph.D. was my path long before I did.

It is also dedicated to Tessie. There is nothing like a dog who loves you, and she loved fiercely her entire life.

Lastly, to my husband, Dan, for his constant support, encouragement, humor, and love.

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## Introduction: Capital, the Biopolitical State, and Animals

All ages are times of great transition; it is only our temporal placement within or after them that makes them appear monumental. However, there is little debate that the rate of technological advancement and dependence on that technology to facilitate the functions of everyday life stands out as exceptional in any examination of contemporary events. As the Industrial Revolution altered the landscape of human labor, economic models, housing, governmental models, and any number of other systems, the technological revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century altered and defined new paradigms both in social institutions and the artistic commentary on those developments.

While the ur-text and definitive moment of creation of Science Fiction (SF) as a distinct genre of literature is still contested among scholars whose definitions of the field seemingly match their desire to point to their chosen moment, it is difficult to argue that by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century SF was not a genre that was both well-defined and extremely popular<sup>1</sup>. For the young adult of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, living through the invention and ubiquity of the telephone, the radio, the television, the atomic bomb, and space travel, it was easy to imagine that the human forays into the future would result in a relentless pace of advancement and engagement with new landscapes and civilizations. It is during the zeitgeist of possibility that enveloped the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century that SF began to

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<sup>1</sup> My dissertation, however, will treat Science Fiction as practice and mode, as well as consciousness for techno reality and cultural imagination. For a discussion of some differences between mode and genre, see “Fantasy as Mode, Genre, Formula” in Brian Attebery’s *Strategies of Fantasy* or Damien Broderick’s *Reading by Starlight: Postmodern Science Fiction*.

appear less as fanciful imaginative dreams and more as forthright visions and predictions of the future.

Arguably born from Lucian's fanciful tales of exploration<sup>2</sup> or Mary Shelley's experimentation and rumination on the nature of man's relationship to his creator<sup>3</sup>, the focus of the examinations of journeys off planet, through time, and living with technology as engagement of pure wonder became more introspective by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. At much the same moment SF went mainstream and began beaming directly into the living rooms of the world through television with *The Twilight Zone* (1959) and *Star Trek* (1966), SF began exploring not just new planets and civilizations but the relationships between human and non-human entities in the distant lands and times offered through SF's extrapolative model as a way to symbolically comment on the world of the authors and viewers while providing enough effective distance to avoid much of the pushback associated with pushing for a change in the social order<sup>4</sup>.

SF's move toward introspection afforded it a structure through which the extrapolative journeys of faraway lands and peoples eventually returned its focus to its home planet and the silenced inhabitants and the unexamined agents sharing the same resources. SF examined the problems of this world, engaging racism, colonialism, fascism, sexism, and began presenting texts that undermined long-standing social norms and challenged or warned its viewers and readers of the successes or failures associated

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<sup>2</sup> His work, *A True Story* (Second Century), is regarded by some as the first SF tale.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is another text many consider the first work of SF.

<sup>4</sup> It is exactly this remove from reality that prompted Kornbluth to argue in a lecture in 1957 ("The Failure of the Science Fiction Novel as Social Criticism") that SF had not yet been a literature of effective social criticism, but that it should be. His comment is famous, controversial, and was perhaps presented poorly. Despite not clarifying between the two terms, it is clear Kornbluth meant SF had not yet resulted in social change in the same way his noted example of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had, rather than meaning SF did not practice effective social commentary. SF has a long and notable history of social critique, and it is precisely the SF mode itself that makes social commentary both possible and effective as I discuss in my dissertation.

with those changes. As this level of introspection continued in the late 1960's and early 1970's, SF's perceived focus on destroying oppositional binaries and blurring lines of division proved useful for negotiating early work into exploring the possibility of animal agency and questioning the ethics of human and non-human animals.

As SF, by nearly all definitions, must remain connected to the future as an extrapolation of the present in order to remain science fictional, the literature has followed or been followed by the social movements of its creation. Coinciding with the environmental movement, the early to mid-1970's saw a focus on the ethics surrounding animals with 1971's publication of *Animals, Men, and Morals* edited by John Harris and Stanley and Roslind Goglovitch and 1975's *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer. As animal ethics moved into the cultural consciousness, SF authors preempted this by engaging animal ethics and by blurring the human/animal boundary in works like Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968). Later, they further developed human relationships to non-human animals through existing or imagined technological and social developments as in Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's *We3* (2004) and Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003, 2009, 2013).

In addition to the genre's focus on the ethical situation regarding the relationship between human and non-human animals, many SF scholars have turned their attention to texts which present concerns about animal welfare and environmental destruction, and such concerns are particularly pressing in the current moment. While current anxieties surrounding mass extinction and environmental destruction are given particular importance due to the threat of Anthropocene, the conditions that have enabled humans to

show disregard for life that is not human and thinking about these conditions are both far from new or contemporary.

Disregard for life that is not human extends not just to animals, but also to the environment, and discourse surrounding the human relationship to nature is helpful for conceptualizing the human relationship to animals. Both animals and the natural world are often viewed as pure resource, an ideology that long pre-dates the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As Neil Smith argues in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*, nineteenth-century American Romanticism “was a direct response to the successful objectification of nature into the labor process” (13). Smith is concerned with the “bourgeois ideology of nature,” which he argues presents two differing ideologies: the scientific and the poetic (3). He argues that nature is treated as “external” in the scientific tradition, as if humans are not part of it and nature is a force to be dominated, dissected, and harnessed, while the poetic tradition often approaches nature as a “universal,” treating humans as if they are part of a larger whole. While Smith is not primarily concerned with animals, specifically, this divide between external positioning in scientific tradition and universal positioning within poetic tradition is also seen in how humans treat animal life. Animal studies scholars note a similar divide between philosophical treatment and poetic treatment of animals, arguing that the poetic tradition is the only tradition which imagines animals as beings who can “return the gaze.”<sup>5</sup> Humans often view animals as wholly other objects that have little relation to human life, a view reinforced by capitalist domination and the use of animals as either nuisances or products to enhance human life.

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<sup>5</sup> As I will discuss in the section on animal studies, this is a term coined by Jaques Derrida in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Through a personal example of his cat, he uses it to denote animal subjectivity.

SF is in a unique position to imagine animals in poetic terms and as beings who can “return the gaze.” SF authors concerned with animal identity and subjectivity directly respond to capitalist, technoscientific exploitation and the destruction of animal life. These authors are attempting to embrace a “poetic”<sup>6</sup> understanding of animals that values them as living, feeling beings and warn of the dangers of societies based on human exceptionalism, the belief that humans are not a part of, and are therefore superior to, the rest of the animal kingdom. However, capitalism is an all-encompassing system, and in its such wholeness—indeed the “poetic” understanding itself—is an unattainable fantasy, thus such authors revert to animal exploitation and depict capitalism as a system which permeates modern thought. By analyzing the relationship between animals and capitalism in Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely’s *We3*, and Margaret Atwood’s *Madaddam* trilogy, my dissertation will show how the relationship between animals and capitalism is inherently exploitative. In examining posited future scenarios for the non-human animal, SF shows the necessity of linking together multiple fields of inquiry. Since animals serve in these textual models as consumer product, non-human replacement to serve humans, and as bioengineered consumer good, the necessity of linking the animals’ relationship to capitalism (for-profit product), biopolitics (the regulation and control of the animal body/mind to serve human agency), and the ability, or lack thereof, for the non-human animal to become recognized as agent or develop a transspecies world is interrogated as imagined within SF texts from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Given this inherently exploitative relationship, the only alternatives presented in the texts—animals removing themselves from the biopolitical

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<sup>6</sup> This “poetic” treatment of animals attempts to place humans and animals together as living beings sharing a world, as opposed to treating animals as wholly other products for human exploitation.

capitalist market, the destruction of capitalism, and granting animals political representation—suggest ideological opposition between animal welfare and biopolitical capitalism because of the ways biopolitical capitalism classifies animals and the ways it must deny animal subjectivity.

### **Origins of Capitalism and Distinctions Between Periods**

I begin this section by giving a historical overview of capitalism in the West. By illustrating shifts in thought between pre-capitalism, early capitalism, and late-stage biopolitical capitalism, I argue the exploitation of animals under biopolitical capitalism is quantitatively different from that under pre-capitalist and early capitalist Western societies.

Before discussing how biopolitical capitalism in the West is unique from previous forms of capitalism, particularly within the context of animal life and labor, it is necessary to discuss specific historical shifts. Many historians situate the shift from European feudalism to capitalism as the inevitable and natural result of industrialization and the human desire for innovation and profit. In *The Origin of Capitalism*, Ellen Meiksins Wood refers to this view as the “commercialization model,” which is considered the dominant model of explanation for capitalist economic systems in the West<sup>7</sup>. The commercial model implies capitalism was always, already part of human society and rests on the principle that “individuals have been engaging in acts of exchange since the dawn of history. These acts became increasingly specialized with an evolving division of labor, which was also accompanied by technical improvements in

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the commercialization model of capitalism, see Robert S. DuPlessis *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (1997). DuPlessis focuses this development from the mid-fifteenth to late-eighteenth centuries as agricultural systems became innovated and villagers worked in industry in addition to farming and livestock production, followed by the urbanization of Europe and central urban areas employing thousands of women and children, moving Europe's economic center from the Mediterranean to the North Atlantic region.

the instruments of production” (Wood 12). Such a claim posits capitalism as a natural progression of what humans have always done and implies a capitalist system is the inevitable result of human interactions after a certain period of time and given the appropriate amount of industrialization. This claim rests on the idea that humans have always and will always be motivated primarily through maximizing profit. The commercialization model assumes a close relationship between “commercial development and a kind of technological determinism” (12). By placing the two together, “[c]apitalism, then, or ‘commercial society,’ the highest stage of progress, represents a maturation of age-old commercial practices (together with technological advances) and their liberation from political and cultural constraints” (12). Here, capitalism is assumed to be an evolutionary inevitability that would have happened anywhere as soon as the correct conditions were met. The commercialization model also implies capitalism is the highest stage of human progress, thereby positioning objection and resistance to it as somehow unnatural to a fully developed human society<sup>8</sup>. European cities, in particular, are seen as an integral part of the shift due to their autonomy, and so technological improvements, combined with “liberation of the urban economy, of commercial activity and mercantile rationality” are seen as the primary factors contributing to “the rise of modern capitalism” (3)<sup>9</sup>. In the commercial model, modern capitalism is a distinctly

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<sup>8</sup> The idea of capitalism as the highest level of inevitable and natural human progress is deeply ingrained in American culture, so much so that anything deemed anti-capitalist is met with both suspicion and resistance from many politicians and citizens alike.

<sup>9</sup> Both Wood and DuPlessis historicize the developments of capitalism and commercialization through their ties to urbanization and depict them as an evolution early but complicate this notion throughout their works, arguing instead that capitalism was merely the dominant system that sprung from a number of possibilities.

urban, technological, and an ultimately inevitable form of human progress that resulted from human relationships and motivations already present in previous societies<sup>10</sup>.

While the commercialization model implies capitalism did not distinctly change human relationships, but rather formed as a result of already present human relationships, Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* argues human relationships changed drastically under capitalist systems. Polanyi notices a distinct shift and claims individual profit was not a prevailing motivation until after capitalist markets created "market societies." In a market society, "the running of society [exists] as an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system. The vital importance of the economic factor to the existence of society precludes any other result" (Polanyi 33)<sup>11</sup>. For Polanyi, capitalism is not merely an evolution of what had already existed in human societies and relationships; rather, it presents a dramatic departure from the past. Instead of markets being a necessary aspect of human relationships and interactions, markets become the primary factor around which human societies are situated. As Wood observes, Polanyi's account is particularly notable not only because of his distinction between a "market society" and "societies with

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<sup>10</sup> For sources on capitalism as natural and inevitable see Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), where he argues against regulations on commerce and government intrusion into the market. Alternative theories have been offered by Immanuel Wallerstein (world-system approach based on Marx's theory that capital arose from the commercial exploitation of colonial possessions) and Robert Brenner (class structure in the countryside approach) which centers around the interplay between peasants and landowners in violent revolt and non-violent protest (as well as the responses to these actions) created the basis for capitalism's dominance in specific areas, among others.

<sup>11</sup> Despite not being informed by feminist thought, for an understanding of how Polanyi's work might provide "a framework conducive to the inclusion of gender into economics" (494), see "A Feminist Reconsideration of Polanyi" (1991) by William Waller and Ann Jennings. For a discussion of the connections between Polanyi and "the midcentury critique of economic society" in the U.S. (446), as well as a good review of his core argument in *The Great Transformation*, see "Polanyi in the United States: Peter Drucker, Karl Polanyi, and the Midcentury Critique of Economic Society" by Daniel Immerwahr (2009). Additionally, Polanyi's idea of the "economists' fallacy" was the basis for the "new institutionalism" as developed by John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan in the 70's and then by Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell in the 1980s.



markets,” but because he noted “not only the differences between their economic systems but the social dislocations which that transformation brought” (22). Capitalism, Polanyi and Wood argue, did not just alter markets; capitalism changed the nature and motivations of both human societies and human relationships. The logic of a capitalist society in the West is decidedly different from non-capitalist societies, and it is not necessarily a natural evolution of already existing human motivations, as the commercialization model suggests. As I will discuss later, Polanyi’s argument about the logic of market societies has significant implications for human life, animal life, and biopolitical capitalism.

Building off the work of Polanyi and in resistance to the idea that the development of capitalism was entirely urban, Wood argues the farmers of the English countryside were an essential part of the shift from feudalism to capitalism. For Wood:

there are many questionable things in these assumptions about the natural connection between cities and capitalism, but foremost among them must be the tendency to naturalize capitalism, to disguise its distinctiveness as a historically specific social form with a beginning and, potentially, an end. (69)

Rather than capitalism being an inevitable shift as a result of urbanization and technological innovation, as many have argued, she instead posits that capitalism was agrarian, and did not, in fact, evolve as a result of natural human urges, behaviors, and social structures. For Wood, challenging the inevitability of capitalism is an essential step in challenging the system itself. If a capitalist system is not a natural product of human evolution, but rather a structured market like those that came before it, challenging

exploitative capitalist practices is not unnatural as some suggest. She argues the shift to capitalism and the resulting market society:

was born not in the city but in the countryside, in a very specific place, and very late in human history. It required not a simple extension or expansion of barter and exchange but a complete transformation in the most basic human relations and practices, a rupture in age-old patterns of human interaction with nature. (69)

By placing the origin of capitalism in the English countryside, Wood disrupts previous narratives about its origins and its inevitability. Narratives that characterize capitalism as the natural result of urbanization and the highest form of human economic evolution can minimize the harm such a system can do to human life, animal life, and the natural world. If capitalism is both natural and necessary, periodic “sacrifices” and harms done in order to preserve the system can also be shortsightedly characterized as natural and necessary, and perhaps, inevitable.

While the shift to capitalism had a profound and dramatic effect on human life and human labor, embracing new methods of and reasons for farming, of course, also impacted the natural world, animal life, and animal labor. Farming for commodity production changed the essential relationship between farmers and their animals, as these animals were no longer seen as sustenance for the family but rather as forms of biocapital necessary for turning a profit where the animal body represents future profit. Commodity farming also results in a change in volume and scale<sup>12</sup>. Rather than raising a small number of animals for personal use, commodity farming requires raising large numbers

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<sup>12</sup> Discussions on the changes from the peasant farm to the commodity farm and then to the industrialized farm all center around the work of F.H. Buttel, who has published extensively on the topic since the 1980s. While his research is focused on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, his theories and observations have been applied to developments across time periods and geographical distance.

of animals, removing both the identity and individuality from the animals and making them numbers. When the identity and individuality of animals is removed, it is seemingly logical to deny their subjectivity, as subjects must have both an identity and individuality. Commodity farming also changed the relationships between animals and the people who consume animal products, as a result of the alienating nature of capitalism between consumer and product.

Karl Marx famously argues capitalism results in people being alienated from their labor. People no longer use the products they produce, but rather sell what they produce and do not benefit from the product itself, but rather from the sale of the product. Under capitalism, commodity farming also results in alienation/removal from the animal who supplied the animal product. It is through the for-profit model that the consumer becomes alienated from the cow who supplied the milk or the cow who was killed to supply the meat or the leather, while sustenance farming requires a direct relationship with both the animal and the animal product<sup>13</sup>. Through alienation from the animal being used, the consumer relationship approaches farm animals as always things, as the end products, rather than as individual creatures who helped make, or through death, became products. Commodity farming, then, transformed both the relationship of the farmer to the animal and provided a way for consumers to seemingly remove the animal from the situation entirely. Commodity farming sets the stage for industrialized farming and the unique form of animal exploitation inherent in biopolitical capitalism.

My discussion of the radical shifts the beginning of capitalism entailed helps explain how the biopolitical state results in another significant change for both human

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<sup>13</sup> See Edward Miller and John Hatcher for an examination of sustenance farming in medieval England, or James C. Scott on subsistence farming in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Asia.

societies and animal relationships. In contemporary Western society, the capitalist state is inherently connected to the biopolitical state, and this study treats the two as interlinked. For Michel Foucault, “one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death” (41). While this sovereign power has changed over the course of different human societies and with various restrictions<sup>14</sup>, such power has always remained in the purview of sovereign entities—dictating who lives and who dies, or “the right to *take* life or *let* live” (42). This power is not unconditional, and it has historically been conceived as being for “the defense of the sovereign, and his own survival” (41). By using the examples of modern warfare and the death penalty, Foucault notes how the sovereign in the West has expanded so that its power “is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population” (43). Humans become part of large populations that the sovereign has the right to and must manage in the name of preserving safety, both of the population and of the sovereign itself. Wars and the death penalty are “justified” through arguing for the safety of a specific population by insisting their very lives are at risk if others are allowed to live. What is currently at stake is still who lives and who dies, but this is a different form of power from pre-biopolitical societies.

According to Foucault, this power over life evolved into two basic forms, or poles, starting in the seventeenth century. The first pole to be formed was over the individual body and focused on optimizing and controlling it. The second:

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<sup>14</sup> According to Foucault, this right over life and death likely derived from the Roman *patria potestas*, which formalized a Roman father’s legal right to kill his children and his slaves. Once the right over life was conceived by classical theoreticians, “[i]t was no longer considered that this power of the sovereign over his subjects could be exercised in an absolute and unconditional way, but only in cases where the sovereign’s very existence was in jeopardy, a sort of right of rejoinder” (41).

focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all of the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population*. (44)

A biopolitics of the population seeks to control the biological processes of life in the name of preserving the sovereign and those who live under its control. Contemporary society is situated in such a way that laws, government entities, and corporations have increasing power over human bodies through the regulation and availability of food and drugs, as well as corporate attempts to patent genetic material and influence the laws governing food and drugs. For Foucault, biopower is specifically linked to capitalism in the current moment, and biopolitical theorists still begin with Foucault.

The biopolitical state is discussed at length by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995), who is building on Foucault's work. Agamben discusses the contemporary biopolitical state as one of the foundations of contemporary sovereignty. Agamben notes the differences between *bios*, which is the "qualified life of the citizen" and *zoë*, which is "the bare, anonymous life that is such taken into the sovereign ban" (124). While all human life is born with the capacity for political action, Aristotle's concept of humans as the only political animals, *bios* is life that is granted the opportunity for political action through the state or sovereign. *Zoë* is life that is denied this right through the power of the sovereign and who cannot act politically. This obviously includes refugees, non-citizens, prisoners, and those on life-support; however, Agamben argues the status of *zoë* can now encompass the

entire polis. Agamben states that with modern democracy's inception, its goal was to "find the *bios* of *zoë*" (11), to give political rights to all humans, not just a privileged few. In Agamben's view, modern democracy has largely failed in this goal. The failure to "find the *bios* of *zoë*" is of huge importance to the current state of modern democracy because the state's right to control *zoë* is currently what gives it legitimacy and sovereignty. The state needs to control *zoë* or it has nothing to govern (127), making the ability to govern *zoë*, non-political life, the foundation of sovereignty. In a world where corporations are people, agribusiness has unprecedented control over the food supply, and neo-colonial corporate powers have increasing transnational control, the lines between corporate entities and sovereign entities are increasingly blurry as the relationship between the two become further entwined. The rise of a new kind of corporate power certainly has clear implications for human life, but animals are, of course, also impacted by shifting forms of governmental control. While not interested in animals, specifically, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri discuss the connections between contemporary biopolitics and imperialism.

In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri discuss the nature of contemporary sovereignty. They argue national sovereignty has been superseded by the sovereignty of empire. This new form of global sovereignty, empire, is "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule" (Hardt and Negri xii). Empire's "transformation of the modern imperialist geography of the globe and the realization of the world market signal a passage within the capitalist mode of production" (xiii). As the shift from feudalism to capitalism in the West drastically changed the nature of human societies and relationships, the shift to globalized empire has changed the

Western capitalist state. In the global economy “the creation of wealth tends ever more toward what we will call biopolitical production, the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political, and the cultural, increasingly overlap and invest one another” (xiii). Like Agamben, Hardt and Negri also build from the work of Foucault to conceptualize their concept of biopolitical production. By using Foucault’s argument that life itself has become an object of power, Hardt and Negri state “biopower thus refers to a situation in which what is directly at stake in power is the production and reproduction of life itself” (24). Forms of biopolitical control regulate life itself, and this regulation is inherently tied to the creation of wealth, which is particularly easy to observe in the biotech industry. In such an economic system, life can be and is treated as a resource that must be governed, can, and should be used for profit.

The creation of wealth in contemporary Western society is inherently tied to globalization. Hardt and Negri’s empire and the merging of capitalist production with globalization, “[m]akes perfectly clear and possible today the capitalist project to bring together economic power and political power, to realize, in other words, a perfectly capitalist order” (9). A perfectly capitalist order in market society seeks to make everything an adjunct to the market and make its primary purpose to serve the market, including life itself. This perfectly capitalist order does not just produce commodities, but also produces “agentic subjectivities within the biopolitical context: they produce needs, social relations, bodies, and minds—which is to say, they produce producers” (32). Human life and subjectivity are crafted to consume, serve the market, and produce goods for others to do the same. The impulse of the market is to continuously expand, and so it defines new “needs” for the consumer. They argue, “[i]n the biopolitical sphere, life is

made to work for production, and production is made to work for life” (32). Society itself became an adjunct to market under the switch to capitalism, and this logic can now be extended to life itself. With the market as the major impulse of human society, and a fully realized biopolitical capitalist order under globalized, Western society, life is treated as a patentable and controllable product. Human life itself can be an adjunct to the market, particularly those humans who do not hold capital but who sell their labor. The impulse of markets to continuously expand and the ties between wealth creation and globalization in contemporary biopolitical states links capitalism with colonialism.

Transnational biopolitical capitalism is inextricably tied to colonialism, with corporate entities pillaging the labor and resources of foreign countries, as colonial entities did to the same countries in the past. J.M. Blaut discusses one of the primary justifications for European colonialism, Eurocentric diffusionism. Eurocentric diffusionism relies on four

straightforward propositions: (1) Europe naturally progresses and modernizes. (2) Non-Europe naturally remains stagnant, traditional, unchanging. (3) The essential reason for progressive cultural evolution in Europe is some force or factor which is ultimately intellectual or spiritual. (4) Progress comes to non-Europe only through the diffusion of European ideas, institutions, and people—that is, through colonialism. (260)

Eurocentric diffusionism is similar to the justifications for American imperialism, both through the American government and through American corporations, linking together Western practices of exploitation in the name of profit. By situating colonialism as some



form of “higher ideal,” the destruction of foreign countries and resources is not only justified but is positioned as being for a certain country or people’s “own good.”

Such justifications are still alive and well today, but they have been adopted as part of a decidedly capitalist enterprise possible through the kind of globalization discussed by Hardt and Negri. As Blaut argues,

colonialism, in various modern forms, remains a basic and central tenant of the European elite, and it is still necessary to explain and rationalize a system by which European capital exploits non-European labor, mainly (but not only) for the purpose of persuading European populations that this exploitation is right, rational, and historically natural. (261)

The new colonial powers are linked to corporate power, giving rise to a form of colonial capitalism. As before, Blaut is interested in Europe, specifically. However, this impulse is also apparent in the U.S. and is part of the Western approach to contemporary profit seeking, hoarding of resources, and the exploitation of non-Western, often non-white, others<sup>15</sup>. I will discuss colonial capitalism at length in the next chapter in the context the android market in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*<sup>16</sup>. In addition to its deep-rooted ties to colonialism, the conditions of capitalism encourage and result in rampant conspicuous consumption, even by consumers who do not necessarily have the means to publicly display proof of their wealth.

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<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the ties between colonialism and capitalism, see Kwame Nkrumah’s *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965).

<sup>16</sup> Fowler Shocken Associates in Fredrick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth’s *The Space Merchants* (1952) also takes on the role of corporate colonizer, aiming to populate Venus with colonists who will be forced to buy their products to survive and who will give birth to more colonists so the cycle can continue in perpetuity.

Conspicuous consumption is the display of wealth through purchasing and publicizing products designed to showcase the economic power of the individual. First coined by Thorstein Veblen in 1899's *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions*, the theory of conspicuous consumption was widely panned by sociologists until the age of the Great Depression in the United States, when sociologists noted that people actually would rather display their wealth and status to others than spend capital on goods and services that were unseen by the general public. In concrete terms, people would rather purchase fur coats and diamond earrings than eat more nutritious meals where they could not be seen. While Veblen's theory and coining of the term is important, the work of Jean Baudrillard showcases that the era of conspicuous consumption may be over for the wealthy, even as the middle class continues to engage in the behavior.

In *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard argues that as middle class society has gravitated toward conspicuous consumption in order to associate themselves with the power and wealth of the ruling class, the rich have moved toward inconspicuous consumption in order to differentiate themselves and maintain the ability to display their power (6). For Baudrillard, this move is one that turns away from the public view and toward the consumption of culture as opposed to material goods that can be purchased by any with the means to do so (54). What Baudrillard is showcasing here is the move away from fancy automobiles and designer clothes and jewels and into the curating of art collections and cultural experiences that are beyond the purchasing power of the aspirational class<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> One could look at art collections here, but a particularly striking example is the creation of an application for the Apple phone known as "I Am Rich." The app was released in 2008 and pulled from the App store

While Baudrillard argues that the rich no longer participate in conspicuous consumption, it is not because they no longer desire to have nice things but because the purpose of conspicuous consumption is to showcase the difference between themselves and others. As it impacts this dissertation, conspicuous consumption and the desire of the middle-class to assimilate themselves into the display of power regarding the ruling class is exemplified in both the production of the android animal and Decker's desire for a real animal in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (as detailed in the next chapter).

### **Biopolitics and Animals**

Having given a brief overview of capitalism in the West and the current biopolitical state, in this section I discuss how biopolitics impacts animal populations. By looking at the distinct class structure biopolitical capitalism uses to categorize different forms of animal life, I illustrate how this naturally leads to animals being classified as biocapital.

Biopolitics is often used to analyze human populations and welfare, and human life is certainly Foucault, Hardt, and Negri's main focus. However, animal studies scholars have turned their attention to biopolitics, and as Agamben argues, in *Homo Sacer*, "one of the essential characteristics of biopolitics...is its constant need to redefine the threshold in life that distinguishes and separates what is inside from what is outside" (131). The biopolitical, capitalist state locates animals outside of human society, and this

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the next day. The app itself has no use value and functions solely to prove that the owner could purchase it. The app sold for \$999.99, was on the market for just one day, and was purchased eight times. See "FCJ-181 There's a History for That: Apps and Mundane Software as Commodity" by Jeremy Wade Morris and Evan Elkins.

distinction is fundamental to the human/animal boundary and thus closely connected to the inherently exploitative relationship between animals and capitalism.

In one of his later texts, *The Open: Man and Animal* (2002), Agamben discusses conceptions of human and animal identity under biopolitics. He makes note of the “anthropological machine” which “verifies the absence of nature to *Homo*, holding him suspended between celestial and terrestrial nature between animal and human—and thus, his being is always less and more than himself” (29). The anthropological machine allows humans to classify themselves as both divine and singular and as being prone to animal characteristics (30). By occupying a space no other being occupies but still leaving room for “lesser” or “baser” behavior, humans exert their own superiority over animal life and leave themselves open to classify certain actions and certain groups of people as closer to animals and as “less than human” humans. For Agamben, the distinction between human and animal is largely tied to human language. He argues,

The passage from animal to man [after the understanding of evolution], despite the emphasis placed on comparative anatomy and paleontological findings, was produced by subtracting an element that had nothing to do with either one, and that instead was presupposed as the identifying characteristic of the human: language. (34)

By using human language as the essential characteristic of the human/animal boundary, and by dismissing forms of animal language as not “true” language because it is not human, animal life can be related to an objectified and seemingly unthinking status. Agamben argues if human language is taken away, “the difference between man and animal vanishes” (36). As I will discuss at length, it is not surprising, then, that both

Morrison/Quintely and Atwood give their respective animals the power of speech, and that their speech disrupts both the human/animal boundary within the respective texts, and in the case of *We3*, specifically, the biopolitical capitalist states of the texts. The human/animal boundary is necessary for justifying animal objectification, exploitation, and is an essential characteristic of the biopolitical capitalist state.

The human/animal boundary places all non-human animal life in the category of “other” and is used to justify animal exploitation, classifying animal life as consisting of relatively homogeneous populations that must be managed to ensure human safety, welfare, and profit. As Derrida argues, the failure to classify animals as independent, thinking subjects justifies their exploitation and nullifies human responsibility (30-32). Categorizing animals as wholly other and denying their subjectivity aids in their classification as biocapital. They may be alive, but by ignoring carefully selected realities about them, animals can be seen and used as products and pieces, rather than as beings who deserve fundamental rights to life, and late capitalism’s relationship to animals is decidedly different from that of early capitalism. In late-stage biopolitical capitalism, industry no longer only profits from the animal body post death, with the living animal being an expense to be maintained and a symbol of future profit. The living animal becomes a profitable asset in biomedicine and becomes a luxury good through testing, derivative supplementation, and a designer companion. Animal identity is relational to the human and marked by use value, resulting in numerous economic classifications about which animals deserve rights and what rights they deserve.

Contemporary biopolitical capitalism in the West has resulted in a distinct class structure for animal life, similar to human class distinctions. Treasured pets of the social

and economic elite in the U.S. are entitled to rights, healthcare, expensive food, and even possessions. The purchase of live animals, food, healthcare, and related products is a billion-dollar industry in the U.S. The American Pet Product Association estimates U.S. households will spend \$72.13 billion in 2018. The care American pets receive varies greatly based on the owner's socioeconomic status and how they view the animal in question, ranging all the way from the "accessory" teacup dogs carried around by socialites, to pets whose owners cannot afford their basic necessities, to the estimated 1.5 million animals who die in U.S. shelters every year ("Pet Statistics") and dogs who freeze to death because they are left outside during winter. Such inequality within how American companion animals are treated is the result of a multitude of factors, but as it does within human society, late capitalism has resulted in a distinct class structure for American companion animals, and this class structure is exacerbated by economic class and selective reasoning about the value of animal life.

While many Americans agree companion animals are deserving of some form of rights, at least in theory, this logic does not always extend to farm animals. The unnecessary cruelty of factory farming is well documented and has given rise to many counter-industries, such as "cage-free eggs" and "grass-fed beef." Marketed as both more humane and better for the human consumer, these products are often significantly more expensive and less widely distributed than their industrialized farming counterparts. Thus, class distinction exists both for the animals kept on farms—those who live and die on factory farms classified, whether directly or indirectly, as less deserving of rights than animals of the same species on more "ethical farms," and class distinctions for the human consumer—those who can afford to make healthier and more humane food choices, and

those who cannot. In such a system, farm animal welfare and farm animal rights are luxury goods, as agribusiness maintains more ethical conditions for farm animals would hinder productivity and raise food prices, and “ag-gag” laws have been enacted by states to hide unethical practices and protect the owners of factory farms. Acknowledging the evils of factory farming causes a moral and ethical dilemma in which the consumer acknowledges their role in the mistreatment of these animals. However, welfare for these animals is packaged as something lower classes cannot afford to consider when making food choices. Farm animals seem to be deserving of rights when and if these rights are affordable on the part of the farm, and even then, they are only affordable for the consumer given a certain amount of access to food choices and a certain amount of disposable income. Of course, the argument that these animals “die anyway” stubbornly persists, and it is difficult to imagine such an argument being made regarding companion animals such as dogs. Industrialized farming makes it easier for both consumers and agribusiness to make these arguments because of the alienation between animal, farmer, and consumer under commodity farming (as mentioned previously). Farm animals can be situated as always, already products, and products have no need for, and are not deserving of, rights.

Animal rights under biopolitical capitalism in the West is largely based on selective reasoning about which animals deserve rights based on proximity to the human, value to the human, and annoyance to the human. The animals who are perceived as being capable of having the closest relationship to humans, dogs, are often conceived as deserving the most rights. Of course, this does not account for abuse situations, and animal abuse laws vary widely by state. Additionally, people continue to spend as much

as \$2,000 per “purebred” puppy, as unwanted “mutts” die in shelters, speaking to sharp class distinctions even within a particular species, the use of animals as status symbols, and in some cases, individual human desire taking precedence over canine welfare in general. Cats, sometimes perceived as not needing or loving their human companions, rarely receive the same status and care as dogs<sup>18</sup>. As I have already discussed, farm animals are often seen as products, and their rights are often situated as economic luxuries. Animals classified as either nuisances or trophies are routinely denied any rights, and arguments for the humane killing of these animals are often characterized as requests from extreme or fringe animal rights advocates. Proximity to and experience with the animals in question often determine how their rights are perceived, creating clear class distinctions among animal species, similar to class distinctions among humans, with some animals and some people seen as more deserving of life than others.

These different classifications of animals are treated similarly, however, insofar as the arguments against animal welfare are often economic, as the primary arguments against social welfare programs for humans are publicized as economic<sup>19</sup>. The Endangered Species Act has been accused of both destroying American jobs and American businesses, an argument that assumes nothing can be more important than economic gain and that economic gain should accept no concessions and lacks any form of moral responsibility to the environment or non-human species<sup>20</sup>. Similarly, American animal shelters are notoriously underfunded by states and local governments, which

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<sup>18</sup> For example, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, in 2011, 44.9% of cat owners did not take their cat or cats to the vet, compared to 18.7% who did not take their dogs.

<sup>19</sup> Obviously, despite how they are publicized, arguments against social welfare programs are far more complicated than purely economic and speak to discriminatory discourse based on class, race, and gender.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the connection of capitalism and lack of moral responsibility to the environment, see Jason W. Moore’s “Silver, Ecology, and the Origins of the Modern World, 1450-1640.”



results in both horrible living conditions for the animals in them and alarming euthanasia rates for healthy and adoptable companion animals. Rarely is increased funding for state animal shelters up for discussion because it is seen as luxury spending that the U.S. cannot currently afford. Government shelters routinely euthanize animals in lieu of medical intervention because of the cost of veterinary care. Families, too, make similar choices when faced with high veterinary bills. In both cases, the market and exchange value of companion animals becomes the determining factor for life and death, resulting in a biocapitalistic determination of the value of life.

### **Animal Studies and the Biopolitical Turn**

This section discusses Jacques Derrida's initial theorizing of animal studies and philosophical thinking concerning animals and then moves to contemporary theorists to show how animal studies has progressed since its inception in the 1990's. I end this section by illustrating how biopolitical theory is necessary for understanding our current relationships to animals.

My theoretical positioning for animal studies begins with Derrida because his late work is the foundation for animal studies, and many contemporary animal studies scholars have used Derrida's philosophical arguments about the nature of human and animal relationships as the starting point for their own work. Since the human/animal boundary is so *critical* to animal exploitation, I (like so many other animal studies scholars) am interested in texts which work to disrupt it. Animal studies begins with *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, in which Derrida discusses what he calls "the question of the animal." His goal is to erode the human/animal binary, and animal studies scholars are still interested in this avenue of inquiry. As Sherryl Vint observes in *Animal Alterity*, Derrida suggests his philosophical treatment of the animal was always one of the main

goals of his body of work (7). Derrida's attempt to erode the human/animal binary, and thus boundary, is an explicitly poststructuralist project, as one of the goals of poststructuralism is the destruction of binaries. Eroding binaries is linked to disrupting hierarchical power structures, and animal studies is a field closely allied with social activism, like other poststructuralist schools of thought such as gender studies, postcolonial studies, queer studies, and disability studies. It is through disrupting traditional concepts of power and authority that we can begin changing traditional modes of thinking often linked to the exploitation of both humans and animals.

The human/animal boundary is enforced partly through the language often associated with animals, which furnishes the logic of using animals as biocapital. Derrida discusses the problem with the term "the animal" to denote "*all the living things* that man does not recognize as his fellows, his neighbors, or his brothers" (34). For Derrida, it is highly problematic to classify all animals under this single term because it is dismissive of the vast differences between species<sup>21</sup>. "The animal" also imposes a false binary by supporting human superiority over animals because the term categorizes all animals together as "other than human." He notes that animals are, "the wholly other, more other than any other" (11). It is through this absolute othering that using, abusing, and ignoring animals has been both practiced and justified, and this treating all forms of animal life as absolutely other from human life is an essential aspect to using animals as biocapital.

Theoretically, humans are not seen as appropriate beings to be used as biocapital, despite

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<sup>21</sup> Despite Derrida's insightful and important observation here, many animal studies scholars continue to use the phrase "the animal" in their work. While I acknowledge the usefulness of the phrase, it is important to note both its limitations and the problematic classification it suggests.

both historic and contemporary practices standing in direct opposition to this claim<sup>22</sup>. Contemporary justification for using a living being as a resource to serve economic productivity requires a classification of “less than human” in the case of animals and “less human than other humans” in the case of people.

Categorizing animals as forms of life wholly dissimilar to humans mirrors arguments about humans and nature, which illustrates how human society heavily polices the boundaries between humans and all other forms of life. By policing the boundary between human and non-human life—indeed by asserting only human life is worthy of protection even to the detriment of all other forms—both animals and nature are easily classified as biocapital. In many instances, such classification is presented as logical, in sharp contrast to thinking associated with poetics. Similar to Smith’s argument about discourses surrounding nature that I outlined in the first section, Derrida argues that there are two forms of thought and discourse regarding the treatment of animals. He notes that there is a long philosophical tradition of dismissing animals by looking at the work of Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Lacan, and Levinas and insists that the philosophical tradition ignores that animals are beings in their own right. He argues, “something that philosophy perhaps forgets, perhaps being this calculated forgetting itself—it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other” (11). The “it” Derrida refers to is his own singular cat, but he uses this cat as a possible representation of many animals. Prior to Derrida’s work, philosophical tradition did not acknowledge that animals are beings who can return a human gaze or as beings who can respond to humans. Derrida sees the Western philosophical tradition as dismissive to

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<sup>22</sup> Obviously, the practice of slavery reduced entire populations of humans to biocapital. Currently, discourses around women’s health and prison labor seek to classify humans as biocapital.

animals, perhaps intentionally, and denial of animal subjectivity and motivation has been used to justify the supposed superiority of humanity, or human exceptionalism<sup>23</sup>. He claims that this failure to “have been seen by an animal that addresses them” is the most abundant of the two types of discourse, and “[i]t is probably what brings together *all* philosophers and theoreticians *as such*” (13). Derrida sees both a lack of imagination and a lack of understanding in the philosophical treatment of animals and that this tradition is not interested in the experience of being seen by animals. The philosophic treatment of animals Derrida discusses stands in contrast to the poetic thinking often embraced by authors interested in animal subjectivity, and it underscores the importance of studying the poetic thinking surrounding animal life. Poetic thinking surrounding animal life, of course, is not confined to the specific genre of poetry, and as I will discuss in the next section, SF authors are in a unique position to imagine animals in poetic terms.

While many animal studies scholars consider Derrida’s the ur-text of the field, Peter Singer argues that the philosophical treatment of our ethical obligations to animals began prior to Derrida’s work. He credits an edited collection entitled *Animals, Men, and Morals* which was published in the 1970’s and received very little attention (2)<sup>24</sup>. P. Singer is particularly interested in speciesism, “the idea that it is justifiable to give preference to beings simply on the grounds that they are members of the species *Homo sapiens*” (3). Speciesism is directly tied to the concept of human exceptionalism, and both are the underlying justifications for animal exploitation. P. Singer begins *In Defense*

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<sup>23</sup> For Derrida, human exceptionalism begins in Biblical tradition with Adam’s naming of the animals. In naming the animals, Adam has claimed dominion and possession over them (15-18). Similarly, human exceptionalism is often justified by the religious argument that people have souls, and animals do not.

<sup>24</sup> *Animals, Men, and Morals* is distinct in its field as being not just an early text regarding the unethical treatment of the non-human, but also because it shows the unethical treatment as a systemic problem that requires a complete rethinking of the relationship between humans and animal to alter.

*of Animals: The Second Wave* by arguing there are two main issues surrounding speciesism:

(t)he first issue, then, is whether speciesism itself can be defended. The second issue is whether, if speciesism cannot be defended, there are other characteristics about human beings that justify placing greater moral significance on what happens to them than on what happens to nonhuman animals. (3)

P. Singer argues speciesism itself is rarely defended, but rather arguments that place greater significance on the human to the detriment of all other species often focus on the second issue, invoking moral obligations to care for human life first and at all costs (3).

P. Singer's argument helps explain the economic objections to animal welfare, as they all rely on the premise that humans cannot afford to offer more considerations to animals.

Arguments that rely on the moral obligations to care for humans first are often used when animal rights are invoked to non-receptive audiences and rely on the premise that animal rights and human rights are always at odds with one another and cannot possibly both be addressed, or that caring about animal welfare precludes caring about human welfare.

One of the many problems with this line of thinking is that it obfuscates the connection between species discourse and racist discourse, a point Singer gestures towards in his introduction (3)<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> There are similarities here with nationalist arguments in the U.S. against humanitarian aid to other countries, and more recently, U.S. citizens "versus" immigrants. Of course, in both instances—the false dichotomy between humans and animals and the false dichotomy between U.S. interests/citizens versus humanitarian aid/immigrants—new funds and resources are usually not produced to help anyone. Rather, such arguments diffuse and divide rather than improve the situation of impoverished or marginalized people, highlighting another connection between capitalist subjugation of both humans and animals and the ways in which the discourse of species can be turned against humans themselves. See also Suzanne Kappeler "Speciesism, Racism, Nationalism...or the Power of Scientific Subjectivity."

P. Singer does not argue for equal treatment for all animals regardless of species, but he does argue for an acknowledgement of human disregard for many forms of animal life. He argues for our moral obligations to animals and suggests we will not take those obligations seriously without a disruption to speciesism. He notes, “although many philosophers have come to favor the view that speciesism is indefensible, popular views on that topic are still very far from the basic idea of equal consideration for the interests of beings irrespective of their species” (P. Singer 226). He argues most people still eat meat and make purchases based on what is cheapest, rather than what is better for the animals involved. While it is not the focus of his study, he points out how concentrations of economic power have presented a roadblock to acknowledging and implementing animal rights (226). Most obviously, agribusiness and builders opposed to the Endangered Species Act present significant opposition to animal welfare and animal rights. Singer’s work highlights important moral foundations for our responsibilities towards animals and has been influential on later critics.

Cary Wolfe’s *Animal Rights* seeks to reshape how previous animal studies scholars have approached conceiving the animal subject and builds more heavily on the work of Derrida than P. Singer. In the introduction to *Animal Rights*, W.J.T. Mitchell discusses the familiar reactions of anxiety and resistance the subject of animal rights can produce. Mitchell argues resistance arises “because acknowledging the claim that animals might have or deserve rights entails a revolution in thinking and behavior so profound that it would shake the foundations of human society” (ix). Like Derrida, Mitchell asserts human life relies on the exploitation of animal life and changing this foundation would require radical restructuring. Such resistance is paired with anxiety because humans also

acknowledge there is something “compelling” and “irresistible” about the concept “at least in so far as we are all dimly aware that human life as now constituted is based on the mass slaughter of billions of animals accompanied by untold suffering” (ix). Mitchell argues part of our identity as humans rests on animal exploitation, suffering, and death. While Mitchell’s argument is compelling and ample evidence for his claim abounds, like so many other animal studies scholars, he misses the connection between this fundamental relationship and capitalist modes of production that also seek to exploit human life as much as public opinion will allow.

Wolfe seeks to radically alter the conversations surrounding animals and animal rights through a posthumanist approach to identity. Noting an essential problem with previous approaches to animal welfare, Wolfe argues, “one of the central ironies of animal rights philosophy is that its philosophical framework remains essentially humanist in its most important philosophers (utilitarianism in Peter Singer, neo-Kantianism in Tom Regan<sup>26</sup>), thus effacing the very difference of the animal other that it sought to respect” (8). Humanism places the human figure, as opposed to religious or supernatural, at the center. While humanism can and has provided important theoretical grounding for animal rights, as Wolfe correctly insists, humanism can minimize the uniqueness of animal subjects and is a somewhat contradictory way of approaching philosophical thinking about animals. By contrast, embracing posthumanism allows for a disruption of the human subject to which animals are always on the outside. Posthumanism allows for a plurality, which provides a space for a non-human/human subjectivity. Wolfe presents an

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<sup>26</sup> In *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983), Tom Regan builds on the work of Kant and argues an animal is a “subject-of-life” and is thus deserving of rights.

important move towards reshaping how we conceive of animal identity and human identity.

It is necessary to return to my previous subject of how biopolitical capitalism treats animals differently than other forms of capitalism in order to discuss the work of Nicole Shukin. Shukin's work illustrates why animal studies scholars are interested in biopolitics and why it is necessary to consider the ways in which biopolitical capitalism shapes our thinking about animal life. Shukin's *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* investigates how biopolitical capitalism situates animal life. Shukin looks at "the question of the animal," a phrase used by both Derrida and Wolfe, by "challenging its predominantly idealist treatments in critical theory and animal studies by theorizing the ways that animal life gets culturally and carnally rendered as capital at specific historical junctures" (7). While taking either a humanist or post-humanist approach to argue for animal rights is admirable and ethical, these approaches obscure the connections between capitalism's insatiable impulses and animal classification. Shukin's book "seeks to rectify a critical blind spot in Marxist and Post-Marxist theory around the nodal role of animals, ideologically and materially, in the reproduction of capitalism's hegemony" (7). Just as an escape from capitalism can seem both "unnatural" and "impossible" due to its immersion in everyday life and the historical theorizing Wood notes, so too can capitalism's tradition of using animals as biocapital. By looking at the relationship between animal exploitation and capitalism, Shukin looks at a crucial connection that is missing from the work of other animal studies and Marxist theorists. For Shukin, capitalism's treatment of animals is indicative of capitalism's need to continuously redefine and create new markets.



Shukin looks at how contemporary capitalism seeks complete control over the natural world and animal life with the goals of profit and replication. She notes important differences between capitalism prior to the twenty-first century and capitalism in the twenty-first century. She argues:

[b]y the turn of the twenty-first century, an economic and ideological shift in investment to the renewable resources of nature has become pervasive. New technologies of biocapitalism seek to command the renewability of nature not so much through the mundane recycling of animal remains as through knowledge/power over the genetic codes of life. (84).

For Shukin, biotechnology has redefined capitalism's relationship to animal life in that it exerts control over animal life at the smallest and most basic level, that is, genetically. Genetic control over animal life presents new forms of control, exploitation, and profit, making many animals forms of biocapital or animal capital. For Shukin, mad cow disease is representative of this new relationship because mad cow is a disease that results from livestock animals being fed the remains of other animals, a practice put in place to maximize efficiency and profit and eliminate waste. By looking at the causes of mad cow disease and the responses to it in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, she concludes "mad cow disease can be counted among the new wasting diseases, that, like consumption [in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries], are at once a material symptom and a powerful metaphor of the current ecological conditions of capitalism" (228). Mad cow disease is a result of livestock being fed the remains of other livestock, and for Shukin, this an apt metaphor for the nature of capitalist markets. In this example, animal bodies are both something to be maintained as cheaply as possible until death, a symbol of future profit,

and a way to ensure maximum profit after death since no part of the animal body is “wasted,” and each has its use even if it is not fit for human consumption. This obsession with maximizing the profit margin associated with the animal body results in a fatal disease that destroys the next body, which can be human or animal. In this specific case, maximizing the bottom line is fatal, and an apt metaphor for many practices under biopolitical capitalism<sup>27</sup>.

As I have argued, the term biopolitical capitalism best describes our current moment. Of course, SF writers have responded to this particular system, and because of SF’s close association with technology and power structures, the genre is particularly suited to addressing concerns raised by the tenants of biopolitical capitalism and what this means for animal relationships.

### **Science Fiction**

In this section, I argue SF is particularly suited to address concerns raised by the tenants of biopolitical capitalism and technoculture. I begin with a brief explanation of the history of the genre, move to an overview of SF scholarship, and then argue SF is a particularly important form in our current moment and is a particularly important form for exploring our relationships to animals.

SF generally derives from or employs assumptions basic to science and technology and is usually classified into one of two different sub-genres. In hard SF, the science takes precedence, drives the narrative, and it is often explained in great detail<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> For more information regarding biotechnology and capitalism, see Melinda Cooper's *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism*, specifically Chapters One and Two.

<sup>28</sup> For one of the most famous and controversial examples of hard SF, see Tom Godwin’s “The Cold Equations” (1954). In it, a young girl by the name of Marilyn stows away on an EDS and is jettisoned into space. Her murder is positioned as necessary because her body weight disrupts the exact equation that determines how much fuel the spacecraft holds for the amount of weight it is supposed to carry. See also

In soft SF, the sub-genre in which most socially conscious SF is classified, the science is often not explained in great detail, and other aspects of the story are seen as more important<sup>29</sup>. My dissertation focuses on texts which would all be classified as soft SF, as they are each significantly more invested in social commentary than the specifics of the technologies they use. In addition to the distinctions between hard and soft, SF works can be categorized as extrapolative, set in alternate worlds, or cautionary.

Extrapolative SF engages with the current moment and makes predictions about what might happen in the future, often without any specific or dire warnings<sup>30</sup>. Alternate world settings focus on what could have happened but did not,<sup>31</sup> and cautionary SF is meant to warn readers about what could or will happen if current social or political trends continue on their current course. All of the texts in my dissertation are heavily invested in warning readers about our reliance on capitalist systems and the implications this has for animal life, human life, human/animal relationships, and while not the focus of my dissertation, in the cases of *Androids* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy, what they present as inevitable environmental destruction. In the brief history of the genre, socially conscious SF is more recent and in direct response to social and political anxieties and trends.

During the Golden Age of Science Fiction (1920's-1940's), SF is optimistic, utopian, and focused on the (usually white, usually male) hero<sup>32</sup>. Many of these stories

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Hal Clement's *Mission of Gravity*, as noted by David Hartwell in *The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard SF*.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the best-known example of soft SF is Frank Herbert's *Dune* series, which presents a futuristic feudal society set on another planet that deals primarily with political questions and not those regarding how life is supported or spice is mined on the planet.

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of extrapolation and how it relates to hard SF, specifically, see David N. Samuelson's "The Formulas of Hard SF."

<sup>31</sup> Joanna Russ' *Whileaway* from "When It Changed" (1972) and *The Female Man* (1975) presents a feminist utopian version of alternate worlds SF.

<sup>32</sup> See the Introduction to Eric S. Rabkin's *Science Fiction: A Historical Anthology* and the work of E.E. Smith.

engage in imperialist impulses, are modeled off Westerns (space opera), and focus on the space cowboy. Due in no small part to nuclear anxieties, SF of the 1940's and 1950's becomes more socially conscious with an abundance of cautionary and dystopian elements<sup>33</sup>. During the 1960's and 1970's, SF authors respond to fears of nuclear war and radiation poisoning<sup>34</sup>. Additionally, SF splits into factions that focus on either a return to the space cowboy or socially conscious works. There is also a distinct rise in feminist SF and approaching the genre through a post-colonial lens. The 1980's ushers in Cyberpunk and post-humanist themes<sup>35</sup>. Currently, SF is an immensely diverse genre with a plethora of themes, impulses, nations of origin, and perspectives<sup>36</sup>. While environmental concerns are not a new trend in SF, contemporary works are, not surprisingly, particularly interested in addressing the climate crisis and mass extinction<sup>37</sup>. Heightened concerns about environmental crisis are readily apparent when comparing *Androids* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy. While both Dick and Atwood share similar concerns, Atwood's vision of environmental destruction is more closely tied to her capitalist system, and while she addresses issues such as extreme weather and a depletion of resources in addition to animal extinction, Dick focuses solely on animal extinction and does not address extreme weather. The difference in their focus speaks the times in which their

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<sup>33</sup> See Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Issac Asimov's *Foundation* series.

<sup>34</sup> See Mordecai Roshwald's *Level 7* or Fritz Leiber's "Coming Attraction."

<sup>35</sup> As noted in the Introduction to *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction* and the entry on cyberpunk in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*.

<sup>36</sup> As it has always been, SF's current diversity has resulted in reactionary anxieties about who it is for and how it should be defined, perhaps best illustrated by the Sad and Rabid Puppies' anger over the Hugo Awards recognizing the accomplishments of women and people of color. For a discussion of the beginnings of this campaign, see <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/26/hugo-awards-shortlist-rightwing-campaign-sad-rabid-puppies> (2016). For a more contemporary discussion, see <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/21/17763260/n-k-jemisin-hugo-awards-broken-earth-sad-puppies> (2018).

<sup>37</sup> For excellent discussions on science fiction and environmental crisis, see *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* edited by Gerry Canavan and Kim Stanley Robinson (2014).

texts were written, as environmental concerns became both better understood and more dire in the thirty odd years between the publication of the texts.

My brief overview of generic history illustrates the rich and varied history of SF. While the diversity of the genre has resulted in both excellent fiction and excellent scholarship, it does make defining all the genre encompasses challenging. Many scholars agree that SF theory begins with the work of Darko Suvin and work from his definition of the field. Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Politics and History of a Literary Genre* presents his ideas of estrangement and cognition, and these concepts are foundational to a scholarly understanding of the genre. For Suvin, "SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (20). Suvin's definition is perhaps the most famous definition of SF, and his work is the foundation of SF theory. For Suvin, cognitive estrangement is what separates SF from all other forms of literature, including both mimetic and fantastic forms, such as myth and fantasy. Cognitive estrangement is closely linked to what Suvin terms the novum, "a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author's and implied reader's norm of reality" (80). For Suvin, the presence of a novum is necessary for a work to be considered SF, and the novum is determined by its moment in time and space and may later no longer be "science fictional" to a reader. Similarly, SF itself is historically dependent on both the author and the reader's contemporary reality. Cognition in SF is "not only a reflecting *of* but also *on* reality. It implies a creative approach tending towards dynamic transformation rather than

towards a static mirroring of the author's environment" (22)<sup>38</sup>. For Suvin, "true" SF presents a dramatic departure from the author's empirical reality, with the aid of novum, and he considers the most "significant" works as those which are primarily political.

Suvin makes a specific distinction within SF of "significant SF." After going through some of the historical and current genres related to SF and acknowledging cognition is not unique to SF, Suvin argues,

(s)ignificant modern SF, with deeper meaning and more lasting sources of enjoyment, also presupposes more complex and wider cognitions: it discusses primarily the political, psychological, and anthropological *use and effect of knowledge, of philosophy, of science*, and the becoming of failure of new realities as a result of it [emphasis in original]. (27)

In this view, SF becomes a political and humanistic project aimed at interrogating political systems, epistemology, ontology, and the future of human societies. Historically, "*the initial impulse for SF comes always from the yearnings of a repressed social group and testifies to radically other possibilities of life*" [emphasis in original] (107). For Suvin, SF is an inherently political genre tied to the project of liberation, and influential scholars such as Carl Freedman and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay have built on the work of Suvin and tend to share this view. The idea of SF as a political literature working towards liberation is particularly helpful for my study, but Suvin's definition of SF is imiting.

While Suvin's work has been foundational to SF theory and criticism, it excludes important work that should be categorized as SF, and so Suvin's definition, while a

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<sup>38</sup> For a brief but excellent discussion of Suvin on estrangement, cognition, and SF, see Gerry Canavan's "Preface" to *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (2014). In it, he explains estrangement as an "artistic tool for disorientating and defamiliarizing the conditions of everyday life" and cognition as "the reality principle that keeps our imaginations honest" (xi).

starting point, have not provided the basis for a standard or all-encompassing definition. Because of the problematic nature of trying to define a genre with such varied impulses and tropes, SF scholarship has moved away from attempts at definition and moved towards illustrating how different theoretical models can be helpful for understanding specific works, what specific works can tell scholars about different theoretical models, and what SF can tell scholars about contemporary values and anxieties<sup>39</sup>. I position my dissertation within this framework by focusing on depictions of animals and animal subjectivity in science fictional capitalist markets. While many SF scholars use Marxist lenses to critique both the SF genre and capitalism, other SF scholars have been interested in animal representation in SF, and animal studies scholars have critiqued the relationship between capitalism and animal exploitation, my dissertation looks at the relationship between animals and capitalism within the science fictional mode in a unique and original theoretical approach that answers meaningful questions regarding the unity of these fields of inquiry.

Because SF scholarship has moved beyond definition and focuses instead on different theoretical approaches, SF scholars have been able to use the genre to explore a range of subjects and identities. Since defining the genre is impractical and no longer the focus of current scholarship, I approach SF as a mode rather than as a genre in my

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<sup>39</sup> Looking at SF within the context of specific theoretical models has resulted in a plethora of scholarship. For an overview of SF and post-colonialism, see John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2008) and Jessica Langer's *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (2011). For an overview of gender and feminism in SF, see Justine Larbalestier's *Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (2006), and Brian Attebery's *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* (2002). For an overview of diverse sexualities in SF, see *Queer Universes: Sexualities and Science Fiction* (2008), edited by Wendy Gay Pearson, Veronica Hollinger, and Joan Gordon. For an overview of disability in SF, see *Disability in Science Fiction: Representations of Technology as Cure* (2013), edited by Kathryn Allan. For an overview of SF and the environment, see the aforementioned *Green Planets* (2014), edited by Canavan and Robinson.

dissertation. In “On the Origins of Genre,” Paul Kinkaid correctly asserts that “there is not one definition of science fiction but many, there is not one urtext but many” and that the definitions change because science fiction is not one thing (412). Similarly, in “There Is No Such Thing as Science Fiction,” Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint argue genres are not fixed categories, but “fluid and tenuous constructions made by the interactions of various claims and practices by writers, producers, distributors, marketers, readers, fans, critics and other discursive agents” (48). SF is far more diverse than Suvin’s work suggests. It is also important to remember it is a popular genre that in the West is produced and sold within a capitalist system and is thus in some respects beholden to it. In “On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History,” John Reider makes five propositions about SF in order to summarize the current paradigm of the genre as of 2010. Reider argues “(b)ecause of the ways that multiple genres play upon and against one another in individual texts, pigeonholing a text as a member of this or that genre is much less useful than understanding the way it positions itself within a field on generic possibilities” (197). This statement is particularly useful for understanding my use of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, as Atwood has famously insisted her work is not SF but speculative fiction. If, as Reider argues, “texts use genres, rather than belong to them” (197), the ways in which Atwood denies her use of the science fictional mode to understand the current moment speaks far more to the perceived necessities of publishing than generic characteristics<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Atwood prefers for her books to be marketed as “literature” proper, rather than genre fiction, much to the consternation of some fans and critics alike.



Treating SF as a diverse mode allows for important avenues of inquiry into texts that might have been excluded by Suvin or by other definitions<sup>41</sup>.

The science fictional mode is particularly useful for exploring conceptions of animal identity and subjectivity in capitalist markets. Capitalism itself requires a conception of the animal as product and resource, often relegating concepts of animal identity and subjectivity into the realm of the Fantastic. By using texts that employ SF and which are interested in animal welfare, my dissertation looks at Western conceptions of the animal subject and how these conceptions are mediated and dictated by capitalist markets and biopolitical determinations of value. Within the science fictional mode, animals can be given the power to communicate (either directly with the power of human speech as is the case in *We3* or through translation as they do in *MaddAddam*). My dissertation considers this ability of the science fictional mode to grant animals the power of speech essential to understanding perhaps the greatest barrier towards seeing animals as fully realized subjects—their perceived inability to communicate with humans and thus insist on full recognition within human terms. In addition to allowing for a greater investigation into animal identity and subjectivity, SF informs the ways in which many people understand and interpret current reality.

The science fictional mode is critical for understanding our current moment under biopolitical capitalism, and SF images and tropes help inform the ways in which humans interact with contemporary reality. In *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, Csicsery-

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<sup>41</sup> A historical moment that engages this position is the split in SF regarding the New Wave movement led by Judith Merrill in the United States and Michael Moorcock in the United Kingdom as chronicled in David Hartwell's *Age of Wonder*, Chapter 9.

Ronay argues technological intersections into every day life produce incongruous science-fictional moments. For Csicsery-Ronay,

(i)t is from SF's thesaurus of images that we draw many of our metaphors and models for understanding our technologized world, and it is from SF that many of our impressions of technology-aided desire and technology-driven anxiety are produced back into works of the imagination. It is impossible to map the extent to which the perception of contemporary reality requires and encourages science-fictional orientations. (2)

Science-fictional discourse is essential to understanding techno-modernity, a phrase that might initially seem to have more bearing on human lives than animal ones. However, animals are also subject to surviving in techno-modernity, a state which increasingly encroaches on aspects of their being and seems to hold little connection to environmental concerns. Techno-modernity is an essential aspect of the biopolitical state, and science-fictional thinking can shape human perceptions of animals as much as it does human societies. There is no better mode than the science-fictional one to better interrogate the relationship between animals and biopolitical capitalism, as well the techno-modernity the system encompasses. The biopolitical state is essential in policing and enforcing the human/animal boundary and classifying different forms of animal life based on their perceived use value or nuisance factor.

While contemporary SF criticism has moved away from definition and toward an approach that utilizes SF as exempla to read through a theoretical position (for example, SF and feminism, SF and colonialism, etc.), my study is not one that could be defined as SF and biopolitics or SF and animal studies. Instead, my dissertation focuses on science

fictional models of capitalism as necessary for viewing a future space that exists outside the current ideological and economic positions. Thus, SF, and the extrapolative mode of SF in particular, is necessary for authors and readers attempting to think outside the bounds of the current moment. It is through this focus on the future as possibility based on the understanding of the contemporary moment that an investigation into the relationship between capitalism and animals can be investigated. The possibility (or lack of a possibility) can best be presented when crafting worlds that do not yet exist. In this way, SF is not merely the source of the examples within this study, but the only modality where an escape from the ideological zeitgeist of the contemporary moment allows for a rethinking of the human/animal species barrier and the possibilities of recognizing animal agency within the dominant economic model can be investigated.

### **Graphic Novels**

In this section I address the inclusion of *We3*, an SF graphic novel, and the how the graphic novel differs from text in terms of analysis in general and animal representation specifically. I address how the visual elements of graphic novels impact the reader and the implications this presents for interacting with animal protagonists.

The science fiction graphic novel provides a unique opportunity to explore and experience animal subjectivity and identity. While SF literature can give voice to the animal and is particularly suited to investigate animals, as has been noted by Vint (“SF and Animal Studies, 179”), the graphic novel allows readers to experience animal subjectivity in a way literature cannot by locating readers in the shared subjectivity of animal protagonists. In *Understanding Comics The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud argues that comics are a uniquely collaborative genre between reader and creator. The reader of

comics or graphic novels must “recreate” the subject in the text “moment by moment” because the visual iconography of comics gives readers an active role in creation (59). McCloud argues that specifically within the gutter, the space between two panels, the reader takes the separate images of the panels and merges them into a single idea. The idea itself is not shown through images or text, but the reader’s prior experience tells her that it is there and that something happened between the two panels. The panels themselves “fracture time and space,” but the act of closure allows the reader to connect those moments (66-7). The reader is able to “mentally construct a continuous unified reality” (67). The act of constructing reality in this way is unique to graphic novels, and it is not replicated within text in the same manner. By actively constructing the reality of animal protagonists, human readers experience the lives and subjectivities of non-human subjects in graphic novels in a way that cannot be replicated in mediums without visuals and a dependence on closure.

When the point of view characters are animals, readers are given a chance to actively experiment with animal subjectivities and identities, giving comics a unique ability to encourage readers to empathize with non-human subjects because the medium forces the reader to use the self to create a fully realized subject. As Lisa Brown argues, “(c)ultural beliefs about animals are revealed in comics, and these beliefs both reflect and influence the value and significance that are applied to animals, the environment, the natural world, and even other humans” (73). While Brown’s argument can also be applied to literature about animals, such as the texts I use in Chapter One and Chapter Three, McCloud’s interactive theory of comics expands on the ability of comics about animals to inform the perception and experience of readers. Through closure, the reader

of *We3*, and animal comics in general, becomes an active participant in animal identity and subjectivity by identifying with and collaborating with the animal protagonist, creating different possibilities for influencing human values about animals.

In his Introduction to *Animal Comics: Multispecies Storyworlds in Graphic Narratives*, David Herman argues, “the distinctive structures and affordances of graphic narratives foreground key questions about trans-species entanglements in a more-than-human world” (1). The use of the graphic novel form allows for the non-human animal protagonists of *We3* to show the story without having to resort to narration by human animal authors or through increasing the abilities of speech afforded to *We3* through cybernetic enhancement. The direct communication between animals and humans in *We3* is very different from what happens *MaddAddam*, whose human characters cannot communicate with the pigeons until the Children of Crake, beings who are not quite human and not quite animal, translate between them. Both texts illustrate more than human environments, and in “more than human environments, attributes associated with intelligent beings, including the capacity to have a perspective on events, intentionality, agency, and others, extend beyond the species boundary” (8). However, it is only through the graphic novel and its interactive nature that readers become active participants in shaping, creating, and experiencing the agency and perception of animals. Within my dissertation, specifically, it is only in *We3* that readers are able to experience the agency and perception of animals who behave like animals, rather than the agency and perceptions of animals who are biologically and emotionally partially human<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> As I will discuss at length, particularly in the Conclusion, Atwood’s pigeons are altered pigs with human neocortex tissue. They are animals, but they are also incredibly human in some respects, and the humans eventually treat them as such. Conversely, the animals in *We3* are animals who seem to think and behave like animals.

The inclusion of the graphic novel affords the animal an agency not possible in the plain text of the novels presented elsewhere in this study, as it utilizes the interplay of both visual and textual semiotics in which to tell the story that does not force human language onto the animals to the point of dependence, mediate the animal through a human narrator, or mediate the animal through the use of an interpreter that spans the two worlds. Instead, the reader bridges the trans-species world between their own mind and language as they interpret visual and limited textual clues presented through the eyes and augmented though the limited speech of the protagonists.

### **Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood**

For this study, I focus on the work of Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood. Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood aim to embrace various forms of poetic thinking about animals to question human exceptionalism founded on the human/animal boundary. Derrida explains the connection between animals and poetic thinking, arguing the only thinking concerning animals derives from poetry (7). The thinking Derrida references is different from simply engaging the subject of animals because it is in direct contrast to what the philosophical tradition writes about animals. Derrida continues by stating, “[t]here you have a thesis: it is what philosophy has, essentially, had to deprive itself of. It is the difference between philosophical knowledge and poetic thinking” (7). Poetic thinking can and does imagine the animal as a being that can return the gaze and attempts to imagine what the animal might say. He also links poetic thinking about animals with prophecy. He states that the other kind of animal discourse is “found among those signatories who are first and foremost poets or prophets, in the situation of poetry or prophecy, those men and women who admit to taking upon themselves the address that an animal addresses to them” (15). In order to imagine the animal as responding, one has

to have the characteristics of a poet or a prophet. Of course, fiction authors in general, and SF authors, specifically, share these characteristics and offer important discourses surrounding animals as beings, rather than senseless objects. By looking at authors who attempt to characterize animals as beings rather than objects, my dissertation positions the relationship between animals and capitalism as a relationship between subjects and system, as opposed to resources and system. I will use their desire to engage animals as subjects to frame how these authors indicate capitalism results in an inherently exploitative relationship with animals.

SF authors are in a unique position to give a voice to animal language and characterize animals as fully realized beings with thoughts and intelligence that is not uniquely human<sup>43</sup>. Prophecy itself is a form of extrapolation and is science fictional. By focusing on the future, SF authors can challenge contemporary and popular understandings of animal knowledge and subjectivity. Donna Haraway discusses the importance of Mary Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" and "contact languages" for understanding human and dog interaction in agility training (*Species Meet* 2016). Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood play with the contact zone between human and animals, to varying degrees, in order to shed light on human/animal relationships and animal suffering. By imagining alternate realities of the contact zone, and in Morrison/Quitely and Atwood's cases, contact language, these authors challenge justifications for classifying animals as biocapital and attempt to show alternate possibilities, despite these

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<sup>43</sup> As noted by Vint, "[i]t is important to remember that this voice of the animal in SF is, of course, a voice speaking *for* the animal, yet this need not make us reject the insights of writers attuned to animal behavior and human/animal interactions" ("Science Fiction and Animal Studies" 179). The insights these authors provide challenge traditional notions of animal characterization and can provide nuanced ways of thinking about animal life.

possibilities relying on varying degrees of impossibility. Their respective decisions to give animals the power of communication with humans reveals a fundamental roadblock to acknowledging animal subjectivity in capitalist societies—unlike oppressed people who have demanded their rights, animals cannot do so. As Agamben notes, language itself is seen as “the identifying characteristic of the human,” and has been essential since understanding evolution to separating humans from animals (*Open* 34). Their lack of human language allows humans to deny that animals are fully realized subjects and further allows humans to continue policing and justifying the human/animal boundary.

Like SF, animal studies and other postmodern projects are forward thinking and invested in presenting alternate possibilities. Animal studies works to imagine and bring about a world with less oppression and more compassion, a mode of science fictional thinking. The idea of science fictional thinking being tied to future possibilities is first explained by Suvin. Suvin argues the location of the fantastic changes with the global spread of multinational capitalism. Prior to capitalism, the wondrous happened in a difference place, such as an island<sup>44</sup>, but this distinction is no longer as effective after capitalism, and the location of the fantastic often switches to time, the future, solidifying a relationship between SF and working towards a different future. Unlike other critics before him, Suvin argues this shift has less to do with imperialistic expansion and the “flattening” of the globe and more to do with factory production, where time becomes a fixed and ruling principle in workers’ lives and better things, such as time off or more money, are supposed to happen at an undetermined future time (135-36). Suvin thus implies there is a relationship between contemporary understandings of SF and capitalism

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<sup>44</sup> *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is one of the most famous examples of the fantastic location. See also Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Edwin Abbot’s *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, et cetera.



itself. His implications help illustrate the ways in which capitalism is an all-encompassing system which impacts the ways in which humans view one another and the world around them. Similarly, I argue that the texts in my dissertation exemplify the ways in which capitalism defines how humans configure animal life and the value (or lack thereof) humans place on it. Through the promises of future profit and future expansion, capitalism requires a focus on what will happen, and such a shift changes the way in which humans imagine how societies might be different. Rather than thinking society could be different elsewhere, people imagine that society could only be different in the future. A focus on future profit encourages humans view animal life and the natural world in terms of their expected exchange value, rather than as having any intrinsic value. A science fictional mode of thought is part of animal studies and structuralism, and as Freedman argues, critical theory itself and science fictional modes of thought share a number of parallels and goals. While entrenched binaries that lead to the exploitation of animal labor, human labor, as well as exploitation on the basis of gender and race, are present now, disruption of these binaries is possible and could lead to a better future. Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood all attempt to erode the human/animal boundary so they can point humans towards a better future. By analyzing the three texts, I argue the authors suggest ideological opposition between animal welfare and biopolitical capitalism because of the essential ways biocapitalism classifies animals and the ways it must deny animal subjectivity.

In Chapter One, I use Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* to position android animals as representative of a human fantasy of control over and perfection of animal life. *Androids* attempts to encourage responsibility towards animal life. However,

by replacing biological animals with android ones, the human characters can enact a fantasy devoid of tangible responsibility towards the very beings they are supposed to value. This chapter presents a text that unintentionally reverts back to animal exploitation. By relying on a human fantasy of perfection, *Androids* fails to provide representation of animals who are not products under a capitalist system, suggesting such a relationship could not be achieved under Dick's system because it relies on a foundation of using animals as status symbols. *Androids* is essential to exemplifying animals who remain in a capitalist system and who remain subject to capitalist control and classification, as well as the ways in which capitalist systems can create a market for high priced animal commodities who function as status symbols for those who can afford them.

In Chapter Two, I use Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's graphic novel, *We3*, to interrogate the interconnected pillars of science, the government, the military, and biopolitical capitalism with regard to animal commodification and the denial of animal subjectivity and to explore the ability to graphic novels to allow humans to experiment with experiencing animal identity. In *We3*, science, the government, the military, and biopolitical capitalism are institutions which seek to reconfigure animal bodies and labor into weapons under the guise of prioritizing and saving human lives. The animal biorgs—a dog (Bandit), a cat (Tinker), and a rabbit (Pirate)—are expensive forms of biocapital to keep as slaves. In addition to weaponized coats, they are given the power of human speech, an uncomfortable reminder of their agency and subjectivity for the representative of the government (Senator Washington) and the representative of the military (an unnamed general). This chapter argues that since the domination of animals (in one way

or another) lies at the base of capitalist power structures and the level of profit through exploitation in the text, to perceive or conceive of a self-determined animal agency would undermine the basis for *We3*'s capitalist model. Additionally, I argue the potential for graphic novels to encourage readers to imagine animal identity and agency is different than that of text and can provide an important locus for exploring non-human subjectivities. *We3* illustrates both the potential of graphic novels to explore animal identity in a unique way and the connections between science, the government, and the military work to uphold and perpetuate biopolitical capitalism.

In Chapter Three, I use Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy to illustrate how animals become the logical biological resource under late capitalism and suffer extreme levels of blatant and purposeful exploitation as biocapital. The texts suggest since animals were resources long before capitalism, humans are always already conditioned to view animals as commodities rather than thinking, feeling beings. Additionally, I argue the exploitation of women and the exploitation of animals is inherently connected under Atwood's patriarchal biopolitical capitalism. Both are conceived of as consumable bodies and resources for the pleasure and profit of men. The only animals who can escape exploitation in the trilogy are the pigeons, and this is only after the collapse of human society and only because they are animals who have been bioengineered with human neocortex tissue and are able to demand their rights through a translator, as I discuss in the Conclusion. By looking at animal exploitation in the trilogy, this chapter argues because Atwood depicts no meaningful solutions to animal exploitation under capitalism, she presents the two as inherently connected.

Despite being of interest to SF scholars and utilizing the mode of SF, all three texts have transcended genre while simultaneously using the mode of extrapolation for their world building. Atwood, specifically, in her refusal to classify her work as SF, has made a calculated capitalist move in an attempt to garner more economic and cultural capital. All three texts have eclipsed genre readership while also depending on genre norms and expectations. As such, they occupy a space where they are both SF and not, and with respect to Dick<sup>45</sup> and Atwood<sup>46</sup>, specifically, both inside dominant culture (“literature” proper) and outside (SF). Morrison and Quirey publish *We3* with Vertigo, which is an imprint of DC Comics, also placing the text both inside (as a mainstream comic) and outside of dominant culture (a non-superhero comic). By focusing on three texts that exist both within and outside dominant models of reader engagement and critical inquiry of SF, this study is able to present these texts through a dualistic lens of critical analysis that mirrors their generic identities. For this reason, this study posits that the questions or presentation of the animal and the question and presentation of dominant economic models at work both within and external to the texts must be engaged simultaneously as interdependent subjects. It is through the interplay of capitalism and the presentation and representation of the animal that these texts illustrate the possibility/impossibility of blurring the human/non-human boundary while existing within a capitalist system. The inclusion of these texts in my dissertation is to illustrate

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<sup>45</sup> There are multiple *Library of America* editions of Dick texts, and his work has been the inspiration for numerous mainstream films such as *Blade Runner* (1982), *Total Recall* (1990), *Minority Report* (2002), *A Scanner Darkly* (2006), *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011), and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017).

<sup>46</sup> While there are no film or television adaptations of the *MaddAddam* trilogy yet, Paramount is working on one (Otterson). *The Handmaid's Tale* has been adapted multiple times, with the most recent adaptation in its third season on Hulu. Additionally, *The Handmaid's Tale* does appear on high school readings lists, although not without controversy. See Stan Ziv for a discussion of controversies surrounding the inclusion of *The Handmaid's Tale* in high school curriculum.

how anti-capitalist messages within the context of animal welfare and subjectivity can exist within texts which both are and are not “mainstream” and the ways in which authors navigate and disseminate this message<sup>47</sup>. Additionally, the texts present human relationships to non-human animals in capitalist systems in disparate and significant ways, illustrating traditional thinking surrounding human/animal relationships. *Androids* focuses on what the presence and treatment of animals can say about human nature. *We3* illustrates what humans imagine animals can and for some, what they should, do for them (improve and save human lives). The *MaddAddam* trilogy presents both complete objectification and silencing, as well as a fantastical vision of true partnership between select humans and genetically altered animals with human characteristics.

While Dick, Morrison/Quitely, and Atwood work to disrupt the human/animal boundary, they express an inherently exploitative relationship between animals and capitalism. The only alternatives presented in the texts—animals removing themselves from the biopolitical capitalist market, the destruction of capitalism and granting animals political representation—suggest an ideological opposition between animal welfare and biopolitical capitalism. Biopolitical capitalism does and must deny animal subjectivity in order to justify animal resourceification and exploitation.

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<sup>47</sup> Recently, decision makers in the world of comics, specifically Marvel, have seemed unwilling to criticize dominant narratives. In August 2019, Art Spiegelman accused Marvel of preventing him from calling out Donald Trump in “Orange Skull,” and Marvel removed an essay critical of systemic oppression in the U.S. by John Cassidy and Laura Martin that accompanied a picture of Captain Marvel in *Marvel Comics #1000*. Marvel claimed both decisions were made to remain “apolitical,” despite comics never being apolitical. See Aja Romano for a discussion of the Spiegelman decision and Beth Elderkin, Jill Pantozzi, and James Whitbrook for a discussion of *Marvel Comics #1000*, including a copy of the removed essay by Cassidy and Martin.

## Chapter One: Androids, Animals, and Empty Empathy

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) is one of the most often studied works of SF and has been of particular interest to both animal studies and post-humanist scholars. The novel centers around questions of what it means to be human in a post-apocalyptic society and privileges empathy as uniquely human and essential to fixing society's ills, both past and present. While animals are entirely absent from Ridley Scott's 1982 adaptation, *Blade Runner*, empathy to animals is characterized as a societal obligation within *Androids* and understanding the role of animals within the novel is essential to understanding the novel itself. As has been argued by Vint, the human societies of the novel rely on enforcing the species barrier between what is human and what is not ("Species" 114), and capitalism is essential to policing that boundary. By analyzing the relationship between animals and capitalism in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), I argue that Dick critiques the relationship between animals and capitalism as inherently exploitive and that capitalism shapes the ways society views and values animals. Dick's text suggests that while important, an emphasis on empathy is not enough to save animals and nature from human exploitation, particularly in an inherently exploitative system.

As I discussed in the Introduction, one of the most persistent boundaries in Western thought is the binary opposition between humans and animals, but another persistent boundary is the distinction between humans and machines. Many animal studies and posthumanist critics and theorists have attempted to undermine these

distinctions; however, these binary oppositions often shape the ways in which non-theorists view humans, animals, and machines, upholding human exceptionalism as an obvious and forgone conclusion. The humans in Dick's text are particularly invested in policing these boundaries and keeping the distinction between humans and machines intact in order to preserve human exceptionality, and speciesism informs a significant part of the narrative. By showing how these distinctions within a capitalist system erode the chances of maintaining an empathetic and ethical society, Dick's text provides a harsh critique of human exceptionality and speciesism, as well as their connections to upholding capitalist systems.

*Androids* presents a future where the lines between biological and technological life are blurred. Set in the year 2021, Earth has been ravished in World War Terminus, and many animals are extinct. Eligible humans have emigrated to the colonies on Mars, and those who remain on Earth risk permanent damage due to widespread radiation poisoning, or they have already been sickened by it and are thus classified as "specials." As Tony M. Vinci argues, "Earth's inhabitants must cope with personal and cultural wounds caused by severe physical isolation, psychological alienation, and consistent and pervasive practices of discrimination" (91). Dick's society seems to be partially founded on a feeling of guilt towards destroying a large part of the planet and ushering in mass extinction, highlighted by an emphasis on empathy towards what remains of animal life. Humans use an "empathy box" in order to connect with other humans and their god, Mercer. The box allows the person using it to feel what other users are feeling. The need for mechanical enhancement of empathy, something humans are supposed to feel naturally, suggests the inhabitants of Dick's America have difficulty feeling it unaided,

perhaps because they are so deeply alienated from one another and from forms of nonhuman life. Like the empathy box, animals present an opportunity for humans to escape the psychological alienation Vinci highlights. The benefits of human/animal relationships are well documented, and the widespread desire within the novel to own animals and fuse with others via the empathy box suggests Dick's characters seek ways to alleviate their alienation.

However, this emphasis on empathy and the potential benefit the human characters could receive from forging relationships with animals is consistently undermined by the capitalist system that permeates all aspects of society. Keeping pets is encouraged as proof of one's empathy, but the rarity of biological animals turns them into an expensive form of status driven biocapital. Since many people cannot afford to own biological pets, there is a large industry centered around the creation, sale, and maintenance of android animals. Owning a biological animal is linked to status, and empathy for animals is positioned as a central part of their religion, Mercerism. Humans consider it a great honor and responsibility to own a biological animal, but this relationship is always mediated by their status as commodities. Even though the animal androids are common, and at a casual glance visually indistinguishable from biological animals, privilege is still given to biological life because biological life is seen as inherently authentic in a way mechanical life can never be. The android animals are often referred to as "ersatz animals." Their status undermines any potential benefit and alleviation of psychological alienation the human characters could receive from their relationships with them because the android animals are always already false products kept primarily for the benefit of the neighbors. Android animals are seen as inferior



substitutes, and their owners go to great lengths to convince others their pets are biological, as I will discuss later.

Humanoid androids are also a fully integrated part of Dick's world and represent the firmly entrenched binaries that uphold human exceptionality. Each human colonist receives one android when they emigrate to Mars, and the humanoid androids are closely linked to both colonization and slavery. A television commercial in California, designed to convince people to emigrate to one of the colonies, shouts:

duplicates the halcyon days of the pre-Civil War Southern states! Either as body servants or tireless field hands, the custom-tailored humanoid robot—designed specifically for YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS, FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE—given to you on your arrival absolutely free. (Dick 17)

An explicit and unapologetic reference to slavery as “the halcyon days” and the desire to return to a form of slavery references the connection between speciesism and human exploitation noted by Wolfe in his introduction to *Animal Rites*. When discussing the humanist discourse at the heart of many arguments for animal welfare, Wolfe responds:

as long as this humanist and speciesist *structure* of subjectivization remains intact, and as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animal simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available to use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social order of *whatever* species—or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference. (8)

Classifying the androids as slaves rests primarily on the justification of speciesism. Since the androids are not seen as human, just as people of African descent were not seen as

human, their status as slaves is advertised as justified. The androids are categorized as objects not deserving of rights and to whom the humans bear no responsibility. Dick specifically wants readers to make this connection through his overt references to American slavery. The being facing exploitation and dehumanization may be new, but the justification for that exploitation is not and rests on a discourse of speciesism.

The enslavement of androids is also used to reinforce the “humanity” of the colonists, situating full personhood as being reliant on having an other to oppress and dominate. Later in the same commercial, one of the colonists, Mrs. Klugman, states, “I think what I and my family of three noticed most was the dignity” (Dick 18). When she is asked to clarify, she makes it clear her family’s “dignity” partially relies on having received an android slave when they emigrated. Mrs. Klugman notes the connection: “(h)aving a servant you can depend on in these troubled times...I find it reassuring” (18). Speciesism is used to justify android enslavement and to help the human characters feel better about a poisoned Earth and being colonists, as well as convince those left on Earth to leave it in favor of becoming colonists. Mrs. Klugman’s renewed sense of “dignity” and human identity is reliant on her status as master over a servant. Animals are seemingly absent from the colonies, and without them, the colonists must have someone else positioned as less than human to reinforce their human exceptionality. The android market is “so linked to the colonization effort that if one dropped into ruin, so would the other in time” (45), connecting both colonization and oppression directly to the novel’s capitalist system, which in turn determines what it means to be human.

By linking both colonization and capitalism through the figure of the android, Dick’s text warns of the oppressive nature of capitalist systems and the ways in which

these systems are often founded on practices of oppression. In order for the colonization effort to be both profitable and popular, the human colonists require android slaves. Despite the androids being created for their labor and as part of a colonial enterprise, other scholars have correctly classified the androids as colonized subjects. Wisam Kh. Abdul Jabbar argues that despite the reasons for their creation, “the implications that these androids have been violated are still present since they are forced into servile conditions, which constitutes their condition as ruled subjects.” Dick’s vision of humanity rests on social stratification between what is biological and what is not and rests on a foundation of oppressive dehumanization that impacts the lives of both biological animals and biological humans and stands in direct opposition to the empathy humans are supposed to practice. Colonial implications for both humans and animals have also been noted by other scholars, and “(a)s it presents a vicious world where man demands complete subordination as the colonizing master/manufacturer of androids and the colonizing consumer/manufacturer of animals, the novel can be seen as negotiating the violence that takes place between the colonizer and colonized” (Jabbar). Both animals and androids are “kept in their place” through the species barrier, and the barrier itself is heavily policed by the humans in the text. While the humanoid androids are designed for colonists, they periodically escape to Earth where they are hunted down and “retired” by bounty hunters like the protagonist, Rick Deckard. The species boundary is so important to maintaining society that the humanoid androids who pose a threat to it are given a death sentence with no chance for appeal or mercy, and the majority of Earth’s citizens are not even informed of this practice.

Biological humans make a distinct effort to distinguish themselves from androids, partially due to their status as servants and slaves, and humans are most comfortable in the world when they can determine who is android and who is biological in an attempt to keep the human/machine boundary intact. As Jabbar argues, the “stereotypical mind of the colonizer...necessitates the persistence of a clear-cut distinction—the source of his colonial authority” (Jabbar). Humans claim colonial authority over the androids by claiming androids do not possess empathy, in much the same way fallacious arguments have been used historically to prop up governments and laws reliant on white supremacy, colonization, and slavery. Empathy is seen as uniquely biological and human<sup>48</sup>, and because it is believed androids cannot feel empathy, they are seen as a lower form of life who in turn do not deserve to be treated with empathy. Privileging empathy is an elaborate justification for the position that biological life is inherently more important and superior. There are elaborate “empathy tests,” such as the Voigt Empathy Test<sup>49</sup>, which bounty hunters such as Deckard employ to distinguish between biological humans and humanoid androids, and subsequently use as the justification for the killing of beings deemed as android on Earth. The killing of the escaped androids is part of their identity as colonized subjects, and through colonial rule “violence becomes a legitimate act” (Jabbar). When Deckard’s wife Iran calls him a murderer, he replies, “I’ve never killed a

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<sup>48</sup> Notably, the text is devoid of references to animal empathy, despite the fact that animals possess it. Given the clear desires to keep the biological/artificial boundary intact, an emphasis on animal empathy would serve as a clear distinction between biological and android animals. An absence of animal empathy, specifically, and animal to animal relationships more generally, further suggests the animals in the novel are routinely denied subjectivity and individuality that is not linked to their value as consumer product.

<sup>49</sup> The questions associated with the test mostly concern animals, animal treatment, and animal products. Interestingly, there are few questions about human to human interactions, suggesting empathy is a forgone conclusion in such situations, despite the way “specials” are routinely treated. As has been noted by Vint, many people today would, in fact, not pass the Voigt Empathy Test because it denotes behavior towards animals that is commonplace in our world, such as using fur and eating meat (“Speciesism” 115).

human in my life” (Dick 4). Once on Earth, the humanoid androids have no value and cannot be “murdered,” only killed or “retired.” In order for them to be murdered, they would need to possess an amount of human value and a right to live. Their enslavement, then, justifies their killing and initially prevents Deckard from viewing his actions as anything more than retiring them as one would an old car.

Both the enslavement and systematic killing of androids is inextricably linked to the colonial Capitalist society of the novel, which exerts biopolitical control over both biological and android life. As Agamben argues, when biological life, specifically, becomes “a problem of sovereign power...[w]hat follows is a kind of bestialization of man achieved through the most sophisticated political techniques” (*Homo Sacer* 3). Obviously, androids are not biological. However, they greatly resemble biological life, express similar desires and feelings as biological life, and are still subject to a sovereign power that has complete control over their bodies. Furthermore, capitalism relies on biopolitics, and the success of capitalism would not have been possible “without the disciplinary control achieved by the new bio-power, which, through a series of appropriate technologies, so to speak created the ‘docile bodies’ that it needed” (3). The android slaves are seemingly docile bodies whose status enforces the power of the human masters and legitimizes the colonial sovereign. Their status and treatment is a stark example of how Dick illustrates the incompatibility between empathy and capitalist systems and how the discourse of speciesism can be used against any being, both for economic profit and to reinforce the human exceptionality of those who profit from dehumanization.

The less-than-human status of androids, and their supposed inability to feel empathy, is used to justify their enslavement and deny them a right to life. Vinci connects their status to Agamben's "zone of indistinction" and argues, "the android inhabits a space Giorgio Agamben terms 'the zone of indistinction,' a subjective location poised between the unspeakable and the spoken, the subject and the desubjectified, the real and the unreal" (96). Androids are prohibited from engaging in the activities and privileges of human society, and both their presence on Earth and the actions of the bounty hunters are hidden, or both "real" and "unreal," so as not to alarm the public. Androids also illustrate "[t]he fundamental biopolitical structure of modernity—the decision on the value (or nonvalue) of life as such" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 137). While androids are fit to be colonial subjects, they are routinely denied subjectivity, just as animals are fit to be status symbols, but routinely denied subjectivity. As "life devoid of value," to use Agamben's term, the androids occupy a space in which they are simultaneously delegitimized and yet are used to legitimize both the bounty hunters and colonial practice through the species barrier and biopolitical sovereignty.

The existence of androids on Mars and the lack of them on Earth signals capitalism's connections to the colonial model and the species barrier. Mars is seemingly devoid of animal life, as no biological or android animals are mentioned within the context of life on Mars. Both on Earth and on Mars, capitalist and colonial societies are reliant on an understanding of humanity through an oppressed other, whether animals or humanoid androids. The human subject is partially constituted through both the subjugation of other forms of life and the psychological alienation that results from separating the human subject from those other forms of life. The value of both animals

and humanoid androids is in their value to the human subject on Earth or Mars and the status they provide as products. The colonial subject on Mars requires an android slave to reclaim their dignity, not because of living through World War Terminus and leaving behind their home, but because there is no animal subject to treat as othered product, and colonial and capitalist systems require a subjugated other as proof of one status as fully human. The colonists on Mars do not see themselves as colonists, a position inherently without power, because they have androids to subjugate; they have “an other” who is categorized as “less than.” The capitalist system of Earth traps humans in an alienating cycle of conspicuous consumption, which is then lessened by exerting their human exceptionality over animals. Both colonial and biopolitical systems rely on humans oppressing those seen beneath them so the humans doing the oppressing do not focus on their own oppression. The species barrier serves the needs of the market by ensuring a never-ending supply and demand of biological and android life for sale, and it serves the individual by making them feel fully human despite the personal and cultural wounds Vinci argues are essential to human identity within the novel.

Despite humans and the government being most comfortable in a world where they know who is human and who is android because of the importance of policing the species barrier, corporate entities are willing to disrupt this balance in the name of profit. Deckard visits the Rosen Association in an effort to gain information about their newest android, the Nexus-6. A group of these highly advanced androids has escaped to Earth, and it is Deckard’s job to hunt them down and kill them. Bounty hunter organizations want the Nexus-6 taken off the market because it is difficult to determine if they are human or android, and so they are seen as highly dangerous. However, “[l]egally, the

manufacturer of the Nexus-6 brain unit operated under colonial law, their parent autofactory being on Mars,” and so, despite protest, bounty hunter organizations on Earth have no authority to stop the sale of the Nexus-6 (Dick 28-29). The bounty hunter organizations are tasked with keeping Earth “safe” from android invasion, and yet they are not in a position to prevent the problem from occurring due to the lucrative android market and its importance to the colonization effort. Like the colonists and the androids, the bounty hunters are subject to a form of colonial rule, albeit it to a lesser degree. The powerlessness that results from this situation is lessened by their ability to control another, the androids. While this is largely successful, powerlessness does partially fuel Deckard’s obsession with owning an android animal, as I will discuss later.

Despite his powerlessness to control the practices of the Rosen Corporation and the danger he believes Earth now faces, Deckard attempts to reclaim the bounty hunters’ agency at the request of his boss, Harry Bryant, by visiting the Rosens. When Deckard visits the Rosens, he initially thinks he can reason with them by explaining the danger such highly advanced androids pose to Earth. However, the Rosens argue they are only providing what the market demands:

‘We produced what the colonists wanted,’ Eldon Rosen said. ‘We followed the time-honored principle underlying every commercial venture. If our firm hadn’t made these progressively more human types, other firms in the field would have. We knew the risk we were taking when we developed the Nexus-6 brain unit.’

(54)

The initial consideration for the Rosen Association is not maintaining the species barrier which is a fundamental aspect not just of Earth, but also of the colonization effort. Their



primary consideration is an even more distinctly capitalist one—maximizing profit for the corporation, regardless of the consequences. Rosen continues to argue that Deckard’s job, and the practice of bounty hunter in general, is “extremely bad morally” because Deckard “may have retired, very probably has retired, authentic humans with underdeveloped empathetic ability, such as my innocent niece here” (54). While Rosen is correct about the immorality of hunting down androids and of the empathy test itself, it is difficult to accept his statement at face value. His “innocent niece,” Rachael, is not biologically human as he insists, but the first Nexus-6 android Deckard meets. Eldon Rosen is not necessarily invested in convincing Deckard bounty hunting is immoral in order to protect androids or instill more ethical practices on Earth; Eldon Rosen is invested in determining if he has finally created an android that can beat the Voigt-Kampff empathy test in the hopes of voiding the test entirely. The morality he adheres to is not the morality of treating androids with sympathy. He fully admits they are not authentic by positioning biological humans as authentic, and he does not even argue the androids have a right to live. He argues “authentic humans” have probably been killed. The morality Eldon Rosen exalts in this section is the morality of capitalism, a morality based in profit, as opposed to human rights. Ultimately, he does not see the androids as deserving of any more empathy than other biological humans do. While he implies he is not concerned about the dangers the Nexus-6 pose to Earth because it is immoral to hold such a position, his only concern is selling more androids because progressively advanced androids are what the market wants. He does not consider the consequences of his creation because capitalist systems foster a never-ending need to expand and meet the demands of the market. The Rosens, like many inventors and manufacturers, rarely

consider the consequences of products and practices because those consequences could hurt profit margins, and they consider themselves shielded from those consequences.

The intelligence and characteristics present in the Nexus-6 advance the slave product to the status of near-life, and thus present significant complications to the species boundary that situates the entire colonization effort and the colonists' self-identity as fully human. To void the empathy test entirely would remove the primary justification for android enslavement, disrupt both the capitalist and colonial market, and demand a radical shift in thinking about what it means to be biological/human and what it means to be artificial/android. Such radical disruptions in the text have clear parallels to the argument about animal rights I mentioned in my Introduction, specifically, that to acknowledge animals have or deserve rights "entails a revolution in thinking so profound that it would shake the foundations of human society" (Mitchell in Wolfe ix). In both instances, the species boundary is essential to human identity, and the boundary can only exist through the denial of rights to non-human forms of life. Threats to the boundary—increased android intelligence and affect, the suggestion androids have rights, increased understanding of animal intelligence and subjectivity, the suggestion animals have rights—are threats to the foundations of human society and identity.

The species boundary between biological and mechanical humans, as well as practices of capitalist colonization, ensure the android will not be treated with empathy, and in turn illustrate how the world of the novel is not an empathetic place, despite rampant empathy posturing. Empathy in the novel is conditional on the status of the object that might receive it, and such conditions are at the heart of anxieties surrounding

being able to both identify and classify different forms of life. Heavily policing the species barrier ensures the system will be based on inequality and oppression because

[t]he post-apocalyptic culture depicted in the novel is based upon anthropocentric values constructed in such a way as to belittle and disempower human and nonhuman others ('specials,' androids, ersatz animals) by defining the human as a specialized category of being that has exclusive access to empathy. (Vinci 92)

When faced with a form of life that is similar to the biological human, biological humans grasp to find something to differentiate themselves, and the text argues the need for such differentiation is somewhat inevitable within capitalist systems. The species barrier forms and enforces a capitalist system that, while profitable for some, harms all forms of biological and mechanical life subject to it.

Biological humans use the idea that androids do not feel empathy for one another as a way to identify them, a point Deckard explains to Luba Luft, an android he hunts. Deckard tells her, "an android...doesn't care what happens to another android. That's one of the indications we look for" (101). Deckard expands on this claim a bit when he tells Inspector Garland, an android posing as a bounty hunter, "[y]ou androids...don't exactly cover for each other in times of stress" (124). Caring for a member of one's own species is characterized as something distinctly human here, despite rampant mistreatment of "specials," who are routinely treated as "less than human" humans, and despite ample evidence that many species of animals care for the members of their social groups. As Vinci argues, "the narrative reveals this ability to empathize to be chimerical: the humans, perhaps because of their ideological entitlements, demonstrate little to no actual ability to empathize with human and nonhuman others" (92). What Vinci misses here,

however, is Dick's critique of capitalist systems, and how the economic system of the novel prevents meaningful fostering of actual empathy. The treatment of "specials," the actions of the androids themselves, and the treatment of animals, greatly undermine the veracity of Deckard's claims about human and android empathy.

Despite claiming the androids are devoid of all empathy, they are certainly capable of feeling empathy towards one another. In the scene where Deckard sleeps with Rachel Rosen, Rachel informs him one of the androids he is hunting, Pris Stratton, is the same type of android she is and that the description of the android he is hunting could be a description of her. She tells Deckard if she had known about Pris, she "never would have flown down here. I think you're asking too much. You know what I have? Towards this Pris android?" (189). Deckard responds that it is "empathy," and Rachel confirms by stating, "[s]omething like that. Identification; there goes I" (189). Though her identification is partially motivated by the fear that Deckard will retire her instead, Rachel is capable of identifying with and feeling for another android, a feeling she isn't supposed to have. She also tries to convince Deckard not to finish the job, something an android isn't supposed to do. Similarly, when Deckard finds the last androids he is hunting, two of them are a married couple, Roy and Irmgard Batty. Deckard happens to kill Mrs. Batty first, and her husband "let out a cry of anguish," forcing Deckard to admit Mr. Batty loved her (223). The scene would not have been noticeably different if Mr. and Mrs. Batty were biological humans. While these examples of android empathy do not make up a majority of the novel, they do indicate that bounty hunters, and humans in general, are incorrect about androids not being able to feel empathy for and identify with one another, and, arguably, biological humans have given the androids no reason to

extend that empathy to other forms of life. The androids are kept as slaves and then hunted down and killed if they escape. It is difficult to see how the androids can be expected to feel anything but fear and animosity towards the biological humans, but “[i]n order to keep the myth of human exceptionalism alive, androids must remain culturally and ontologically marginalized” (Vinci 93). Like the non-fictionalized slaves of the past, marginalization allows humans to deny android subjectivity and individuality. Because of the “superiority” of the biological humans, android animosity and fear is used to further characterize the androids as devoid of empathy and unworthy of a status above that of slaves. Additionally, the failure to see androids as individual subjects in the text mirrors the failures to see animals as subjects both in the text, and in the world of the author and readers.

Privileging empathy through human exceptionality is similar to the justification that has been traditionally used to subjugate animals—intelligence. “Higher intelligence” is perceived as uniquely human. The connection between the historical treatment of animals and the treatment of androids in the novel has been noted by Vint who argues “in many ways, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* simply puts androids in the place historically occupied by animals. They are classified as less-than-human and any evidence of capabilities they might possess that runs contrary to hegemonic ideology (such as Luba’s appreciation of art) is ignored” (“Speciesism 113-14). As androids are not valued forms of life in Dick’s novel because they lack empathy, animals have traditionally been exploited, tortured, and treated as biocapital based on their “lower intelligence.” As Derrida argues, this perceived lack of intelligence has been used as a moral argument justifying the exploitation of animals for a large part of Western

tradition, and it has also been used to justify the practice of slavery. While the status of androids seems to support the desire to adhere to the human/machine boundary, my comparison shows how Dick begins to erode the distinction between human/animal/machine in treating mechanical humanoid life in much the same manner as animals have historically been treated. By eroding these distinctions, Dick critiques the ways in which animals are exploited under capitalist systems. As Vint argues, while much scholarship has focused on the opposition between the androids and biological humans, the novel “develops its ideas about being human through *two* comparisons: animals and androids” (111). Discourse surrounding the animals, both android and artificial, and discourse surrounding the humanoid androids in the novel are best understood together. Both show anxieties about protecting and privileging human identity and policing the species boundary. A system that relies on colonial oppression, such as the case with the humanoid androids, is an inherently unjust system, and animals are not immune from its effects, just as biological humans are not.

By partially eroding the distinction between human and animals as classifying them both as biological, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* attempts to set up a new boundary—biological/artificial, placing biological humans and animals on one side and android humans and animals on the other. In placing biological life together as inherently “authentic,” Dick’s text attempts to subvert the human/animal binary. As both Derrida and Vint argue, historically animals have been seen as the wholly other, the “alien” among us. By creating distinctions between biological and mechanical life, Dick begins to challenge this perception. As the humans of Dick’s novel are heavily invested in keeping the biological/artificial boundary in place, animals are no longer the wholly

other, leaving androids to occupy the space traditionally held by animals. Despite the transformative power possible in human/animal relationships and attempts to elevate the value of their lives in the text, such efforts fall short of providing meaningful and widespread alternatives to human and animal exploitation because these efforts exist within a highly structured biopolitical capitalist system.

The highly structured capitalist system of Dick's novel mediates the relationships humans have with animals. As Donna Haraway notes, human relationships with companion species may be places of transformation<sup>50</sup>. It is in their treatment of animals that the humans of Dick's novel have the most potential to show empathy and behave the most "human," and in the case of at least one character) who I discuss in the following paragraph), relationships with animals have the potential to make Dick's human characters want to be better people. Confronted with mechanical life, and the horror of practically driving animals to extinction, Dick's society finally begins to understand that humans have a responsibility to the beings with whom they share the planet. They are alike because they are both biological life; they are both "authentic" life. They are alike because they both have feelings. While Dick successfully begins to erode the human/animal boundary here, this erosion is, of course, wholly tainted by the fact that animals are an economic status symbol. Caring for an animal is seen as a social imperative, and animals are largely treated as objects signifying conspicuous consumption. Humans feel obligated to show they have the empathy to care for an animal and the money to pay for one, and many seem most concerned with other people knowing this, rather than the actual relationship they have with their pet. Using animals as a status

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<sup>50</sup> For a discussion on the transformative power of human/animal relationships, see Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet*.

symbol speaks to the desire to cling to human exceptionality and the permeating nature of capitalist systems and the conspicuous consumption they foster. Although biological animals are “protected” and highly valued due to their rarity, this value is in decidedly economic terms. Their value is in their exchange value, rather than in the use value of the actual relationship their humans could have with them, akin to how the worth of luxury goods is determined<sup>51</sup>. While android animals are owned to prove a human’s empathy, this widespread keeping of android animals does not lead to an empathetic society. Even “valued” biological animals are denied subjectivity and rights, and the android animals are throw-away products designed for show due to their connection to economic and social status in a capitalist system.

By using animals as status symbols in a capitalist system, the human characters in the novel devalue the very lives they claim are important and recreate the boundary the novel attempts to erode. Since “the animals are treated as commodities rather than as part of living nature with whom humans share being” (Vint, “Speciesism” 119), the novel critiques the essential relationship between humans and nature under capitalist systems. Because of their status as commodities, the relationship between humans and animals within the text “becomes alienated and alienating” (Vint, “Speciesism” 119) because it is essentially the relationship between a consumer and a commodity. As empathy for animals is an essential tenant of Mercerism and a large part of how humans prove they are moral beings (and thus “better” than androids), the noticeable absence of love, the essential foundation of the human/companion animal

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<sup>51</sup> The use value of animals in capitalist societies has traditionally been conceived of in two ways—their use value for work, such as the cattle driven plow or more recently the animal used for testing, and their value as emotional support, such as the companion animal. The novel seems to remove both of these typical relationships, leaving little room for anything but luxury good.



relationship, illustrates that these animals are not the basis of empathy, but merely a symbolic display designed as performance. Often, the animals in the text are used to “validate the anthropocentric model of human exceptionalism” (Vinci 99-100), rather than as beings with whom humans have meaningful relationships. The most notable exception to the lack of love that defines many human and animal relationships in the text occurs in a scene between Deckard and another bounty hunter, Phil Resch. Resch briefly worries he is an android and expresses both love and concern for his pet squirrel since he will be “retired” if he is not human (Dick 128). On contemplating his own death, he never mentions any humans, only his squirrel, indicating his sense of responsibility towards his pet and implying this is the most significant relationship in his life. However, this is an incredibly brief scene, and Resch demonstrates more love for his squirrel here than any other human character expresses towards their animals in the text. Despite empathy being used to enforce and define who is human and who is not, in most cases, the commodity status of animals prevents humans from viewing them as beings and stands in opposition to forging a loving relationship between species. The majority of relationships between biological humans and biological animals in the text are mediated by the corporation in charge of collecting, classifying, and selling animal life.

The lucrative animal industry in the novel is controlled by one corporation, Sydney's. Sydney's sets the prices and keeps a list of which animals are considered extinct. Keeping a list of which animals are extinct implies animal life is regulated primarily through the corporation, rather than a government or non-profit organization devoted to conservation and welfare. Animal existence is documented by the corporation that heads the industry and seemingly supplies all of the animals for sale. Deckard carries

around a *Sydney's Animal & Fowl* catalogue, which is a version of *Kelley Blue Book* for animals. The catalogue informs the way in which he views animals, as anytime he sees an animal, one of his first actions is to look at the catalogue to determine its list value. On his way to work, Deckard sees an ostrich in a pet store's window and later calls to inquire about the price. Deckard "wiggled his bent *Sydney's* catalogue out of his coat pocket, thumbed to ostrich comma male-female, old-young, sick-well, mint-used, and inspected prices. 'Mint, male, young, well,' the salesmen informed him" (33). While classification of biological sex is a common factor in animal pricing, the "mint" verses "used" terminology is closely associated with collector's items, such as coins, baseball cards, and comics, rather than living beings. One would never say, "my cat is in mint condition" because this is a phrase reserved for the inanimate objects people collect, not the beings with whom they have meaningful relationships.

Listing animals as collector's items, rather than as beings showcases a lack of the very empathy the animal is supposed to incite and demonstrate in humans. The human/animal relationship is mediated through the animal's economic value, which in turn devalues individuality and empathy. Notably absent from Sydney's listings is any information concerning the personality or needs of the animal in question, essentially removing any indication of the animal's unique characteristics and classifying them as "life devoid of value," like the androids, since all animals are classified as collectables. While it is not unusual for a business to consider anything they are selling an item, Sydney's choice of language and categorizing system also dictates how the worker and the consumer ultimately view the product, which in this case is a live being, not a baseball card. Sydney's presents the sale of animals as pure business transactions, rather

than a search for a companion. As Vint argues, “if empathy were as important to the experience of human culture as it is to the ideology of the human/android boundary, then owning a real animal should be a social relationship, not a commodity one” (“Speciesism” 119). The commodity relationship that results from capitalist systems both enforces the boundaries between what is human and what is not and prevents meaningful empathetic relationships between species. Situating the sale as a search for a companion, as many animal rescues do, would be a logical step for a relationship that society claims is based on and illustrates empathy. It would encourage consumers to consider which animal would be a good fit for them based on their lifestyle and the animal’s needs, rather than considering which animal would allow them to demonstrate socially prescribed conspicuous consumption. However, these animals are always, already capital that is both an investment and can be self-replicating, and their value is in their rarity and list price, rather than the prospective relationship they represent.

The status of individual animals is directly linked to their rarity, which in turn, of course, dictates their price and the value many human characters place on animal lives. The “mint, male, young, well” ostrich is \$30,000 at the store, as opposed to an android version which would be about \$800 (Dick 33-34). Not only are android animals ersatz, but they are cheaper, and in the capitalist system, lower in price means lower in status. Deckard’s neighbor, Bill Barbour, owns a beautiful Percheron mare named Judy, but at the beginning of the novel Deckard himself owns an android sheep. Barbour’s horse is partially why Deckard is unhappy with his android sheep. Capitalist systems encourage a “keeping up with the Jones” mentality, and the demoralizing feeling Deckard experiences by having an electronic animal is made worse by comparison to Barbour’s horse.

Deckard's identity is mediated by patriarchal capitalism, and before Barbour is his neighbor, Barbour is Deckard's rival. Judy is pregnant, and Deckard tries to convince Barbour to sell him the colt. Deckard argues, "for you to have two horses and me none, that violates the whole basic theological and moral structure of Mercerism<sup>52</sup>" (11). While this is an argument about morality, it is about the morality of owning, not the morality of care and companionship, and decidedly not the morality of how to be a good pet owner. Deckard makes no effort to convince Barbour why he would be a good caretaker for a horse, or that he had always loved them, or any other similar arguments that could be made about why someone would be a good fit for a particular animal. The prevailing morality in the discussion is a morality of buying, selling, and owning. In other words, it is the morality of how to be an "ethical" capitalist.

Deckard doesn't just want any biological animal, however. He wants one that would signify a higher amount of wealth beyond what he makes as a city employee. After Deckard presents his reasoning for owning the colt, Barbour informs him this line of reasoning would only work if Deckard did not own his sheep, and Deckard finally admits to him that the sheep is an android. He claims he wants a biological animal but cannot afford one on his salary. After pitying him, Barbour suggests Deckard purchase a cat because they are cheap, and Deckard responds, "I don't want a domestic pet. I want what I originally had, a large animal. A sheep, or if I can get the money, a cow or a steer or what you have, a horse" (14). Considering some dog breeds are larger than sheep, size isn't Deckard's only consideration, despite what he claims. Deckard wants an exotic animal—one with a larger price tag than a cat and who must live on the roof so all the

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<sup>52</sup> Notably, the religion of the novel provides a guidance on the "morality" of buying, selling, and owing live animals, further highlighting how biopolitical capitalism informs and mediates all aspects of life.

neighbors can see, rather than an animal who lives with him in his home where none of the neighbors can see. He never directly admits it, but a cat cannot provide Deckard with the kind of public display of wealth and empathy posturing he is looking for in a pet, and so he is not interested. Because cats are inexpensive, they cannot be considered rare forms of animal life in the novel (despite all animals being “rare,” there are distinctions among species as to how rare they are), and so they do not signify the same kind of value as more exotic and expensive forms of animal life. Deckard is emotionally invested in having an animal that would seem beyond the financial means of a bounty hunter, and he wants to make sure this animal is on public display, in much the same way people want to be able to place a luxury car in their driveway. Deckard wishes to display the signs of empathy without any of the benefits, and this desire to display wealth beyond his means is partially informed by the powerlessness he feels as a bounty hunter. The rules of conspicuous consumption, rather than the desire to bond with or care for a specific kind of animal, are what dictate Deckard’s obsession with owning a large animal. Owning a status symbol is something Deckard can control and that can be used as proof of his own personal worth and value. Despite his claim about ethics, Deckard’s primary motivation is displaying his worth through conspicuous consumption.

Considering Deckard’s deep desire to own a biological animal and his seemingly “ethical” argument about why Barbour should sell him the colt, it would be logical to expect him to take an interest in Judy and value her as a living being, particularly if the human/animal relationship actually fostered the kind of empathy society claims to value. However, Deckard’s lowered status as the owner of an android animal, his animosity towards Barbour for owning a biological horse in the first place, and his inability to view

animals as more than signifiers of capital renders this impossible. After Barbour teasingly tells him to buy a cricket or a mouse, Deckard threatens to kill Judy:

‘(y)our horse could die, like Groucho died, without warning. When you get home from work this evening you could find her laid out on her back, her feet in the air, like a bug. Like what you said, a cricket.’ He strode off, car key in his hand. (14)

When presented with a situation that attacks his ego and economic worth, Deckard shows a lack of empathy towards both his neighbor and the horse. Deckard’s desire for a biological animal of his own does not result in empathy towards the animals or people who are right in front of him; rather, he reacts with threats of violence. Judy is an extension of Barbour, rather than a living being, and as an extension of the object of Deckard’s anger, Judy becomes, like the androids, “life devoid of value.” He displays no empathy for her because she is her relationship to her human and ultimately a form of biocapital Deckard himself cannot own, a reminder of his economic shame, limited self-worth, and powerlessness. As James Gilligan argues, “shame is the primary or ultimate cause of all violence, whether towards others or toward the self” (110). When faced with representations of his economic shame, Deckard, predictably, reacts violently and showcases his inability to feel empathy. Deckard and Barbour’s relationship exists in a capitalist system where the market permeates all social interactions, and the market reduces Judy to her relational identity and Barbour to a symbol of economic competition. The capitalist system in the novel demands an empty empathy mediated through market relationships.

Biological animals are valued more for what they indicate about the economic status of their owners, rather than as living beings deserving of rights, or, within the case

of Deckard's economic shame and Judy, even life. Biological animals are far more expensive than android ones because of their rarity, and their value is in showing someone can afford one, particularly "exotic," "wild," and large animals. No one wants to admit to owning an android animal because they are "not real" and indicate someone cannot afford the "authentic" being. The shame associated with not having an "authentic" animal is a form of economic shame, and people must have a certain amount of money to be able to do what society expects of them and showcase their empathy. The market permeates the majority of human relationships and the ways in which they view their personal value and the value of other living beings. Android animals are not biological and are thus determined to lack "life," and so human responsibility to them is diminished to the same form of responsibility one might attribute to any other electronic product, rather than the level of responsibility one would have towards a living creature. Since android animals are viewed as inherently inauthentic, they do not contain the same empathetic value, suggesting someone who is poor or not wealthy cannot be as "good" of a person as someone who has the financial means to purchase a biological animal. The capitalist system ranks animal life, human life, and emotion, and creates a system in which the rich appear more "moral" than the poor by defining all three economically. By linking empathy posturing with wealth, the logic of the market becomes paramount, rather than actual practice of empathy. Empathy is an emotion, and the desire to commodify that emotion has de-valued it and rendered it difficult to find. Ultimately,

Deckard continually thinks of animals in terms of their prices in *Sidney's* catalogue, and he explicitly links the deaths of the androids to his ability to attain this capital when he calculates with uncanny prescience the circumstances (which

form the plot of the novel) that would lead him to being assigned a sufficient number of android bounties to afford a real animal. (Vint “Speciesism” 120)

Deckard, consumed by his desire to own a large biological animal, fanatically hunts the humanoid androids who have escaped to Earth and views the death of the humanoid androids as a means to illustrating his empathy through purchase and display. His threat to kill Judy is seemingly justified in his mind because his economic shame and his inability to see animals as more than their Sydney’s value is more important in this system than empathy towards either an animal he claims to want or his neighbor. In a system where even “valued” biological animals are essentially biocapital, android animals fare far worse. Since they are lacking in rarity and seen as inherently inauthentic, android animals are not seen as alive and are afforded little value in the novel, as underscored by their relative value in the Sydney’s catalogue.

The android animals are subject to exploitation because they were designed and created to be property. Unlike the biological animals, there is no poetic concept of android being, akin to the one about nature and animals I discuss in the Introduction, for people to embrace. They are machines, and while they are modelled on biological animals, the human characters are always aware of their inauthenticity. While biological animals receive poor treatment in the text and are routinely denied subjectivity due to their status as biocapital, android animals are doubly subjected to this treatment because of their status as both animal and android. While humans will brag to other humans about how well they treat their biological animals, android animals are not only unworthy of such treatment, they are also unworthy of being claimed. Early in the novel, Deckard thinks, “[o]wning and maintaining a fraud had a way of gradually demoralizing one. And



yet from a social standpoint it had to be done, given the absence of the real article” (Dick 9). Deckard thinks not only of animals in terms of their cost, he but values himself in terms of what he can and cannot afford, as well as by what his neighbors think he can afford. The demoralization Deckard feels is not a result of lacking the relationship he could have with a biological animal; rather, it is a direct result of not being able to afford “the real thing,” which in turn translates into “not being good enough.” Deckard’s demoralization is a result of viewing animals as products within a capitalist system and not as biological subject with whom one forms a bond. What Deckard feels is not emptiness or loneliness; it is shame. The responsibility Deckard shows towards animals is for the sake of maintaining human economic status, not for the sake of caring for or helping a fellow being and companion, a basic tenant of the very empathy human society claims to value. The novel argues a society in which all life is mediated by its economic value, or lack thereof, cannot be a truly empathic society. Android animals, and the businesses designed around them, highlight the paramount value of conspicuous consumption and the market.

There is an entire industry centered around discretely repairing android animals, and this industry speaks to the lower tiered status they give their owners and the lack of obligations their owners feel for them. The company J.R. Isadore, a classified “special,” works for is named “Van Ness Pet Hospital,” and his clothing and the carrying cage he uses is even designed to look like “an animal vet picking up a true animal” (71), even though they solely repair malfunctioning electronic animals and do not work with biological ones. Rather than speaking to the value of android animals by showing they are worthy of veterinarian care, this elaborate ruse is so people can hide the “shame” of

not being able to afford biological animals. Their appearance as a veterinary hospital is so convincing, the beginning of the novel depicts a scene where a woman named Mrs. Pilsen calls the Van Ness Pet Hospital to care for her biological cat, Horace, because he is sick. Horace, of course, dies in Isadore's truck because Isadore thinks he is malfunctioning, rather than sick, and they must call Mrs. Pilsen to tell her. After getting off of the phone, Isadore's boss comments on how working with electronic animals normally comes with very little responsibility compared to working with biological animals. "Owners who get to love their animals,' Sloat said somberly, 'go to pieces. I'm glad we're not usually involved with the real animals. You realize that actual animal vets have to make calls like that all the time" (82). Electronic animals never die, and seemingly are not loved by the people who own them in the same way as biological animals. Even Mrs. Pilsen admits her husband would never get physically close to Horace because he knew Horace would die one day (81-82), despite the assumptions that her husband loves Horace. The idea of having a cat that is never touched seems incompatible with forging a meaningful relationship with one. The people who own electronic animals have the benefit of seeming to do what society requires they do and none of the responsibility, empathy, ethical obligations, or affective significance associated with owning and loving a biological animal. They do not risk being hurt when that animal eventually dies, and they have no responsibility to give the android animal attention if they are too busy to do so. A pet is a companion, but it is also a risk and a responsibility. Android animals allow people to avoid that risk and responsibility. They exist primarily for people to show their neighbors so they can insist they are good, empathetic people who can afford the price tag associated with a biological animal without having to alter their lives to care for one.

The economic expenditure of purchasing an animal is a necessary part of being seen as a full and “good” citizen, but the practicalities of and emotions attached to caring for one are not because empathy is not valued as action, but only as a conspicuous display of consumerism.

*Androids* depicts a world that engages in human fantasies of control and the perfection of nature. The value animal life holds is in showing someone can afford one. No one wants to admit to owning an android animal because they are “not real” and indicates someone cannot afford the “authentic” being. Android animals are an attempt to backtrack from the widespread destruction of animal life. While *Androids* attempts to encourage responsibility towards animal life, in replacing biological animals with android life, the human characters merely enact fantasies devoid of tangible responsibility. Although biological animals are “protected” and highly valued due to their rarity, this value is in decidedly economic terms. While android animals are owned to prove a human’s empathy, this widespread keeping of android animals does not lead to actual empathy directed at android life, and humans are still highly isolated. The goal is to publicly display empty signs of empathy, not to truly develop it. The conspicuous consumption Earth’s society relies on positions the self as object to other subjects, increasing the isolation of the human characters. Even “valued” biological animals are denied subjectivity and rights, and android animals are disposable products designed as performance due to their connection to economic and social status in a capitalist system. By relying on a human fantasy of perfection, *Androids* fails to provide representation of animals who are not biocapital, suggesting such a relationship cannot be achieved under a

capitalist system because capitalist systems rely on a foundation of using animals as status symbols.

As I have discussed in this chapter, the society of *Androids* is one in which the value of life is mediated by its economic value, and biological humans must engage in conspicuous consumption in order to be viewed as moral people. Despite rampant empathy posturing, the main moral imperative in the novel is to spend and to display those expenditures publicly, not to practice actual empathy. Biological humans are put in a situation where they are shamed into appearing empathetic, and this shame is on public display. I have also briefly mentioned the work of Gilligan, who argues the leading cause of violence is shame. However, whether or not shame leads to violence depends on the “specific social and psychological circumstances in which shame is experienced” (Gilligan 111). In these specific circumstances, “[t]he purpose of violence is to diminish the intensity of shame and replace it as far as possible with its opposite, pride, thus preventing the individual from being overwhelmed by the feeling of shame” (Gilligan 111). In the case of Deckard, both his reaction to his neighbor, Barbour, and his entire identity as a bounty hunter, are contingent upon the shame he feels from owning an inferior product. Deckard can replace his shame with pride by violently killing “life devoid of value,” in the case of the androids, and simultaneously work to end the source of his shame and powerlessness by collecting reward money for doing so. In the case of Judy, Deckard can replace his shame with pride by showing his neighbor that he is a man to be feared, not a man to be pitied. In both cases, Deckard’s violence is a response to the system in which he lives, a decidedly capitalist system that thrives on and induces shame and powerlessness.

The social inequality Deckard feels, and the social inequality the capitalist system fosters, leads to increased instances of violence, as illustrated in the ways in which Dick's society treats androids and animals. If, as Gilligan argues, shame leads to violence, then Deckard's inability to display the conspicuously real animal leads to shame from Barbour, but also personal shame, as masculine identity is often linked to the ability to provide<sup>53</sup>. Violence is seen as the best and fastest way for Deckard to regain his pride. Since capitalism itself is intrinsically designed with the have/have not binary in place, capitalism as a system, always, already incorporates the idea of shame, which is transmitted as violence. Thus, capitalism cannot exist without violence, which is, in part, why the animal must always exist as a disposable commodity within the system and cannot be self-defining or poetic under a capitalist model. Animals cannot shame others or know shame themselves, and so they cannot participate in the capitalist model aside from being always outside or a commodity. Animals are and have been products or objects within capitalist systems, and to allow animal subjectivity causes a moral crisis for the past relationships between animals and capitalism. Through the androids and animals, Dick illustrates the violence indicative of capitalist systems, and the ways in which capitalism and empathy are inherently incompatible. The violence indicative of capitalist systems specifically within the context of animal life is the result of the shame humans feel because of how they treat and classify animal life. Because of the shame associated with what "we have done" and continue to do, instead of correcting these practices, society seeks to take pride in animal mistreatment and violence through constant reiteration and reinforcement of human exceptionalism.

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<sup>53</sup> This point is supported by the fact that Deckard's wife, Iran, does not seem to work, and that they both consider it Deckard's job to purchase a biological animal, not their job.

In the next chapter, I focus on a graphic novel, Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's *We3*, and the ways in which the form of the graphic novel presents a unique opportunity for exploring non-human subjectivities and identities. I argue the interconnected systems of science, the military, the government, and capitalism in *We3* must reject the evidence they are given of animal subjectivity because acknowledging animal agency and subjectivity would undermine the graphic novel's capitalist system. I also argue that the scientist in charge of and responsible for the animal protagonists is classified as more animal than human by the men representing science, the government, and the military and that her treatment is a direct result of her femininity and the ways in which patriarchal capitalism animalizes women as consumable objects.

## Chapter Two: Animals, Capitalism, and the Military Industrial Complex

In the previous chapter, I argued Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* illustrates the violence inherent in capitalist systems and the ways in which empathy and capitalism are depicted as inherently incompatible within the text. While Dick's text focuses on consumer culture and the commodification of animals as luxury items, the approach taken by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely in *We3* (2005) focuses on the use value of animals to the interconnected systems of science, the military, the government, and biopolitical capitalism.

Morrison and Quitely's *We3*, short for Animal Weapon 3, tells the story of three animals—a dog, a cat, and a rabbit—who have been turned into biorgs as part of a government funded and controlled research project. They are “efficient animal slaves” designed to replace human soldiers in war and thus save the lives of American soldiers (Morrison and Quitely 24) through the use and sacrifice of their bodies. Each animal is given a unique function, based loosely on their body size, natural abilities, and weaponized armor. Doctor Trendle, the scientist in charge of the government project, explains their roles early in the text to a visiting senator: “our rabbit biorg was designed and trained to deliver mines and poison gas. You can think of the dog as a small tank, the cat, a lethal stealth machine” (26). Beginning with *We3*'s last assassination and illegal release, the graphic novel centers around the experiences of Bandit (a dog), Tinker (a cat), and Pirate (a rabbit), as they attempt to escape capture and death in search of “home,” an idea both foreign and compelling to them all.

*We3* begins *in media res* with what will be Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate's final assignment. Shortly afterward, the three animals are designated for death by the military (early in the text) because they are considered "obsolete." The person most involved with their project, Dr. Berry, releases them, resulting in their aforementioned journey to escape capture and death at the hands of the military. After suffering serious injury, Pirate is eventually killed by 4, the Mastiff designed to take the place of the three animals, but both Bandit and Tinker ultimately escape the military and find their "home" with a homeless man. The ending of the graphic novel signals that because of their classification and use as biocapital, there is no place within the capitalist model of the text for the animals to exist without subjugation and oppression. They must leave the system entirely in order to find a "home" where they are acknowledged as fully realized subjects.

As I discussed in my Introduction, the science fiction graphic novel provides a unique opportunity to explore and experience animal subjectivity and experience. While SF literature can give voice to the animal, as has been noted by Vint ("SF and Animal Studies, 179") the graphic novel allows readers to experience animal subjectivity in a way literature cannot. In *Understanding Comics The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud argues that comics are a uniquely collaborative genre between reader and creator. The reader of comics or graphic novels must "recreate" the subject in the text "moment by moment" because the visual iconography of comics gives readers an active role in creation (McCloud 59). When the point of view characters are animals, readers are given a chance to actively experiment with animal subjectivities and identities, giving comics a unique ability to encourage readers to empathize with nonhuman subjects because the medium forces the reader to use the self to create a fully realized subject. As Lisa Brown argues,



“(c)ultural beliefs about animals are revealed in comics, and these beliefs both reflect and influence the value and significance that are applied to animals, the environment, the natural world, and even other humans” (73). While Brown’s argument can also be applied to literature about animals, such as the texts I use in Chapter One and Chapter Three, McCloud’s interactive theory of comics expands on the ability of comics about animals to inform the perception and experience of readers. The reader of comics becomes an active participant in animal identity and subjectivity by identifying and collaborating with the animal protagonist, creating different possibilities for influencing human values about animals.

The act of co-creation between the reader and creator of comics that the protagonist's full character relies on may hold a clue as to why specific non-human animals were chosen by Morrison and Quitely as members of We3. The ability of the authors to attach roles to the animals presented as members of the weaponized team is directly related to the reader's previous experience with these animals in their actual world. When Bandit is described within the text as a "small tank," readers who have spent time around a Labrador Retriever make a connection between the depiction of the animal within the text and their actual world, using their knowledge to fill in gaps from the textual description. The relationship between the reader’s experience and the characterization of the animal protagonists applies equally well to the description of the cat, Tinker, who is described as a "lethal stealth machine" in the text, and most cat owners have witnessed both the stealth and predatory nature of a domesticated feline outside of textual examples. While there is more to both Bandit and Tinker than these small descriptions, fleshing out the character and traits of the animals is dependent upon

knowledge that the reader brings to the text. Each of the animals is selected and utilized based upon their real-world abilities or stereotypes, but these are abilities that are summarized within the text in three-word bursts. The knowledge of what these behaviors might actually look like in the world of *We3* is absent in the opening scene, and the reader must retroactively apply their real-world knowledge and experience of similar animals in order to make sense of the perspectives and action of the mission that opens *We3* in a series of images unaccompanied by text. Using animals with which readers would be familiar allows Morrison and Quitely to capitalize on the interplay between reader and text in a very different way than if they had chosen animals most people do not have intimate experience with or do not automatically sympathize with, such as exotic or wild animals.

When the text of *We3* opens, readers are thrust into the middle of an action sequence where the focal points and angles of observation are entirely unfamiliar. The first square panel, of a man's shoes and one leg below the calf, is presented to the viewer from a height of no more than eighteen inches from ground level (where the shoes are making contact with a surface) and within twelve inches of the rear of the runner's stride. For a human to perceive the same event from this angle, they would need to be partially lying down directly behind the runner. This is neither a comfortable position to be in for a person, nor one that would leave them undetected by the runner. The remaining three square panels show two additional perspectives of the same moment, with one focusing on the upper back and neck of the runner (though no evidence is provided to determine this is the runner until a spread that appears in following pages) as viewed from the height of the lower back of the runner and in close proximity to the same. The second

perspective offered is from ground height, but from the right side as opposed to the rear. None of these perceptions are from characteristically human positions (eye-level or within twelve inches of eye-level or from a clear observational location far away from the subject of the perception), and none seem to present a narrator's viewpoint. The final panel on the opening page, a full-width horizontal, would seem to show the reader the location of the being whose perception is accounted for in the two panels that show a side view of the runner's shoes; however, though it is a pulled-back, wider shot of the scene that shows two glowing red lights behind a ventilation grate, this perception is from the same side (right) as the earlier panels of the shoes. The next page, eight, showcases a view from behind the same ventilation grate, which highlights two important aspects of the visual elements that continue throughout *We3*. First, there does not appear to be a human point-of-view through which this scene is being depicted. Secondly, if this third point-of-view being offered to the reader is from the shadows behind the ventilation grate with the two glowing orbs, then the logic of the visual elements follows that the previous two were as well since the third image offered is from the same position but retreated from the close-up nature of the earlier illustrations.

The design and depiction of perception in these initial panels begins to engage the reader in the co-creative process on which the graphic novel is dependent. Not only is the reader entering the narrative *in media res*, but the physicality of the viewpoint being presented is decidedly not human. This perspective forces the reader into a viewpoint that is retained throughout the majority of the text, as either one of the members of *We3* (most notably as Tinker, as Morrison and Quitely use Tinker's fight scenes in an attempt to

illustrate how differently a cat would experience time<sup>54</sup>), or as a being set apart as narrator, but often from the height or location as the non-human members of *We3*.

The act of taking on the physical perspective of the non-human animal and learning to experience the world through non-human perception of the space, subject, and time is the direct result of the co-creative process that is ubiquitous to the graphic novel. Readers are forced to fill in the gaps in knowledge that are so often narrated through or presented as “info dumps” in works that deal with estrangement and wonder. In *We3*, specifically, this necessitates readers to engage with non-human perception and experience. In addition to the co-creative element of the graphic novel, an analysis of the front matter that accompanies *We3* proves important for understanding how the experience of the graphic novel differs from that of the plain text.

The front matter of *We3* opens with a black background that is blanketed in a repetition of the text “WE3,” where intermittent examples of the repeated text are presented in a darkened, blood red, and the majority is a grey that seems to fade into the black background, all colors that will be repeated throughout multiple scenes in the text. This is a pattern that holds throughout the opening of the text with the exception of the full-page depiction of Bandit's missing poster (examined later in this chapter). In the foreground against this textual background are images taken from the illustrations of the

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<sup>54</sup> Morrison himself discusses this technique in the accompanying material at the end of *We3* (130), and Marc Singer discusses it at length in *Grant Morrison: Combining the Worlds of Contemporary Comics* (210-217). In their first fight scene after they escape, tree limbs serve as panel borders, and the panels that depict Tinker's vantage point are at different sizes, “different levels of magnification,” and different speed than the ones which focus on the other animals or the humans. While she is depicted as “plunging into a column of soldiers and diving between the panels that depict them: the troops remain trapped within the panel borders, locked into a slower passage of time, while the cat moves freely outside and between them at a pace they cannot even perceive” (Marc Singer 216). Not only is Tinker's experience and perception different from both her animal counterparts and her human enemies, her speed, ability, and fighting skills are presented as vastly superior to those of the soldiers.

main text of the novel, but the majority of these images are pieces of larger scenes (as opposed to a smaller version of a full panel), and these pieces are outlined in a heavy white border that not only separates them from the textual background and highlights that separation, but also confines the small images within a visual wall that may represent the inability of those scenes to transcend the confines of the text in which they appear. By contrast, the title page shows Tinker in mid-air and leaping toward the reader in an attacking pose with metallic claws outstretched, and the spread that follows on the next pages features Bandit and Tinker looking at the reader with facial expressions that humans would expect to see on their pets, though augmented by a worn and exhausted tinge. Both images of Tinker and Bandit here appear unframed, though each also appear in the smaller bordered images present through the front matter, as well.

The relative freedom of the images presented in the front matter can be retroactively acknowledged as foreshadowing following a first reading of the text, and offers, by way of an engagement with metatextuality, a frame through which the text's ending can be analyzed in support of my argument regarding biopolitical capitalism and the animal. As only Tinker and Bandit are presented in freeform illustration (without the heavy white border), they are not merely the only images who escape the confines of the white borders of the front matter, but also the only non-human animals who escape the domination and control of the biopolitical capitalist system present within the world of the text. Their escape is foreshadowed in these depictions; Tinker moves from an attack on the reader on the title page to requesting help from the reader (along with Bandit) through a frontal engagement that is not aggressive but wanting. While the reader does not yet recognize or empathize with the plight of the mechanically enhanced animals as

presented in these two opening images, returning to them following the experience of reading (co-creating) the graphic novel sheds new light on their purpose.

Noticeably absent from this freeform depiction of the animals of We3 is the rabbit, Pirate, who appears in just two of the small bordered images in the spread of the second and third pages. Pirate's exclusion from the depiction of We3 (here We2) requesting the aid of the reader works on multiple levels that engage both information from within the text and that of the reader's perception of Pirate's real-world counterpart. Within the text, it is Pirate who is sacrificed and does not live to escape the exploitative relationship between We3 and the economic system of the text's world. Unlike Tinker and Bandit, Pirate's only escape from exploitation is death, and his being depicted as bound within the white borders of the front matter echo his inability to exist beyond the confines of the narrative. However, this depiction also calls to mind the actual world of readers and their interactions with rabbits as pets. Though Pirate's missing poster (examined in detail later in this chapter) shows the rabbit on the floor with the hands of two small children on his body, rabbits are commonly sold and kept as cage animals in a way cats and dogs are not. While dogs and cats commonly have free run of the house when their human companions are home and may have this freedom even when home alone, many rabbits spend the majority of their lives within a cage. The caged aspect of the rabbit in the reader's actual world is echoed in the small images of Pirate presented as caged within the white borders in the novel's front matter, and the images echo not just the relative captivity of the rabbit's life, but also the "caged animal package" so often presented as a necessary add-on when rabbits are sold in pet stores around the world. As the interplay between the reader's knowledge and the depictions of Bandit, Tinker, and

Pirate illustrate, much of the world of *We3* is purposefully similar to contemporary reality.

Despite it being in a graphic novel, the science fictionalized world of *We3* is extrapolated from our own, and much of it is recognizable. The text begins with an image of a lost dog poster featuring a brown Labrador mix named Bandit. He is described as “friendly & approachable,” and a reward is offered for “any information” (Morrison and Quitely 5). Of course, Bandit is a member of *We3*, now known as 1, and as the graphic novel progresses, it is revealed through two other lost pet posters that 2 (the cat) and 3 (the rabbit), also once had homes and names—Tinker and Pirate, respectively. The picture of Bandit—standing on a living room carpet in front of an entertainment center, next to a bone, sticking his tongue out and wagging his tail—is instantly recognizable to anyone who has ever seen a lost pet poster. Readers are encouraged to be concerned for both Bandit and his family. The washed-out colors of the picture, primarily grey, white, and a natural pine colored wooden floor, make Bandit and his upturned face the focus of the image. Readers are invited to look into Bandit’s light blue eyes and see a happy and kind creature who needs help finding his way back home. The bold, black, all capital letters giving his name and pertinent information suggest urgency on the part of his family. Bandit is clearly not equipped to survive on his own, and he is both loved and missed. Such emotive grounding at the start of an SF text signals that the reader should recognize both the world they are in and the situation that signals the start of one of our protagonist’s stories, a lost dog who has probably had something horrible happen to him, despite that resulting horror being unfamiliar. By inviting the reader from the start of the text to identify with Bandit as Bandit and not as a nameless number, Morrison and

Quietly choose to highlight the need for empathetic response in a deeply unempathetic system and world. They invite readers to empathize with and identify with their animal characters, rather than any of the depicted human characters<sup>55</sup>.

While *Androids* focuses on a status driven economy and empty empathy posturing, as I discussed in Chapter One, Morrison and Quietly are hyper-focused on the ways in which animals and humans are used and abused by the connections between science, the military industrial complex, and capitalism. The We3 project is funded through government grant money, giving the government complete control over what gets researched, who does the research, what the research is for, and when it must stop. Scientific research in the text exists not for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of usefulness to the government<sup>56</sup>, which in this case is replacing their “expensive and outmoded [human] workforce” with animal slaves (24). The enslavement of animals for the benefit of the human is an extreme form of human exceptionalism that denies the animals any right to life and their absent owners any rights to their previous non-human companions. Both are seemingly justified, on the part of the government and most of the scientists, by the argument that this will save both money and human lives, speaking to the interconnections between the supremacy of profit at the expense of all else in capitalist systems and the concept of human exceptionalism. While the Animal Weapons project is sold on the premise that it will save human lives, and the animals certainly suffer more exploitation than the humans, when Dr. Trendle refers to these lives as “an

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<sup>55</sup> While they do invite readers to identify with and empathize with the families who are missing Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate, these people are never introduced into the text. Thus, while their presence can be imagined by and felt by the audience, the animal characters remain the primary objects of audience self-identification, rather than any human characters.

<sup>56</sup> This is a theme I will pick up on in Chapter Three, as science has been co-opted and is controlled by corporate and government forces in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy.



outdated and expensive workforce,” he is not only arguing for his project; he is devaluing and dismissing the very lives he claims to be saving, illustrating the ability of the human/animal boundary to harm both humans and animals and define how those who adhere to the boundary view both. While the scientists are subject to and controlled by the government and the military, which place the highest value on the capitalist imperative of the “bottom line,” they still internalize the thinking of this system, and it defines how they view both human and animal lives.

Because this project is government controlled, the scientists involved have little say over its duration or direction. Early in the text, Dr. Trendle, a representative of science, shows the project to a Senator Washington, a representative of the government, who is being given a tour of the military facility by an unnamed general, a representative of the military. These three men each represent the views and needs of a different system, and their initial conversations at the start of the text illustrates the interconnections between the three systems and how these systems use animal lives for human profit. All of the men view the animals involved in the project as largely disposable forms of biocapital. The second scientist involved in the project, Roseanne Berry, has a different investment in Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate because she is with them daily and considers the We3 project years of her work. She is first introduced in the text at home with her pet macaw, Charlie, an introduction that gives dimensions of her personality the other human characters are not because the other main human characters are only shown at work. Despite her being the primary scientist behind We3, Dr. Trendle is both insulting and dismissive of her when he introduces the visiting senator to her, calling her “Doctor Doolittle” and interrupting her when she speaks, highlighting the connections between

human exceptionalism and sexism which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three. Despite Dr. Berry's belief in and commitment to the We3 project, the general decides the project must be ended and We3 "decommissioned" because they successfully killed their last dictator, a man named Guerrero. When Dr. Berry objects, insisting that they have "shown more progress than any of the others," the general threatens to fire her and determines, "(t)hese animals are obsolete. They're to be replaced" (28). While *We3* does not directly acknowledge or explore the implications of her statement, Dr. Berry's comment suggests there are other animals who have been experimented on and subsequently destroyed in order for Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate to be as advanced as they are, and the plan is for them to be replaced, and not for the project to be abandoned. The experiment and the desire to replace the animals with "newer" and theoretically more efficient models is not an aberration but rather standard practice under *We3*'s militaristic biopolitical capitalism. In this system, both animals and humans can be classified as "obsolete" and replaced at will when they have outlived their purposefulness.

The senator, who is touring the facility and being told of the project, is particularly disturbed that all three animals can talk, asking Dr. Trendle, "what kind of a lunatic would teach a killing machine to talk" (29). Their speech disrupts the senator's concept of human exceptionalism and makes it difficult for him to view the animals as inanimate objects akin to the real/artificial binary presented in *Androids*. The senator's use of "machine" here reinforces the way the real/artificial binary and human/animal boundary are interchangeable and utilized for the same purpose. Similar to Agamben's argument about language functioning as "the defining characteristic of the human" (*Open* 34), Senator Washington's discomfort helps establish "language as the foundation of

identity and ideology,” a theme shared by some of Morrison’s other work such as *The Invisibles* and *Vimanarama* (Marc Singer 19). While Alex Link argues “to make spoken language a precondition of animal subjectivity is to dismiss the possibility that a non-human animal might be anything other than a passive bundle of instincts and training” (*Comics Forum*), such thinking ignores the fact that the text gives no mention of the animals having their intelligence increased or altered and ignores the value to having human readers enact animal voices. The animals speak like the human conception of what animals would be thinking, expressing species-specific thoughts. Their language gives the animals identity as subjects, rather than disposable biocapital, but instead of adjusting this thinking about the project and animals’ welfare, Senator Washington wishes they not be able to talk at all. The senator and general’s respective positions of power and the money they control makes this project subject to their approval and leaves the scientists with few options and little agency over their own work, a position Dr. Trendle seems all too willing to accept. *We3* sets up an SF reality not unlike our own, but it is one in which technology has advanced to the point where the military industrial complex can redesign animal bodies, while maintaining control over what kind of work scientists do and controlling the life and death of the animals it is using for weapons.

Dr. Trendle, Senator Washington, and the general view Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate primarily as resources that can be used to create tools, with the senator showing the most discomfort of the three. Before he is shown *We3*, Dr. Trendle and the general show him a rat colony who are also part of the Animal Weapon project. The rats have been modified to have the ability to “assemble a jet engine from spare parts in 48 hours” (24). The rats are remote controlled, and they replaced a rat’s head with a drill head. The drill for a head

indicates removal of the brain, as well as all thinking and forms of agency. The drill rat does not even have control over its own movements because of the remote control and must be “told” what to do. This drill rat then appears as the literalized animal metaphor for the perfect human consumer. The scene is depicted on the spread (24-25). Like the lost dog poster showing Bandit, the majority of the colors are muted—shades of white, gray, pink, and blue. To demonstrate the amount of control the scientists can have over the rats, Dr. Trendle uses the remote control to have the rat with the drill for a head kill the rat next to him in a gruesome and disturbing scene. The remote control allows “the scientists and soldiers [to] tacitly adopt a video game metaphor that allows them to exploit their test subjects without troubling their consciences” (Marc Singer 209). These humans do not view the rats as living and feeling beings; they view them as tools. When the drill rat turns to his companion, the second rat stretches his front legs in a defensive posture, proving he both knows what the drill is and the danger it poses. Two panels down, the drill rat starts with his companion’s legs in a scene that presents a stark contrast with the rest because the panel is dominated by bright and harsh red blood bubbles, obscuring the majority of the dying rat’s body except for his arms and feet. Between the two panels of the rat turning on his companion and the companion’s death is a closeup on Dr. Trendle’s mouth, his teeth prominent and sharp, stating, “(s)ay hello to man’s **new** best friends” [emphasis in original] (25). The panel after the rat’s death shows Dr. Trendel’s hands trying to give the senator’s hand the remote, and the senator declining saying, “(y)ou...ah...you said we could take a look at the higher animal prototypes” (25). The only beings whose entire bodies are shown anywhere in this sequence are the rats, reducing the humans to body parts and words, providing an

interesting juxtaposition between the tendency of readers to identify with human characters before animal ones and how the humans are depicted. Such positioning, coupled with the conscious recoiling of the rat who was attacked, forces readers to see the agency of the animals and the humans as objects. Dr. Trendel's smile indicates the sadistic pleasure he receives from using one rat to kill another and gives readers an "animal view" of the sadism of humans. David Herman locates four major kinds of animal characterization in graphic narratives, specifically, each relying on progressive degrees of animality for the animal characters: Animal Allegory, Anthropomorphic Projection, Zoomorphic Projection, and Umwelt Projection, with Umwelt Projection attempting to "emulate, with as much granularity or detail as possible, how animals engage with their surrounding world" (174). While he argues *We3* exhibits Umwelt Projection, some of his comments on Zoomorphic Projection are important for fully understanding this scene. As Herman argues, "(i)f anthropomorphism involves familiarizing the nonhuman, zoomorphism involves defamiliarizing the human" (174). By reducing the humans to parts and leaving the animals whole, or as "whole" as a rat with a drill for a head can be, Morrison and Quitely force the readers to focus on the rats as fully realized subjects and the humans as fragments of cruelty and voyeurism who inflict their will on innocent others.

Senator Washington's refusal to take the remote indicates his unease at getting a personal look at the realities of the Animal Weapon project. For the senator, it is one thing to know this project is happening and what the end results will be, but it is quite another to see the realities of this research<sup>57</sup>. The remote allows him to believe he has

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<sup>57</sup> In a September 2004 interview with Matt Brady, Morrison discusses animal testing and states, "(a)nyone who gets even a hint of what goes on in some of these ghastly laboratories is likely to feel rage

distanced his own morality from the Animal Weapons Project in much the same way that the consumer is distanced from the cruelty of the factory farm and agribusiness. While the senator clearly wants the project to continue, and he clearly wants the military and the government to profit from weaponized animals, he is uncomfortable with the thought of taking the remote control himself, a position consistent with his later discomfort with the language abilities of Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate.

The senator's discomfort continues until he leaves the military facility. As I have already mentioned, he scolds Dr. Trendle for giving Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate the ability to speak. His adherence to human exceptionality is what gives the senator the ability to stomach the Animal Weapon project and having to speak with the animals themselves is a direct attack on his justification. Additionally, he tells Dr. Trendle he wants animals bred for this project because of "how touchy the public can be" and that while Dr. Trendle may see "a biological triumph for techno-biological know-how," he is "looking at three pissed little animals" (Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate) who need to be "put...out of their misery" (29). He also tells Dr. Trendle to "smarten" himself "up for the media" (29). The senator is both uncomfortable with the realities of the project and knows the public will be, as well, if they are allowed to know anything beyond the final results. The public must be able to view the animals through a lens similar to Dr. Trendle's, "as simulated combatants rather than as living creatures in their own right" (Marc Singer 209). Dr. Trendle's joy in animal suffering is not because he hates animals in particular; it is

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and shock and anger. In fact, anyone who *doesn't* feel that way would have to be emotionally disconnected to quite a frightening degree. Whether some of it can be justified or not, people really only accept this stuff because it's generally out of sight, out of mind" ("Disney with Fangs"). The senator's response to the rats is an excellent illustration of this concept. As long as the senator is not the one holding the remote control, and as long as the public can be kept in the dark about the realities of the research, he can justify allowing the research to continue, despite his discomfort.

because he sees them as nothing but specimens for scientific inquiry, and for him, the control he exerts over the rat is proof of the success and viability of the project, rather than a blatant act of violent cruelty for the sake of spectacle. However, it is exactly this joy that will allow the public to see the Animal Weapons project is animal torture packaged as innovation. Senator Washington is content with having the project continue, but he is not content with the prospect of a public relations nightmare or with having to see and confront the specific details of the research and the inevitable cruelty it entails. For both the senator and the public, the animals involved in the project must be anonymous forms of biocapital who are denied their subjectivity.

As a representative of the military, the general characteristically shows the least bit of compassion towards Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate. He announces they will be “decommissioned” as if this equates to their firing; however, it means their deaths. He, too, is upset that they have been given the ability to talk and is angry that these were the animals shown to the senator, when they had the option of showing off their mastiffs, more advanced animal weapons who do not have the power of speech (Morrison and Quitely 29). Marc Singer argues Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate’s ability to speak is part of the reason they are to be decommissioned because it raises the possibility that they will no longer be complacent killing machines (217). It is again language that gives Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate an identity beyond biocapital to the senator and the general, and it is precisely the discomfort their individual identities gives the human characters that seem to serve as the primary reasons for their decommission, rather than the fear that they will no longer be complacent. Despite his inability to see Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate as subjects, and Dr. Berry’s strong reaction to his decision to kill them, the general assures

Dr. Trendle “I don’t hate animals. I have two dogs of my own” (Morrison and Quitely 29)<sup>58</sup>. The general’s statement is a result of feeling shamed by Dr. Berry, rather than any actual concern for the decision he has made, and illustrates how animal value is often determined by their usefulness to humans. However, the general does not exist within the text to illustrate his personal point of view or values. As a representative of the military, the general’s inclusion in the text serves primarily to illustrate how that specific system views the animals within<sup>59</sup>, as opposed to his specific character, just as the Senator Washington represents the government and Dr. Trendle represents science more than they represent themselves.

The text purposefully reduces the three men who have the most control to tropes, while the animals, the homeless man, and even Dr. Berry are given some complexity to their characters and motivations. By reducing the characters who are granted the most agency through their representative positions both within the text and within traditional conceptions of power, *We3* forces readers to identify with and see themselves in characters and beings who are routinely denied agency and full personhood within capitalist systems. The system demands adherence to and conformity to the rules of the system and works to erase and diminish the experiences of those who do not have

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<sup>58</sup> The general’s comment calls to mind the refrain of racists who claim they cannot be racist because they are friends with people of color.

<sup>59</sup> Despite statues and PR photographs of dogs currently serving in the military as heroic, canine soldiers have no choice but to serve their masters in war. Despite the promise from the military that their handlers would get to adopt them “(a)ccording to a Department of Defense Inspector General report released in the spring [2018], of the 232 military working dogs who served in the tactical explosive device detection program from 2011 to 2014, only 40 were adopted by handlers. Nearly 50 were adopted out to civilians, 70 went to other Army units, at least nine died, and the rest went to law enforcement agencies” (Ganzert). The Inspector General determined the U.S. Army did not have a proper plan in place for the dogs’ discharge (Ganzert), illustrating the lack of value the army placed on the relationship between the dogs and their handlers, as well as their disregard for the dogs themselves.



allegiance to it or who are most useful as biocapital. By giving characters who are traditionally excluded from the benefits of full personhood within the system stronger character development, *We3* challenges readers to imagine themselves both at the mercy of and outside of the forces of science, the military, and biopolitical capitalism.

Dr. Trendle, the senator, and the general present a masculine power structure with both a woman, Dr. Berry, and animals under their control, highlighting the connections between the military, capitalism, and masculinity, as well as the dangers those structures can pose to women, animals, and nature. Both Dr. Berry and the animals involved in the project are considered disposable. Within patriarchal capitalism, money is connected to virility, and virility is connected with violence, relationships illustrated through the general's control over *We3*. Despite her primary motivation being selfish, the only person who speaks for Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate is a woman, creating a clearly binary form of power, with men holding decision-making power through economics, and women and animals on the receiving, and losing, end of those decisions, despite the projects existing solely because of their labor. Dr. Berry is allowed within this system of patriarchal, militarized industrial capitalism, as long as she is willing to benefit the system and not question masculine authority. However, she is always both inside and outside the system, closer to the animals than the men, their "Dr. Doolittle," as Dr. Trendle reminds her through his dismissal of her voice and expertise. It is this dismissal of both her and her work, as well as her position both inside and outside of the system, that gives Dr. Berry the courage to free Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate in an effort to save them from being decommissioned. Of course, since the system cannot tolerate dissent, once she does this, she is both an enemy and prisoner of the very system to which she had been devoted.

As I previously stated, when Dr. Berry is first introduced, she is at home with her parrot Charlie. She is attempting to forge a relationship with him but has so far been unsuccessful. She cannot get him to speak to her, despite talking to him and giving him treats. Her attempts at getting Charlie's attention illustrate she has a connection to animals outside of work and desires an interactive relationship with animals. Dr. Berry is the only person involved in the Animal Weapons project who is shown outside of work, and so she is given a personality, as opposed existing primarily as a symbolic representation of a system. However, she still works for and upholds the military industrial complex and capitalism. Despite her attempts at a relationship with Charlie, she is unsuccessful, and her inability to create that connection to Charlie is mirrored in her position at work. It is initially difficult to understand how Dr. Berry exists both as a person who likes animals and as a person who is involved in the Animal Weapons Project. While no motivation for her career choices are given, her attempts at a relationship with Charlie characterize her as someone who probably wanted to "work with animals." Unfortunately, because of the systems which control her research, and the research she herself agreed to do, her relationship with Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate is deeply exploitative until she is willing to actively resist and work against the military industrial complex. Despite her affinity for animals, Dr. Berry agreed to the research in the first place and took the job she has, signaling that ultimately, like the three men who dismiss her, she upholds human exceptionalism as a forgone conclusion and believes it provides the rationale for using animals as biocapital. It is her belief in human exceptionalism that allows her to exploit the very beings she clearly likes and values. The capitalist system she works for permeates her thinking and provides additional

justification for the work she is doing. It is not until she realizes that Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate are purely assets to this system, and her own job is threatened, that she is able to break with the system and set them free<sup>60</sup>. Both the animals and Dr. Berry herself are used by the system as biocapital until they are no longer profitable and then deemed disposable. The sexism against Dr. Berry and the treatment of animals are inherently connected, illustrating connections between patriarchy and biopolitical capitalism.

After Dr. Berry sets them free, Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate are hunted by Dr. Trendle and a group of soldiers whose aim is to kill them. Towards the end of the narrative, the animals are eventually found by a homeless man in an abandoned train car. All three animals are inside large circular armor that hold their weapons and allow them to be controlled through boxes and wires attached to their heads. The animals talk to the homeless man before he talks to them. After trying to hiss, Tinker expresses that she is “sickkkhungry,” Bandit growls and says “man go,” and Pirate is so injured his machinery makes a “vzzkt” noise and all he can say is “ek” (80-81). The homeless man’s immediate response is to tell Bandit “I ain’t your master, Boy. You ain’t mine,” and then to feed him half of his hamburger, so that they each have equal parts (80). Importantly, the hamburger is the only food he has. His first response is not disgust or discomfort at being confronted by talking animals; rather, his first response is to be compassionate to the living beings in front of him who clearly need help, and to talk to and treat Bandit as an equal. He is horrified by their condition, pets Bandit, and asks the question anyone who sees these animals should have immediately asked: “(g)oddamn, look what they did to

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<sup>60</sup> Morrison herself considered Dr. Berry’s release of Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate “a rash and self-destructive gesture, an attempt to evade responsibility for her own role in exploiting and abusing the animals” (Marc Singer 219). See also “Disney with Fangs.”

you! What kinda sicko penned you all up in there?” (81). Unlike Dr. Trendle, the senator, the general, and even Dr. Berry, the homeless man initially sees these animals as beings who have been abused for human gain from the first moments of their encounter and does not automatically believe a human had the right to do this to them in the first place. Instead of seeing the person or people who did this as normal people working on scientific innovation, he sees them as sick or disturbed, placing a very different level of value on animal lives than anyone else in the text.

The homeless man only comments on their ability to speak once, stating, “(t)alking animals. I need liquor” (81). He is both confused and surprised, as anyone in our world would be, but he is not horrified or disturbed, unlike the senator and the general. The contrast between his response and that of the men touring the Animal Weapons project is indicative of how the different men view these animals. To the homeless man they are beings, rather than objects he has used, and so their speech does not force him to confront the ways in which he has objectified them. While the animals’ speech is limited, so is the speech of the human characters. Sometimes the human characters “speak in textual symbols (music notes, check marks, squiggles that denote an angry grumble) or their word balloons frame pictorial elements; more often they do not speak at all” (Marc Singer 217). Depicting human communication in such a way places the humans on more equal footing with the animals, blurring the line between the two and disrupting the distinction between them. While none of the other human characters react to this disruption positively, the homeless man does.

Immediately after saying he needs liquor, the homeless man says he needs tools. Bandit asks him to “(h)elp find home, Boss,” and he responds by telling the animals to

wait while he tries to find tools to help them (81-82). Within eight panels, the homeless man finds them, feeds them, expresses sympathy for them, accepts that they can speak, decides he needs to remove their armor, leaves to find the tools he needs to do so, and is willing to help them get home. His decisions are immediate, and he does not question them. The homeless man is able to embrace the poetic representation of the animals as fully realized subjects who are deserving of help and respect. He is clearly the “good guy” in the text, and his compassion for and willingness to help Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate is designed as a reflection on his character. However, it is also a reflection on his existence outside of militarized capitalism. The homeless man has been abandoned and forgotten by the system; therefore, he has no allegiance to it, and it does not dictate how he views nonhuman life. To him, Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate are beings in need of help, not resources he has been taught to accept exist for human innovation and use. Like women and animals, the homeless man’s labor is invisible to the market, and he is, thus, outside of the system. To the market, he is as expendable as the animals in their coats have become, but unlike the animals, he is seen as so powerless as to not be a threat because of his disconnect from a locus of power within the system.

When the homeless man exits the train car, he is met by two police officers who are accompanied by Dr. Trendle and the military. They, of course, want to know if he has seen anything and offer him a reward for information, stating he could probably use the money. The homeless man acknowledges he could, but responds, “nah, I seen nothin’ you, fascist pig assholes” (83-84). Since he is obviously homeless, the police officers see no value in him and tell him to continue on his way instead of questioning him further. The homeless man displays a distrust and dislike of the government that has abandoned

him—the same system that has not seen the inherent qualities of animals as “enough” or “fixed” and instead needs to utilize them to further the aims and profit of patriarchal militarized biopolitical capitalism. Instead of engaging in speciesism and helping the police because they are human, the homeless man chooses to help the abused and hurt animals who have also been harmed and abandoned by the very same system that harmed and abandoned him. The police officers view the homeless man in much the same way the military views the animals, neither are seen as having any value and are therefore not worth further investment or even a basic level of respect. Despite the way he is treated by the humans who see no value in him, the homeless man is characterized as far more human, far more empathetic, and far more sympathetic than any of the other humans, as are the animal characters.

Like the homeless man, Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate exist both as representations and as individuals. As I stated previously, Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate are all animals who were lost. They had homes, families, identities, and were previously valued as companions. As a dog, a cat, and a rabbit, the three animals each serve a different purpose and have a different amount of value placed on them in American society. Of the three different animals, American society tends to place the most value on dogs. Dogs are viewed as the most intelligent and the most devoted of animal companions, despite the abuse they receive at the hands of humans, as I discussed in my Introduction. Dogs are also seen as animals who are protective, serving an important function within the home, and in many cases they live primarily within homes. Cats are less valued than dogs and viewed as more independent and less devoted, which impacts the amount of value society

places on them<sup>61</sup>. Cats are also seen as pest hunters, and it is not uncommon for people to have cats who are kept entirely outside because they are viewed as being able to “take care of themselves” and as not needing the kind of human companionship needed by dogs. Despite these differences, cats are still seen as companions similar to dogs or as “dog alternatives” in cramped living spaces. Rabbits, however, are generally not seen as the same kind of companion as dogs or even cats, and often live in cramped cages, despite their ability to be litter trained and the quality of life improvement they receive as “free roaming” animals. The work and cost associated with owning a rabbit is often under-estimated. Unlike cats or dogs, rabbits are associated with a specific holiday, Easter, and are often marketed as appropriate Easter gifts. Unfortunately, four out of five rabbits purchased for Easter are abandoned or dead within one year (Morley), indicating a lack of thought about the kind of commitment they are, both financially and in terms of time, and perhaps an indication that rabbits are viewed as more disposable than dogs or cats<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, unlike cats and dogs, rabbits do not like being held and do not serve a function through their labor, also impacting the amount of value placed on them as pets and the level of companionship expected by humans who purchase them. Rabbits are also less intelligent than cats and dogs, further relegating them as less valued in American society. Rabbits are killed for both their meat and their fur within the United States, unlike cats or dogs, but all three animals are routinely used for animal testing and experimentation. Despite the value of these animals as companions, each is used as

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<sup>61</sup> While it is not uncommon to find advanced High School classes in the U.S. that dissect cats, they do not do the same to dogs, another strong indication of the different social roles between the two animals in American society.

<sup>62</sup> Notably, Tinker’s picture on her “Lost poster” does not picture her in a cage. Rather, she is on the floor being pet by two children, presumably the two children whose handwriting is on and who are listed on her poster. While it is characteristic of rabbits for Tinker to be the pet of children, her position on the floor rather than in a cage may indicate she was treated differently than average pet rabbits.

biocapital according to the needs they can fulfill with regard to the market in the actual world of the authors and readers.

As I mentioned previously, the *Animals Weapons* project is designed to enhance and take advantage of the natural abilities and tendencies of the animals within it. Both the text itself and the scientists involved in the project highlight the animals' innate or natural tendencies and abilities. The members of *We3* are clearly animals who display the characteristics of their respective species, rather than animals who behave and act like humans. As Marc Singer argues,

(m)ost comics featuring animal protagonists belong to the 'funny animal' genre—a somewhat misleading name as the genre is not defined by its humor but by the presence of anthropomorphized animals who walk, speak, and act like human beings<sup>63</sup>. (209)

Many children's books employ the same tactic with their animal characters, presenting animals who behave and think much like human beings in different bodies. Both Marc Singer and Herman note *We3*'s attempts to characterize Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate as authentic animals, rather than as human characters in animal bodies. Marc Singer credits Morrison with this decision, arguing he violates the "funny animal" convention by "refusing to anthropomorphize his protagonists and seizing every opportunity to demonstrate their animality," and despite their ability to speak human language, "*We3* still think and act like animals" (209). Herman makes a similar argument by placing *We3* at the end of the scale of representing non-human experience discussed earlier in this chapter, Umwelt, not "refracted through human-centered practices and values" (166). The

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<sup>63</sup> Marc Singer points to Donald Duck and the cats and mice in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* as prominent examples of anthropomorphized animals who are largely indistinguishable from humans.



outlier in *We3* criticism is undeniably Link who argues “*We3* certainly invites a reader to regard the animal perspectives as human-by-proxy,” and that “the mechanized animals in *We3* are a site through which we might examine the discursive construction of the human, and the rights and powers to which the self-declared human lays claim” (*Comics Forum*). However, Link’s analysis relies too heavily on the humanist perspective Peter Singer criticizes in *In Defense of Animals* (discussed in the Introduction) and obscures the many moves Morrison and Quitely make to characterize the animals as animals.

Additionally, Link’s analysis does not include the ways in Morrison and Quitely critique science, the military, and biopolitical capitalism, missing an essential aspect to their overall criticism. While the members of *We3* certainly reveal truths about the human characters in the text and how human society values and views animal life more broadly, as I have argued, such analysis does not rely on imagining the animal characters as humans themselves. Instead, the graphic novel invites readers to consider animal perception and experience as distinct from human perception and experience and as even distinct among different animal species.

Morrison and Quitely’s decision to display and highlight differences among species, while both important and necessary to the text, is not common practice. As Derrida argues, there is a human tendency to group all animals together and incorrectly imply a “heterogeneous multiplicity of the living,” ignoring the vast difference among species, making their not-humanness what binds them together and their defining characteristic (31). Morrison and Quitely attempt and succeed at creating something radically different, a text that accounts for vast differences among species. Bandit, the dog used as the small tank, is clearly meant to be and is the leader of the group, both due

to his larger size and perceived amount of intelligence. Bandit is very concerned with being a “gud dog” and works hard to keep We3 on track and together after they escape. His behavior within the group is similar to that of a herding dog, despite him being a Labrador (sporting dog) mix, or that of a pack leader. Bandit has to both encourage and remind Tinker and Pirate to keep moving to stay safe and reach their destination. He is also the one who first tells the group they will search for “home” when they initially escape (Morrison and Quitely 41), indicating a dog’s devotion and need for human companionship and his superior memory and intelligence. The other animals do not even remember the idea of home and do not seem particularly consumed with getting anywhere in particular, other than to food and safety. It is not entirely clear if Bandit even fully understands the concept of “home,” and he does not consider it a specific place at this point because he does not remember his previous identity or his family, but he knows the word, he knows they will be safe there, and he knows that is where he wants to go<sup>64</sup>. Bandit’s desire for “home” is characterized as something innate within his nature, rather than a firm understanding of a specific place. His desire also links him with his former life as a pet. He longs to return to his life as a pet where he can receive the praise, love, and comfort that comes from living with a family. Notably, as a Labrador mix, Bandit belongs to a group of dogs known as “good family dogs” who are among some of the most popular dogs in the U.S., which places him in stark contrast with another dog in the text, a Mastiff known only as Four. Bandit’s armor has turned him into a weapon, but he is

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<sup>64</sup> Bandit’s consuming desire to find “home” links *We3* with what I call “incredible journey” animal narratives, where dogs or a group of pets travel long distances to return to their families, both in the news and fiction. See the 1963 and 1993 movies of the same name, *Lassie Come Home* (1943), *The Adventures of Milo and Otis* (1886), and *A Dog’s Way Home* (2019) for some examples in film, see <https://www.rover.com/blog/lost-dogs-found-their-way-home/> for examples of news stories about dogs, or see <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57394/9-incredible-stories-lost-and-found-cats> for examples of news stories about cats.

still a dog who needs human companionship and safety and who will work to protect his pack.

Bandit's unique characteristics are not recognized by the humans involved in the Animal Weapons project because these humans view all of the animals as biocapital, not as individuals with personalities, despite their insistence that their enhanced capabilities go hand-in-hand with their particular species. As noted by Marc Singer, Dr. Trendle warns the people looking for We3 that they are dangerous not only because of their weapons, but because of their amorality and instinctuality, despite Bandit's clear examples of moral reasoning (218). Additionally, as animals who are easily identifiable as members of traditionally non-threatening species, Dr. Trendle must warn people of their danger so he does not run the risk of the animals eliciting sympathy and help. For Dr. Trendle, these animals are not capable of making reasoned choices; rather, they are only capable of acting on instinct. However, Bandit's moral reasoning centers around being a "good dog," which, for him, equates to being good to humans and protecting his pack. In one example, Bandit suffers a "crisis of conscience" when he kills a hunter in defense of the pack and cannot protect Pirate from being hurt, referring to himself as a "bad dog" (Marc Singer 218). Bandit blames himself for not being able to protect Pirate because, as the leader of the pack, it is his job to care for Tinker and Pirate. Despite the hunter posing a threat to We3 because he is scared of them (he is the one who shoots Pirate), Bandit is overcome with guilt and remorse for killing a human who was not given to him as a target by other humans. Bandit had a choice between loyalty to his pack or loyalty to humans, and he understandably chooses his pack, but this does not change the

fact that he does what “gud” dogs aren’t supposed to do; he has killed a human he was not commanded to attack.

Bandit’s “crisis of conscience” is his lowest point in the text, despite the obvious suffering he endured prior to the start of the narrative. He asks for assurance that he is a “gud dog” from both the homeless man and Dr. Berry, and it seems to be the most important thing he wants to hear. Bandit is able to return to the role of “gud dog” by the end of the text by protecting Tinker and a man from 4, signaled by his statement, “(g)ud dog! Help man.” (Morrison and Quitely 101). As March Singer argues:

(t)he choice between being a good dog or a bad one may seem like a simplistic or contrived moral dilemma for us, but to 1 it is monumental: a dog—not an anthropomorphized character in the manner of Barks<sup>65</sup> or Spiegelman but an actual dog—has not only decided what kind of moral code he will follow and what kind of identity he will choose, he has made responsible choices despite all of the forces pressuring him to take the selfish or angry ones. (218)

While it is important to note that his concept of being good is defined by what humans would consider a good dog to be, Bandit still decides what kind of dog he will be for himself and without prompting from any of his previous masters. He also makes his choice despite his training as an assassin. Bandit has already proven he is capable of rebelling by running away and attempting to avoid capture in search of home, so this is not an example of him being a “gud dog” because he has resumed being obedient.

Despite what people have done to him, he has an affinity to them and wants to please them, a decision that makes little sense in human terms, but a trait he shares with many

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<sup>65</sup> Carl Barks was the creator of Donald Duck. He viewed his character as “a human being who happened to be shaped like a duck” (Witek qtd. in Marc Singer 209).

abused dogs. Many dogs will not turn on all humans because some humans have been horrible to them. Bandit's desire to please is characteristic of his species, rather than a human characteristic. Despite his training and his modification, Bandit is a dog who makes a self-determined moral choice because he wants to and because his nature overrides his experience. Like Bandit, Tinker and Pirate are also individual subjects who display human concepts of species-specific traits.

While the characteristics of cats often generate great debate between the people who own them and the people who do not—how loving they are, how devoted they are to their human companions, how independent they are—there are certain specific stereotypes surrounding cats in American society. My analysis of Tinker is not meant to argue there are no exceptions to these stereotypes, nor am I interested in analyzing the validity of them. Rather, my analysis of Tinker relies on what humans perceive the stereotype of cats to be and the degrees to which Tinker displays these characteristics, just as my analysis of Bandit determines the degree to which he displays the human determined characteristics of a “good dog.” However, it is important to note that “Morrison researched animal communication and behavior to make the creatures as plausible as their military hardware, grounding the story in a veneer of biological and technological verisimilitude” (Marc Singer 209). Tinker, specifically, behaves most like an abused or feral cat, rather than a pampered and loving house cat. While there are plenty of examples of cats who do not behave as Tinker does, dogs who do not behave as Bandit, or rabbits who do not behave as Pirate, *We3* characterizes the animals as species-specific animals who display human concepts of species-specific traits, offering a view of the animal characters that attempts to highlight their animality.

Tinker, like most cats, is not concerned with whether or not she is a good cat in human terms. She is not particularly concerned with pleasing his human masters or humans in general, and she is a bit more selfish than Bandit, traits in line with the stereotypical characterization of cats in American society, particularly cats who have suffered abuse at the hands of humans or who are feral. When Bandit first meets Senator Washington, the senator is a bit horrified by him when he discovers Bandit can talk, which makes Bandit question whether or not he is a “gud dog” (Morrison and Quitely 26-27). Presenting this moment as soon as Bandit is introduced highlights how much of his identity and self-worth is determined by what the humans around him think of him. Tinker, however, doesn’t seem to care, comments that Senator Washington has a “stink,” and that she is “hungry,” which prompts Dr. Trendle to state, “(t)his feisty little critter never *did* find time to learn any *manners* along the way with all of those big words” [emphasis in original] (28). From the beginning, Bandit is concerned with human perceptions of him, and Tinker is far more concerned with the self—how unpleasant she finds the smell of the senator and that she is hungry. Bandit and Tinker, as well as Pirate, are characterized as individuals with differing needs and motivations, not as beings who act the same simply because they are non-human animals, eschewing the tendency of humans to lump all animals together simply as “nonhuman,” as noted by Derrida. Characterizing the animals as individuals places *We3* in a unique position among human conceptions of animal attributes.

After *We3* escape, Tinker isn’t even initially interested in finding “home” or staying with the pack, where she seems as good a place to eat as any (Morrison and Quitely 40-41), insinuating that, like most cats, Tinker is an independent and “solitary

hunter who stalks and plays with her prey” (Marc Singer 209). Tinker’s affinity for being alone and independent, and the idea that she does not need the rest of the pack, are choices she makes despite her armor and despite her training. Afterall, she has been trained to work as part of a team. Rather, Tinker’s decisions in this moment are a result of who she is as both an individual and a member of a species, and her behavior is like that of a feral or abused cat who does not trust or seem to particularly like those around her. Unlike dogs, cats are not pack animals, and at this moment Tinker sees no value in staying with the pack when she can rely on herself. It is not until We3 is attacked multiple times, Tinker is hurt, and Bandit pushes her to “obey” that Tinker warms up to the idea of searching for “home.”

Pirate, the rabbit, is the least independent of the three animals and the most vulnerable. Like rabbits in general, Pirate is also the least intelligent. While Tinker is also quite interested in food, Pirate is consumed by the idea. As Dr. Berry talks to Senator Washington, the general, and Dr. Trendle at the beginning of the text, Bandit is aware of and concerned about the use of term “decommissioned” and wonders what it means because he has never heard the word before. By contrast, Tinker doesn’t say anything at all, indicating she might not even be listening, and Pirate says, “(n)o. Grass. Eat. Now. Eat” (Morrison and Quitely 28), and these are the only words he utters in the entire scene. His language skills are presented as less than those of both Bandit and Tinker throughout the text, and in this scene, he does not even seem particularly interested in what is happening around him; he is only concerned with having some grass to eat. Bandit presents some higher order thinking, Tinker remains aloof, but Pirate is only concerned with having his basic needs met.

As I have mentioned previously, Bandit needs to keep both Tinker and Pirate on track to keep them safe and make sure they can find “home;” however, the reasons for their distraction and their responses are very different. While Tinker does not initially see the value in sticking together, Pirate accepts Bandit as the leader and wants to do what he says. While Tinker is initially defiant, Pirate does not become difficult to motivate until he is injured in We3’s first encounter with the military. When they are first found and chased by helicopters, they run into a group of wild rabbits, and Pirate is the only one who tells them to run (45), indicating Pirate’s sense of both species identity and loyalty. Unfortunately, the wild rabbits are killed, and by the end of the encounter Pirate has lost his mechanical tail. Pirate is unable to distinguish between his body (self) and the robotic suit (other). Since he identifies the suit with the self, he becomes consumed with the idea of Bandit helping him fix it, something he believes Bandit is able to do since he is the “Boss” or leader. Even as they are running away from the military, Pirate tells Bandit on two occasions that he needs help with different variations of “(s)ee tail bad fix now” (58). As a prey animal, Pirate should be hyperaware of danger, but because he believes the mechanical tail is part of him, he is unable to correctly prioritize danger. While he can identify what a rabbit is without a mechanical coat, as is the case with the wild rabbits, he cannot use that identification to understand that he does not need his coat. Pirate is not alone in thinking the coat is part of himself, and it is not until later in the text that Bandit understands the difference between the self and the coat. However, after seeing the wild rabbits, Pirate should have some indication that the coat and the tail are not part of himself, but he does not, illustrating one of the ways in which the text accounts for the differences in intelligence between Pirate and the other members of We3.



As Morrison states in *We3*, when they created the text, he and Quitely “set about devising a different approach to the comics page that we hoped might suggest non-human perception of time,” and during his research, Morrison discovered that “small animals experience time more slowly” (134). They extended the gutters around the panels during specific fight sequences to suggest “the immense amounts of ‘zen’ time a cat might pass through between the micro-seconds of human awareness” (134). Such planning on the part of Morrison and Quitely indicate an acute awareness of the differences between humans and animals, as well as an awareness of the differences among species and the desire to have human readers experience non-human perception.

The differences in intelligence and perception between the three animals are also highlighted through the way in which their scenes are depicted. As Marc Singer argues, “(b)ecause the rabbit is far less intelligent than the other two animal weapons, his point of view receives far less elaborate representation” (216). Pirate’s lesser representation results in him seeming to take a minor role within the text, despite his presence at all scenes involving *We3* until his death and his tendency to jump into action without fully assessing the situation. The text prioritizes Bandit, the most intelligent, and to a lesser extent Tinker, speaking to the ways in which humans tend to prioritize intelligence and complexity when they place differing values on animal life, and the roles the three different animals play within the home in American society.

The animals of *We3* exist in an interesting position, as they are both uplifted animals and animals who are reduced to a “less than” status. Traditionally, uplifted animals are animals who have been given increased intelligence and abilities to more

closely resemble human characters<sup>66</sup>. While many uplifted animals think and act primarily like humans and the members of We3 do not, they are uplifted to a degree because they are given the power of human language. However, despite having the ability of human speech, these animals are given lower status than loved house pets and occupy a space similar to that of lab animals. They are denied any right to life beyond their value as disposable biocapital identified primarily through their coats despite being advanced members of their species, providing interesting friction with the value American society normally places on animals due to their perceived intelligence. The ways in which their speech and their previous identities complicate their status as biocapital and the ease with which the humans involved in the Animal Weapons project can make peace with their decisions is illustrated by the more advanced weapon 4, the Mastiff who is sent after Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate, and who will replace them once they are retired.

Despite obviously being able to think and feel because he is a dog, 4 is characterized as an unthinking, unfeeling machine whose only purpose is to kill his intended target—displaying the behavior and programming Dr. Trendle thinks Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate should. 4 has not been given the power of speech, and Morrison and Quitely never depict his thoughts. While the aforementioned lost pet posters are included for each member of We3, there is no lost pet poster for 4. Presumably, 4 has been bred for the Animal Weapons Project, what the Senator wants all of the animals involved to be to prevent public outcry, and 4 has never known love or companionship. As a Mastiff, 4 is a member of a dog breed with a reputation for protection and violence. Despite their

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<sup>66</sup> Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate share their unique position with Cordwainer Smith's *Underpeople*—uplifted animals who are relegated to slave status to help and improve human society. For other examples of uplifted animals see H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Olaf Stapledon's *Sirius* (1944), and David Brinn's *Uplift* series (1980-1998).

popularity, Mastiffs are sometimes considered a “bully breed,” rather than “good family dogs.” Mastiffs are also very large, and appropriately 4 is significantly larger than the other three animals. It is 4 who ultimately kills Pirate. He is eventually “remote terminated” on Dr. Trendle’s orders because he cannot be contained or fully controlled and poses a threat to the people around him (Morrison and Quitely 100-101). Unlike Bandit, 4 has no memory of ever being a “good dog” and no memory of kindness, and so he cannot choose these actions for himself because he does not know what they are. Additionally, 4 never had a name other than his number, denying him an important part of his self and his identity as a thinking and feeling independent subject.

Despite them all having names when they are beloved family pets, the memories of these names, along with the memories of their families, seem to have been taken from Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate. They know themselves as and refer to one another by their given numbers. The reduction of these animals to numbers and the erasure of their names stands as a powerful metaphor for both how the animals are viewed by the humans involved in the Animal Weapons Project and how the animals view themselves and one another. The numbers link their personalities both to one another—ultimately, these animals are trained to believe they are parts of a whole, rather than complete subjects—and to the Animal Weapons Project itself. The connection of their identities with the project is most clearly exemplified through the animals’ connections with their coats. Initially, they cannot distinguish between their own body parts and the ones that have been mechanically attached to them, as shown through Pirate’s obsession with his damaged tail despite the danger the distraction poses to all three animals as they are trying to find safety. Not being able to distinguish between their bodies and their coats

signifies how their identities are connected to their status as biocapital and how much the project has conditioned them to be complacent and willing weapons. The coats are their primary connection to having value within the market and exist as a physical marker of their position. Their senses of self as both numbers and as parts of a whole is so strong that the animals cannot see themselves as fully realized subjects until Bandit is given his name.

The entire time the animals have been running from the military, Dr. Berry has been in military custody both so they can punish her for releasing We3 and use her to help them capture or kill the animals. Dr. Trendle forces Dr. Berry to agree with leading We3 to a designated place so the animals can be assassinated by the military men if 4 fails to kill them. After 4 succeeds at killing only Pirate, Dr. Berry approaches Bandit. Bandit expresses that he does not want We3 “decommissioned,” wants to be told he is a “gud dog,” and tells Dr. Berry that he wants to go “home” (93). As the snipers prepare to shoot Bandit in the head, Dr. Berry apologizes and tells him the name on his collar was Bandit, giving him knowledge of his previous identity and treating him as a fully realized subject, for perhaps, the first time since the project’s beginning. Dr. Berry ultimately dies protecting Bandit from the snipers’ bullets. Bandit does not have an opportunity to immediately reflect on this information because the final encounter with 4 happens immediately afterward, but his name becomes a defining moment and a defining piece of information for him. Bandit never refers to himself as “1” again, only Bandit, and once the leg of his coat breaks, he finally understands that the coat is separate from him (105). Bandit removes both his coat and Tinker’s, allowing them both to see themselves as themselves for the first time since their initial capture. Removing the coats finally gives

Bandit and Tinker what they need to escape the military. They leave the coats in the building they are in and blow them up with the military men inside, giving them an opportunity to leave undetected and to be reunited with the homeless man. Bandit and Tinker cannot have physical freedom until they are able to acquire emotional freedom through seeing themselves as fully realized subjects within a team, and as animals who were given weapons, not as animals who are weapons.

In order for the animals to understand who they are and restore their senses of self, they must first be on their own and free from the direct influence of the scientists and the military. The scientists and the military cannot afford to see the animals as independent subjects because this would force them to see how unethical and cruel their project is, and so Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate are only ever around humans who deny their rights and subjectivity. They only know how to be biocapital because that is all they remember experiencing. The capitalist merging of science, profit, and the military dictates how the animals view themselves and one another. In order to shed this thinking, Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate must escape the presence and influence of those involved in the project. Once the animals are separated from the military program and are able to shed their coats, they are able to fully embrace their selves as subjects.

As I have mentioned previously, Pirate is the only one of the three animals who dies and does not find “home.” As he is given lower priority within the narrative, he is also denied the physical freedom of finding home and the emotional freedom of understanding he is a fully realized subject without his coat. As the least valued of the three animals in American society, it is perhaps fitting that he is the one who dies, as an

American audience might be less accepting of the death of a dog or cat<sup>67</sup>. Pirate's death is both tragic and heartbreaking, as he is initially shot asking a hunter to fix his coat's tail and ultimately killed defending Bandit and Tinker from 4. Pirate's sacrifice helps illustrate that each of the animal's roles in the text are mirrored by their roles in American society. The science fictional world of *We3* extrapolates the differing animal roles from American perceptions of animal value. As the "least important" animal—sometimes pet, sometimes food, sometimes fur, sometimes lab animal—Pirate dies so that Bandit and Tinker may live.

At the end of the text, news about the Animal Weapons project has reached the public, resulting in the destruction of Senator Washington's campaign. Dr. Trendle is on the front page of the paper he purchases from a store on his way to the courthouse, presumably to continue testifying about the Animal Weapons Project. As he approaches the courthouse, he sees the homeless man on the steps with Bandit and Tinker. He calls Bandit a "fine dog" and asks, "(d)on't they need special care?" (115). The homeless man responds that all they need us "love and attention" and some food, that the animals bring him luck, and then asks Dr. Trendle if he has any spare change (115). Dr. Trendle gives the homeless man a few hundred dollars and then walks up the courthouse steps, ending the text (115-116). Despite being heavily involved with the project and his numerous insinuations to the senator and the military that he knows and understands these animals, Dr. Trendle does not even recognize them in this moment, nor does he recognize the homeless man, whom he has been around before. Dr. Trendle's inability to recognize any

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<sup>67</sup> [www.doesthedogdie.com](http://www.doesthedogdie.com) helps illustrate the emotional reactions people have to dead dogs. This crowd sourced site lists books, films, and games in which the dog dies so viewers can avoid them if they wish or so they are better prepared before consuming specific media.

of them is a powerful commentary on the ways in which the merging of science, the government, and biopolitical capitalism in the text encourages the people heavily invested in those systems to objectify and depersonalize other beings. Despite wondering if the animals need any kind of care, it is money, not time or true interaction, that Dr. Trendle gives the homeless man. For Dr. Trendle, giving him the end result of the capitalist market (money) is the most logical thing to do.

In the case of the animals, Dr. Trendle never allowed himself to see them as anything other than resources to be controlled and harnessed; therefore, when he is confronted with them in an uncontrolled environment and without their coats, he cannot and does not recognize them. Bandit and Tinker have been returned to their natural state, without armor, and presumably without that armor, they no longer have the power of human speech because Tinker never talks, and all Bandit says is “arf” (115). For Dr. Trendle, their defining characteristics have always been that the animals are a group of three, have the power of human speech, and are outfitted with weaponized coats. Outside of this context, Bandit and Tinker may as well be entirely different animals, signaling that Dr. Trendle never saw them as beings in the first place. Dr. Trendle always saw Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate as the completed, commercial product and cannot recognize the “raw material” of the animals because the animals as themselves lacked value to both him and the systems to which he has allegiance. Similarly, capitalism sees the carved bench as having value, but not the tree which it came from.

Dr. Trendle cannot recognize the homeless man for many of the same reasons. As a homeless person, he exists largely as an invisible member of society. Homeless people are often ignored unless “more productive” members of society find them a nuisance. For

Dr. Trendle, the homeless man was a possible lead for the military men to question, and there is no indication in the text that Dr. Trendle ever spent time paying attention to him, even though they were in the train yard together. The homeless man was never a fully realized subject to him or worth his time and consideration because he and the military men assumed he could not help them find We3. For Dr. Trendle, the homeless man served even less purpose than Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate did because the homeless man is marginalized as non-recognized labor and non-market. He exists entirely outside of the system and is not a source of profit.

Rather than speaking to Dr. Trendle's inhumanity or cruelty as an individual, the above moments of unrecognition speak to the ways in which he has been formed and influenced by both science and biopolitical capitalism. After all, when the homeless man asks him for change, Dr. Trendle gives him a few hundred dollars—the actions of a generous person who wants to do something good without receiving anything tangible in return. However, the ways in which Dr. Trendle interacted with the animals and the homeless man previously were mediated by the ways in which science, the government, and biopolitical capitalism classified and devalued them all, prescriptions at odds with the generosity he shows them in this moment. Now that Dr. Trendle is on trial for the Animal Weapons Project, those systems are likely turning against him. Perhaps, like Dr. Berry, Dr. Trendle is finally able to see beyond their influence a bit and treat other beings with empathy and compassion.

It is entirely fitting that the “home” Bandit and Tinker find is not a physical place because since the moment they were taken from their original homes, home was a concept to them, not a location. The only way for these animals to be free is for them to



live with someone entirely outside the system because of the horrific levels of abuse they suffered within it. In very few texts would a homeless man remaining homeless and the animal protagonists failing to find shelter be considered a happy ending, and yet in *We3*, for Bandit and Tinker, it is. Bandit and Tinker form a family with the only human they remember who has ever shown them only kindness and who has seen and treated them as fully realized subjects. They get to completely escape the forces of science, the government, and biopolitical capitalism that objectified and depersonalized them, and remain completely unrecognizable to perhaps the only person alive who would know who they are. Their concept of home is inextricably linked to freedom, and they could only attain by dropping out of the system entirely.

The homeless man's willingness to take on animals he does not need and who will make his life more difficult because they are beings, like him, who have been used and abused by the system, is a powerful illustration that only those outside of the systems of science, the military, and biopolitical capitalism can fully recognize the value of animals outside of the commodification of animals as products. My claim here is, of course, complicated by the loving families who are missing Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate. Tinker and Pirate, specifically, came from families who had young children or teenagers, as evidenced by their posters (the "I's" in Tinker's posters are dotted with hearts), with Pirate clearly being the pet of children, specifically girls. The children who loved Tinker and Pirate exist within the system, but children are far less influenced by social, political, and economic systems than adults. Additionally, children who love animals are far more likely than adults to humanize them, a move society often relegates to the fancies and whimsy of childhood. For Bandit, however, there is no indication from his poster that

there were or were not children in his life. Even loving families, however, can often view their pets as their property, and pets are certainly legally classified as such. The homeless man's refrain when he first talks to Bandit that he "ain't your master, Boy" (80) indicates that this is a very different kind of relationship. There is nothing abusive or abnormal about people thinking they are their dog's master; it is a hallmark of the American person and dog relationship. For Bandit and Tinker, however, they cannot return to their families as if nothing happened and remain under the control of the systems which stole and abused them in the first place. The only place for them to be free is with someone entirely removed from the system.

Homelessness exists outside the bounds of biopolitical capitalism, and the homeless man exhibits an understandably healthy amount of distrust of capitalist control and market forces. Homelessness is valueless as either market or producer and left outside of the system except for punishment or institutionalization. *We3* romanticizes the reality of American homelessness. The homeless man and homelessness itself is characterized as undermining of the biopolitical capitalist system because he is able to exist and thrive as human outside of the system that regulates and demands production and spending, without illustrating the very real struggles and indignities homeless people endure daily. However, the point of this romanticization is not to diminish homelessness, but to offer a scathing critique of the systems which routinely categorize, depersonalize, and exploit both humans and animals—science, the government, and biopolitical capitalism.

The homeless man is positioned as a parallel to both Bandit and Tinker. Link argues it is Tinker's "literal combat with authority" and the "homeless man's comparable

ideological conflict with authority” that suggests this relationship (*Comics Forum*).

However, Link’s argument ignores that Tinker’s battle with authority is part of what makes her unquestionably feline, as well as the ways in which all of the animals and the homeless man have been the recipients of systemic classification, oppression, and disregard. All three of them are used up, and in the homeless man’s case, abandoned, by a system which no longer equates them with value and thus has little to no use for them. Initially, Dr. Trendle, and thus the system itself, does not want to recognize and see them as beings with value because it fractures the view of that system and complicates the choices made by those who remain within it. The text suggests that in order to survive in and uphold the interconnected and inter-reliant systems of science, the government, and biopolitical capitalism, the humans within them must abandon their personal tendencies towards empathy in favor of viewing the beings they interact with in the same way as the systems themselves. Otherwise, they must confront their role in or support of the unethical and cruel treatment of those within the system. Within the capitalist model, humans define agency as uniquely human, and only for certain humans, because the non-human animal has only ever been food, worker, or biocapital. Allowing animals to have fully developed agency of their own would force an engagement with the horrors and atrocities brought upon subjects without agency by the humans who have ignored animal subjectivity. Since the domination of animals (in one way or another) lies at the base of capitalist power structures and the level of profit through exploitation, to perceive or conceive of a self-determined animal agency would undermine the basis for the capitalist model. The relationship between a denial of animal agency and capitalist power structures, as well as the ways in which acknowledging animal agency would disrupt

those power structures, is at the heart of why Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate's ability to practice human speech is rejected so vehemently by Senator Washington and the general. The animals lose their powers of speech at the end of the text because they no longer need them. The homeless man does not need to see them as partially human and views them as full subjects because he acknowledges they are thinking, feeling beings.

Bandit and Tinker are able to escape the system and reach a new "home" by locating another individual who appeared as valueless to capitalist market forces. In accepting the idea of "home" with the "homeless" man who recognizes them as animals and not as products with a use or exchange value, Bandit and Tinker are able to exit the system of exploitation to become fully realized agents, but only by resolving themselves to a life lacking the conveniences of their previous homes. Though their lives will be a struggle moving forward, they are lives with no master. It is a choice afforded them that is forced on those in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy.

In the next chapter, I focus on Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy and investigate the ways in which the text depicts a biopolitical society which has fully integrated animals as resources in all aspects of human life and the interconnections between women, animals, and the depersonalization and subjugation of both.

### Chapter Three: Animals, Biocapital, and Unregulated Neoliberalism

In the previous chapter, I argued the interconnected systems of science, the military, the government, and capitalism in *We3* must reject the evidence they are given of animal subjectivity because acknowledging animal agency and subjectivity would undermine the graphic novel's capitalist system and that doing so would undermine the basis for the capitalist model because the domination of animals lies at the base of capitalist power structures. Additionally, I argued Dr. Berry's treatment as an animalized human is a direct result of her femininity and the ways in which patriarchal capitalism animalizes women as consumable objects.

While Margaret Atwood has famously insisted she does not write SF, her work has been of great interest to SF scholars, and it is firmly rooted in the tradition and modality of the genre. The three novels that encompass Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013), illustrate an America that has been transformed from deregulated biopolitical capitalism to complete societal collapse. *Oryx and Crake*, specifically, is heavily indebted to Fredrick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's 1952 soft SF novel, *The Space Merchants*. First published in *Galaxy*, the novel tells the story of Mitch Courtenay, an advertising man living in an American future where corporations have replaced the government as biopolitical sovereign. The similarities between Pohl and Kornbluth's novel and Atwood's trilogy illustrate the ways in which Atwood relies on SF tradition, despite her unwillingness to have her work classified in a way that might harm its classification as

“Literature” proper. Both John Clute and Gary K. Wolfe have noted Atwood’s desire to protect her image as a “speculative fiction” author, rather than a science fiction author, and Clute argues within the context of *Oryx and Crake*, specifically, that, “Atwood’s attempt to ringfence her novel from the long conversation of works it takes its substance from constitutes a palpable and conscious slur on honest discourse” (72). Despite the difficult relationship between the field of SF studies and Atwood herself, her trilogy is of particular importance to my study because of the ways in which it critiques the relationship between animals and capitalism through an engagement with the science fictional mode.

Both *The Space Merchants* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy express anxieties of unchecked corporate control, environmental destruction, and animal commodification. The texts also share interest in imagining animals who exercise political rights, as I will discuss in my conclusion. Set in a near future, the *MaddAddam* trilogy centers around the actions of Crake, a genius psychopath who attempts to destroy all human life with a disease he designs in order to replace humanity with his creation, the Children of Crake, attempting reverse human environmental destruction. In a style typical to both Atwood and postmodernism, the narrative is non-linear and shifts from multiple perspectives, with the first two books detailing the years leading up to the destruction of human society (the past for the characters), known as the “waterless flood,” and the final book moving the narrative forward. The two visions of America that Atwood presents, before and after the flood, are each their own form of dystopian nightmare. Prior to the flood, America is run by and beholden to giant corporations, the corps, which results in environmental destruction and the rampant commodification of human and animal life, while America

after the flood is a dangerous and isolating post-apocalyptic wasteland with few human survivors. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, animals are utilized as a resource for the furthering of profit under late stage capitalism and are blatantly exploited for this purpose as biocapital for the benefit of large corporations. The text presents animals as a digestible resource to be harvested and abused by the corporations based on the view of animals as products and not lifeforms featuring cognitive and emotional abilities. Relationships between humans and animals are consistently mediated through and defined by the market, which in turn indicates how humans view and value one another. These relationships are cyclical and present as both a result of rampant biopolitical capitalism and further justification for it (discussed later in this chapter).

The classification of animal life as corporate resource and product is both prominent and highly criticized in the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and there are clear parallels between animal exploitation and human exploitation under Atwood's economic systems. As Gerry Canavan argues, "Atwood presents a vision of deregulated neoliberalism, ecological catastrophe" and "unchecked accumulative profit seeking" (142). Prior to the flood, Atwood's world is the site of widespread environmental destruction and severe weather, leading to the mass extinction of animal life, which Lars Schmeink links directly to Atwood's economic system: "hypercapitalism has brought about a commodification of any and all life on earth, which in turn has led to an acceleration of 'global change' within the Anthropocene" (75), rendering entire areas of the planet uninhabitable. Mass extinction and environmental collapse give rise to a thriving industry where biotechnology offers corporations the ability to increase profits by genetically engineering animal bodies to be more profitable resources. While there is no shortage of

such animals in Atwood's corporate nightmare, the most prominent animals featured are the pigoons, "transgenic pigs with human material" including human neocortex tissue "designed for transplants" (*MaddAddam* xiv). The pigoon project was touted as humane, necessary, and morally justified through human exceptionalism and the human/animal boundary because the pigs were cheaper than "keeping a for-harvest child or two stashed away in some illegal baby orchard (*Oryx and Crake* 23) and seen as a better alternative. This casual commodification of both human and non-human animal life is characteristic of the trilogy's dystopic vision and shows how many forms of life, both human and animal, are reduced to their exchange value under capitalist systems without any regulation.

The pigoons are the genetically modified animals that provide the humans in the texts with the most fear and anxiety. While this is, of course, partly due to the physical danger they present to the human characters, they are not the only animals who pose a physical danger to humans, and the fear and anxiety they induce in the human characters is largely due to their intelligence and problem solving skills. Their intelligence is deeply unsettling to characters who are familiar with them even before the pigoons pose a physical threat<sup>68</sup>, and this reaction highlights the pervasive nature of the human/animal boundary. The pigoons disrupt human exceptionalism, and the human characters fear and are distrustful of this disruption. After the pigoons are free and able to create their own social groups outside the system of exploitation, Atwood's text provides a distinct and succinct indication of the shifting status of the pigoons. As Marinette Grimbeek notes,

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<sup>68</sup> Like all of the bioexperiments, the pigoons are kept captive by a corporation that separates them from the human population, but the pigoons will escape when society collapses, becoming free-roaming animals who pose a physical danger to the human characters.



“(a)s if to afford them more-than-human status, the word pigoon is consistently capitalized from the middle of third novel,” and this shift suggests that “although genetic manipulation is possible, life itself cannot be branded” (93). This shift partially indicates the pigoon’s transformation from Giorgio Agamben’s *homo sacer* (*zoe*) to *bios*, beings capable of political action, as I will discuss in my conclusion. The fear associated with the pigoons is a direct result of how they disrupt the human/animal boundary, and such fear illustrates how keeping boundary intact is an essential aspect of capitalist markets.

*Oryx and Crake*, the first novel in Atwood’s trilogy, focuses on the life of Jimmy, Crake’s enabler and seemingly only friend. The novel is partially told from an older Jimmy’s point of view. Now known as Snowman, he lives in the wilderness after the flood and cares for the Children of Crake (Crakers). For the purposes of my dissertation, I will refer to this character as “Jimmy” when discussing narrative elements that take place prior to the flood and as “Jimmy/Snowman” when discussing narrative elements that take place after the flood. Although we never meet her, Oryx, a young woman Jimmy and Crake both develop an obsession with and who Crake tricks into helping him destroy most of humanity, is also central to the events of the novel. It is clear Jimmy/Snowman’s isolation, the destruction of society, the love triangle he was involved in with Crake and Oryx, the murder of Oryx at the hands of Crake, the destruction of society by Crake, and his enabling of and complicity in it all has affected Jimmy/Snowman’s mental state, as partially illustrated through the disjointed nature of Atwood’s narrative. Jimmy/Snowman has difficulty remembering events, timelines, and words, indicative of the general challenges of recalling information from long ago, his heavy drinking and drug use, and his desire to forget painful memories, making Jimmy/Snowman a particularly unreliable

narrator. Jimmy's unreliability, of course, calls the entire narrative of the first novel into question, particularly the character of Oryx. Despite Jimmy's teenage years, the years immediately preceding the flood, and the releasing of the plague itself centering around Oryx, Atwood never provides a non-mediated version of her<sup>69</sup>. While readers are given an alternate version of events and characterization of Crake from different points of view in both *The Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*, Atwood never provides significant background or characterization of Oryx from anywhere other than Jimmy/Snowman's perspective.

The second book in the trilogy, *The Year of the Flood*, covers roughly the same time period as *Oryx and Crake* but focuses on the story of the God's Gardeners, a peaceful and passive green religious order founded by Adam One and led by Adams and Eves. They practice conservation and compassion towards all living beings, including animals. The Gardeners practice strict vegetarianism and do not even kill the slugs that go after their crops; rather, they relocate them. They are almost entirely independent of the capitalist system they oppose, even preaching an avoidance of technology, and they accomplish this through communal living. Not surprisingly, this religion is eventually outlawed due to the threat it poses to rampant, unchecked, and exploitative corporate rule. Adam One's brother, Zeb, eventually breaks from the Gardeners to create the MaddAddamities, a bioterrorist organization dedicated to actively resisting the Corps, as opposed to actively resisting them through lifestyle choices alone. The MaddAddamites

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<sup>69</sup> Arguably, we never meet a non-mediated version of Crake either. However, it is easier to discern a complete picture of Crake because we meet Crake from multiple character's points of view, while we encounter Oryx almost entirely from Jimmy/Snowman's point of view. It is also worth noting that Atwood's treatment of Oryx is similar to her treatment of Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Neither woman's voice is provided unmediated.

use a chatroom accessed through a videogame, Extinctathon, to communicate and coordinate, and this is how Crake eventually finds and blackmails them. *The Year of the Flood* is narrated primarily by Ren and Toby, ex-Gardeners who survive the waterless flood.

*MaddAddam* moves the narrative forward and focuses on the few survivors of the waterless flood, a group of Gardeners and MaddAddamities who end up caring for the Crakers and an injured and sick Jimmy/Snowman. Like the previous novels, it mixes the past and present, and it is in this novel that the final pieces of Crake's elaborate plan are revealed. When Crake found the MaddAddamities in Extinctathon, he blackmailed them into working on the Paradise Project, the code name for developing the Crakers. The survivors form a small commune and put the survival skills of the Gardeners to work, while trying to protect themselves from the escaped painballers, dehumanized and violent ex-prisoners. *MaddAddam* culminates in a final battle between the painballers and the MaddAddamities, who form an alliance with the previously feared pigeons.

It is important to first explain the nature of Atwood's economic system and how it classifies, oppresses, and controls humans before discussing how this system impacts animal life. *Oryx and Crake* provides ample description of Atwood's society before it collapses, and both its structure and who it exploits provide some of her most blatant critiques of neoliberal capitalism. Prior to the flood, American life is highly segregated by economic class. There are two main ways for people to live, either in compounds or the pleeblands. Compounds are owned and operated by giant corporations for the purpose of housing their employees and providing a centralized location for them to work, so

people must work for a specific company in order to live in a certain compound<sup>70</sup>. When Jimmy is a young boy, around 5 or 6, his father works for OrganInc developing the pigoons. As one of the foremost architects on the pigoon project, he and his family live in their compound. The corporation owns everything in the compound and keeps people segregated from the outside world in the name of safety and comfort. Corporations perpetuate the idea that the pleeblands are dangerous, and

(c)omponent people didn't go into the cities unless they had to, and then never alone. They called the cities the *pleeblands*. Despite the fingerprint identity cards now carried by everyone, public security in the pleeblands was leaky; there were people cruising around in those places who could forge anything and who might be anybody, not to mention the loose change—the addicts, the muggers, the paupers, the crazies. So it was best for everyone at OrganInc Farms to live all in one place, with foolproof procedures. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 27)

The very nature of and justification for compounds is fear of the other, and in this society, the other is often either an economic distinction or a corporate one. In order for those working and living in the compounds to be safe, they must be segregated from the masses, the plebs, the people who live in lower class neighborhoods and who work lower class jobs, despite most of the corporations existing solely because the pleeblanders consume and buy their products. While the pleeblands are considered immoral and lacking in respectability, this does not stop those with high levels of security clearance from visiting them and enjoying what they offer, all the while looking down on the

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<sup>70</sup> Compounds are an evolution of the “company town” model where residents have no need to leave the compound, are actively discouraged from doing so, and spend money and develop social relationships in a closed loop.

people who live there as less than fully human<sup>71</sup>. As Dick's society requires a certain amount of money for people to display true empathy and thus be seen as good people, as I discuss in Chapter One, Atwood's society requires people to hold specific kinds of jobs and live in specific places in order to be considered decent and respectable people. Those living in the compounds simultaneously fear and need those living in the pleeblands, just as the corporations need the pleebs and the pleeblands to ensure profits and show their employees why they should never leave the compounds. Holding onto the idea that money and social class equate morality and respectability speaks to the ways in which the capitalist market defines human relationships to one another, and it illustrates the highly stratified nature of Atwood's society.

By convincing the people of the compound that security is both for their own good and the good of the company, the compounds are able to adopt a quasi-military standard of control, merging the private and militaristic spheres. Drastic security measures are expected and seen as one of the many perks of living in a compound, and they show an essential difference between compound and pleebland life. Schmeink argues the compounds represent the "male, privileged perspective," while the pleeblands represent the "female, precarious perspective" (74), and both the differing narrators of the first two books—with *Oryx and Crake* narrated by a man with a compound background and *Year of the Flood* narrated by women who lived in the pleeblands and briefly with the Gardeners—and the militarized nature of the compounds, embody these differences. These differences and their segregation are both encouraged and enforced by the compounds. Segregation in the name of security is indicative of hypercapitalism, a point

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<sup>71</sup> The CorpsSeCorps men are well known to enjoy the thriving sex industry, and Jimmy and Crake partake in a night of decadence in the pleeblands before Jimmy goes to work for him after college.

discussed by Jean Baudrillard in *The Consumer Society* where he argues that the “tranquility of the private sphere has to appear as value *preserved only with great difficulty*, constantly under threat and beset by the dangers of a catastrophic destiny” (35). Such reasoning justifies segregation from the pleeblands and the security measures within the compounds, and it convinces the people living in those compounds that there is the near constant threat of attack from outside forces. Those living in the compounds feel as if they both need and deserve a private military presence to protect them and the compound projects, ensuring limited privacy and mobility, as well as a cyclical form of justification for the organization of compound life. By keeping people segregated in their respective compounds, personal identity formation becomes wholly linked to the companies, and people relinquish the freedom to leave and return as they please, as movement outside of the compound requires a special pass. The threat of violence and disaster is used as a form of social control. People rarely, if ever, leave where they work or interact with people who work elsewhere, and everyone who works elsewhere is potentially suspect.

By isolating those who work in the compounds in the name of personal safety and by encouraging them to identify themselves as the company, the interests of the company become misinterpreted as personal interests. As Wood argues, “competition, accumulation, and profit maximization” are the primary capitalist imperatives (24-25), and by linking personal identity with the corporation, these ideals become personal imperatives, as well. Personal relationships become dictated by market forces and adhere to market logic. What is best for the corporations becomes characterized as what is best for the individual, further ensuring that individuals do not leave compound life, rarely if

ever visit the pleeblands, and consider themselves members of a corporate community before they think of themselves as individuals with social ties and relationships outside the insular community of the corporate compound<sup>72</sup>.

Jimmy's father internalizes this mode of thinking and presents as a standard "company man." The compounds themselves and much of the pleeblands outside of them are controlled and "protected" by the CorpSeCorps, a form of corporatized military who have taken the place of government military since there are essentially no traditional governments. Jimmy's father calls the CorpSeCorps "*our people*" and tells Jimmy "these men had to be on constant alert" (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 27). The CorpSeCorps protect the compounds from

(t)he other side, or other sides: it wasn't just one other side you had to watch out for. Other companies, other countries, various factions and plotters. There was too much hardware around, said Jimmy's father. Too much hardware, too much software, too many hostile bioforms, too many weapons of every kind. And too much envy and fanaticism and bad faith. (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 27-28)

Rampant paranoia is used to justify all aspects of life within the compound and convince those living within they need protection and that everyone outside of the compound presents a threat to their livelihood and safety. Permanent distrust ensures the segregation the corporations desire and that personal relationships will be dictated by the market logic of competition. Jimmy's father tries to explain this situation to him by telling him about

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<sup>72</sup> A similar situation occurs in *The Space Merchants*, although in that text it is characterized as a corporate update to plantation life by the name of Chlorella Proteins. Chlorella Proteins is located in Costa Rica and provided the majority of the annual budget for the country, and so the county is beholden to it. The workers there are trapped in a vicious cycle of consumption where they are forever in debt the company just to be able to eat and live, and so they are never able to leave (Pohl and Kornbluth 68).

medieval castles designed to keep the “kings and dukes” safe from the masses outside of the castle walls, confirming to Jimmy that they are, of course, the kings and dukes. Such a comparison between the compounds and medieval castles, of course, calls to mind the exploitation of those who live outside of both the castle and the compound walls.

Jimmy’s father’s identity and sense of worth comes from his insistence that he is better than someone else—those who live in the pleeblands—and that those who work for other corporations are potential rivals. Again, the capitalist system provides a sense of identity and self-worth that is based on the exploitation of an other, and Atwood’s system perpetuates the idea that this other deserves such treatment largely because of where they live and what kind of job they have. The ability of compound life to situate human relationships within a framework of market relationships is also illustrated through the stress between Jimmy’s parents and ultimately contributes to his mother leaving both her family and the capitalist system.

While Jimmy’s father is a stereotypical company man, his mother is uncomfortable with both the aspects of compound life, and the corporate imperative to replace moralistic concerns with profit-driven ones. When Jimmy’s family moves to the HelthWyzer compound for a better job for Jimmy’s father, the family is subjected to a much higher level of security both at the gates and within their daily lives, which makes Jimmy’s mother feel like a prisoner. His father calls her paranoid, insisting it is for their own safety and that they should not be concerned because they have nothing to hide<sup>73</sup> (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 53-54). The rift between them widens when Jimmy’s father

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<sup>73</sup> This is, of course, a common refrain given to people who express privacy concerns. It situates the good of the company or the good of the government as paramount and personal concerns and desires as foolish. In this model, personal lives should give up the right to privacy for the “greater good” of the collective.



announces they have finally managed to insert human neocortex tissue into a pigeon, and Jimmy's mother remarks "you've thought up yet another way to rip off a bunch of desperate people" (56). She continues by insisting that Jimmy's father no longer has a moral compass and by stating, "(i)t's wrong, the whole organization is wrong, it's a moral cesspool and you know it," and "(y)ou're interfering with the building blocks of life. It's immoral. It's...sacrilegious" (56-57). Jimmy's father gets exceptionally angry, says he cannot afford to have ideals and that there is nothing immoral about what he is doing. Shortly thereafter, Jimmy's mother destroys his father's computer, escapes the compound, taking Jimmy's pet rakunk, Killer, with her, and never returns. The CorpSeCorps<sup>74</sup> sweep the house, interrogate Jimmy and his father, and his mother's disappearance and rebellion haunt Jimmy well into adulthood, both personally and every time he passes through a security gate or some new information about her prompts the CorpSeCorps to visit Jimmy and interrogate him<sup>75</sup>. To the CorpSeCorps, Jimmy's identity is entwined with his mother's until she is eventually captured and executed after he graduates college. Jimmy's mother feels like a prisoner in the compound and is ultimately able to leave because while she is part of compound life, she is an outsider, in part, because her domestic labor is seen as insignificant. She never adopts compound philosophy, never views life within the context of market logic, and refuses to abandon her morals in the name of profit. When Jimmy's mother first leaves, she briefly stays

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<sup>74</sup> The CorpsSeCorps are private military employed by the corporate compound. They seem to have replaced all other forms of policing and behave as government agents, as the line between the corporations and the government is indistinguishable.

<sup>75</sup> The abandonment Jimmy/Snowman feels as a result of his mother leaving is something he never gets over or forgives her for and undoubtedly contributes to his inability to respect women both as an adult and an adolescent. It also contributes to his isolation and makes him more receptive to Crake when they meet.

with the Gardeners and brings them information about the pigoon project in the hopes of motivating them to disrupt the system (Atwood, *Flood*, 247-249). Market logic is so pervasive and prescriptive, the only way for Jimmy's mother to resist it is by leaving compound life and the system entirely, just as the Gardeners have. The capitalist system within the trilogy dictates the kinds of relationships people have to one another and their world, and few forms of life are immune from the exploitation within the system.

Atwood's biopolitical system is one in which almost everyone and everything is oppressed at some level, with the exception of the corporations themselves and those who represent them. The corporations have taken the place of governments and act as the sovereigns in the text,<sup>76</sup> reflecting

the extreme version of what Bauman describes as liquid modernity: Nation states do not exist anymore; instead an extreme form of 'corpocracy' (Appelton 64) rules a consumer society with an eye for maximizing their profit margins, replacing any ethical decision making." (Schmeink 77)

The economy relies heavily on biotechnology, and so all scientific innovation is owned and dictated by corporations and for corporate interest, placing scientists in a position where they are essentially owned by corporations, may not even know what they are working on, and have little control over what they work on and create. There are no ethical considerations, only the considerations of what will be most profitable. The state of scientific research and scientists is most clearly illustrated through HelthWyzer, the

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<sup>76</sup> Corporations replacing governments, such as the example of Chlorella Protiens, is a trope that also appears in *The Space Merchants*, speaking to anxieties about increasing corporate control and regulations over most aspects of human society and life itself, as well as the amount of control this gives those who work in advertising.

company Jimmy's father works for after OrganInc where Jimmy spends his later childhood and where he meets Crake.

When they are in college, Crake tells Jimmy that HelthWyzer has been creating diseases and putting them in their vitamin pills. Crake explains HelthWyzer's motivation for this practice by stating if "you make your money out of drugs and procedures that cure sick people, or else—better—that make it impossible for them to get sick in the first place," that company will eventually need more sick people and new diseases (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 210-211). The desire for more sick people and new diseases speaks to capitalism's need to constantly redefine and expand the market to maintain continuous growth and profit. The antidote is developed by the same company and at the same time as the disease, but it is not released immediately in order to give people the illusion of scarcity and instill the fear of consequences that drive people to spend more money than they can afford to postpone their own death and that of loved ones, thus maximizing profits. Ultimately,

'(t)he best diseases, from a business point of view,' said Crake, 'would be those that cause lingering illness. Ideally—that is, for maximum profit—the patient should either get well or die just before all of his or her money runs out. It's a fine calculation.' (211)

Crake's father is a top researcher at HelthWyzer West and discovers HelthWyzer is purposefully making people ill and shares this information with his brother and boss, Pete, because he assumes Pete is not involved. Pete then informs the company, and HelthWyzer assassinates Crake's father. According to Crake, "(t)hey'd have said he was about to destroy an elegant concept. They'd have said, they were acting for the general

good” (212). By harnessing their biopower, HelthWyzer ensures a never-ending and seemingly controlled stream of products, customers, and profits that exploits almost everyone involved for the “general good” of their profit margin, the only general good for a company that can exist in the text. Only the people at the higher levels of corporate structure know what HelthWyzer is actually doing, with everyone else on the project working on pieces they are told are highly secretive in the name of keeping the company, and thus their livelihoods, safe. If everyone is told the corporation is under constant threat from the outside, as Jimmy’s father insists, every piece of the puzzle must be kept secret and protected from those who would “steal” from or sabotage them. The scientists are in a system in which they do not own the products of their labor, have little control over their labor, and their lives are wholly expendable if they become a threat to the company by harming the creation of markets and increase of profits. Additionally, the lives of the public are under constant threat, and the very company they think they can trust to keep them well and safe is the one slowly killing them to ensure new markets are continuously created. To HelthWyzer, the public does not consist of people with rights; the public consists of profits and losses. Capitalist markets require a renewable and ever-expanding source of capital to create new markets and continue growing, and as Wood argues, “(t)he basic objective of the capitalist system, in other words, is the production and self-expansion of capital” (3). HelthWyzer is responsible for eventually killing the mother of Toby (one of the main characters in both *The Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*) with one of their diseases, but not until after her family goes bankrupt trying to cure her, and similar stories are not uncommon prior to the flood. Once people are no longer able to function as market or capital, they no longer serve any purpose to the system and are

discarded. The market is driven by biocapital and biotechnology, and all aspects of society are reconfigured with these needs in mind.

Corporations dictate which kinds of colleges and majors are valued based on how useful they would be to the needs of the market. During their senior year of high school, students participate in the Student Auction, where colleges, now called EduCompounds, bid on them. The term EduCompounds signifies the connection between education and the market, as well as further socializes students into compound life as they mature into adults. Jimmy is a writer who is mediocre at math and science, and since biotechnology dominates the market, he spends his young life conscious of his “failures” and jealous of Crake, who excels in both subjects. The humanities are associated with femininity, and Jimmy’s association with them are an attack both on his worth as a creator of capital and his identity as a man in patriarchal culture. Crake is “snatched up at a high price by the Watson-Crick Institute (173), while “Jimmy was knocked down at last to the Martha Graham Academy; and even that only after a long spell of lackluster bidding” (174). Jimmy’s sense of “mediocrity” is a result of his skills not being seen as profitable by the corporations, and both the infrastructure and culture of he and Crake’s respective EduCompounds illustrates the socioeconomic value placed on specific subjects. The idea of colleges fighting over students at auction signals that the students themselves are a form of biocapital available to the highest bidder, and the most valuable students are biocapital who have the highest potential to create future profits. Unfortunately for Jimmy and his society as a whole, the knowledge and skill set of those who excel in the arts and humanities are considered unremarkable and replaceable by Atwood’s market, as

illustrated in the differences between the Watson-Crick Institute, a school devoted to biotechnology<sup>77</sup>, and the Martha Graham Academy, a school devoted to the arts.

The humanities and those who excel at them are deemed both unimportant and feminine. Coming from the wealthy HelthWyzer compound, the state of Martha Graham is a shock to Jimmy and reinforces his sense of inferiority and failed masculinity. Jimmy immediately notices “Martha Graham was falling apart. It was surrounded—Jimmy observed as the train pulled in—by the tackiest kind of pleeblands” (185). The proximity to the pleeblands, a feminine space, and failing infrastructure quickly indicate to Jimmy that this place is not valued, and so neither is he or the other people at the school. Proximity to the pleeblands also serves as a physical reminder of the femininity, and thus inferiority, of the humanities. The list of failing infrastructure and lack of amenities is apparent both in common spaces and the dorms, including spotty electrical, leaky ceilings, and cockroaches. Additionally, “(t)he security at Martha Graham gateway was a joke. The guards were half asleep, the walls—scrawled over with faded graffiti—could have been scaled by a one-legged dwarf” (185). The lack of militarized security signals that what and who are inside of the school are not considered important or worth guarding. Those at Martha Graham are socialized into a society that perpetuates the idea that important places and important things require militarized security and deserve resources, and the lack of both speaks to the value the arts and those who excel at them are denied because of market forces. Jimmy knew “(t)he system had filed him among the rejects, and what he was studying was considered—at the decision-making levels, the

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<sup>77</sup> James Watson, Francis Crick, and Maurice Wilkins won the Nobel Prize in 1962 for their work with DNA. However, their work was heavily indebted to Rosalind Franklin, who was not initially given credit (Science History). Information about Franklin’s exclusion would have been available at the time of *Oryx and Crake*’s publication in 2003.

levels of real power—an archaic waste of time” (195). The real power, of course, rests with the corporations, and since those in the arts do not and will not create biotechnological products corporations can sell, they are considered lower class and not worthy of any form of investment<sup>78</sup>.

Crake, and those like him, are actively creating, and later in their lives will continue to create, biotechnological products for sale, making them far more valuable to the corporations than those who devote themselves to the arts. When Jimmy visits Crake at college, he must first get through intense security, and he observes “(c)ompared to Martha Graham, Watson-Crick was a palace” (199). Because of their association with the sciences, and the level of security the EduCompound has, Watson-Crick is clearly associated with the corporate compound and thus masculine space, and both connections make it highly valued. The grounds boast drought-and-flood-resistant botanicals, fake rocks that absorb water to later release during droughts, and genetically modified butterflies, all created by Watson-Crick students and owned by the corporation (199-

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<sup>78</sup> The complete devaluation of the arts as a result of business interests is another thread that both *The Space Merchants* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy share. In *The Space Merchants*, the arts are abandoned and forgotten, not in the name of biotechnology, but in the name of sales because the elite in this text are advertising firms. Words are still seen as holding power and importance, but only if those words are being used to craft advertising campaigns—that is, only if those words are being used in the service of the capitalist market. The emphasis on sales results in the destruction of most forms of art, and “(t)he correlation was perfectly clear. Advertising up, lyric poetry down. There are only so many people capable of putting together words that can stir and move and sing. When it became possible to earn a very good living in advertising by exercising this capability, lyric poetry was left to the untalented screwballs who had to shriek for attention and compete by eccentricity” (Pohl and Kornbluth 38). Like the emphasis on “useful” skills at Martha Graham and Jimmy’s sense of uselessness before getting a job working on advertising for Crake, this passage in *The Space Merchants* argues capitalism demands a utilitarian purpose in service to the market from the arts and humanities. Both hypercapitalist systems result in the degradation of art because the main goal of art is not to sell a product or participate in the market. Such commentary not only links both texts; it also illustrates the ways in which capitalist systems make all aspects of society adjuncts to the market and how SF is in a unique position to argue against this practice. Unlike the arts, the sciences in Atwood’s text are directly linked to profit, and so the corporations invest in the EduCompounds devoted to them.

203). These students, biocapital themselves, represent both present and future profits for the corporations, and they are given an elevated status because of their doubled potential and usefulness. However, like the adult scientists, they do not own the rights to their own labor (intellectual property), and so they are indoctrinated early into the oppressive system to which they will be beholden their entire lives. As extensions of the corporations, the EduCompounds socialize students to become complacent and willing producers/consumers who identify themselves primarily through their allegiance to specific companies, products, and services. While talent is engaged as biocapital in a system not far removed from the current moment, Atwood also illustrates further refining of the biocapital of criminals by the justice system.

Criminals are forms of biocapital to be used for public entertainment and as a warning to those who could oppose the compounds. While initially kept a secret, Painball is a televised “sport” of criminals fighting one another to the death, for the chance to “win big prizes, such as getting out of jail free and landing a stint as a pleebland grey-market enforcer” (Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 297). While it is advertised as an opportunity for those who have been imprisoned, this opportunity is little more than blatant exploitation. Painball “was a facility for condemned criminals, both political ones and the other kind: they had the choice of being spraygunned to death or doing time in the Painball Arena” (Atwood, *Flood*, 98). The Painball Arena is an enclosed forest. The criminals are divided into two teams, given two weeks’ worth of food, and a Painball gun which “spit paint, like a regular paintball gun, but a hit in the eyes would blind you, and if you got paint on your skin you’d start to corrode,” making the injured painballer an



easy target for the other team (98)<sup>79</sup>. The sport obviously dehumanizes those involved, and, in some cases, makes them far more dangerous than they ever were outside of the Arena, and even the CorpSeCorps are afraid of those who survive the Painball Arena long term. Not surprisingly, “(a)fter a while, thought Toby, you wouldn’t just cross the line, you’d forget there ever were any lines. You’d do whatever it takes” (99). The popularity of this “sport” is only possible in a brutal society that classifies certain humans as not fully human and not deserving of any rights or any chance of rehabilitation. Such classification is made possible through the species boundary. By classifying the painballers as more animal than human and making them more object than being, the systemic and physical violence done to them in the name of entertainment appears justified. Because animals are primarily commodities for use and entertainment, and many are already conditioned to accept hunting and bullfighting as acceptable practices, classifying the painballers as animals and objects removes any inter-species responsibility the public might feel for them.

It is well known among certain people that the CorpSeCorps operate on “lies and cover-ups” (282), and “the media Corps controlled what was news and what wasn’t” (293), calling into question the nature of the political prisoners they take and whether or not these prisoners are guilty of what the CorpSeCorps men claim. Like many repressive regimes, Atwood’s system refuses to tolerate and works to eliminate any threats to the status quo, such as Jimmy’s mother and the Gardeners. Some painballers are very obviously dangerous, both because of who they were before they entered the Arena and

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<sup>79</sup> Similarly, in Stephen King’s *The Running Man*, political criminals are forced to attempt to cross zones where government sponsored hunters attempt to kill them. If the criminal succeeds, they are supposedly granted their freedom, though this is clearly a ruse for the benefit of public opinion.

who they must become to survive it. One such group of painballers survives the flood and escapes, and they terrorize other survivors through rape and murder, as I will discuss further. However, many who are captured simply question and resist the oppressive rules of the corporations. Like every other form of human life, the painballers and those who are captured by the system are classified as objects by the corporations and through both coordinated misinformation and televising painball, the public also views them as objects for entertainment. Again, the corporations dictate how life is viewed and valued, and much of the general public adopts these same views.

Like those in the compounds, the painballers are given the illusion of choice to make them believe they have more agency than is truly granted to them. Their time in the painball arena makes them dangerous to the pleeblands once they are released, offering another example of how maximizing profit is often to the detriment of everyone but the corporations. Within capitalism, “the requirements of competition and profit maximization are the fundamental rules of life” (Wood 2), and this is shown most prominently through the painball arena itself, which stands as a metaphor for market competition outside of it. Like the painballers are forced to view one another, compound life lauds the value that everyone else is competition. Both in the arena and outside of it, viewing everything and everyone as competition results in a zero-sum game with clear winners and clear losers, and those who lose or those without power are often denied both agency and the right to life.

While the criminals are marketed as biocapital like the students, the painballers are described entirely in negative terms, and they are treated as less than the bioengineered animals developed by the Corps because they are less profitable, and their

worth does not reinforce or expand the market. They are useful to entertain, and many of them die to do so. They are, arguably, how we treat animals in the current moment in instances such as circuses, dog fighting, and cock fighting. By fully animalizing the painballers, Atwood illustrates some of the problems with a capitalist system that is reliant on the species barrier because as Wolfe argues, as long as the species barrier exists, it can always be turned against certain humans (8). The connections between the species barrier, violence, and othering are also apparent in the trilogy's treatment of women and children.

Atwood's society functions on a thriving industry of violence, torture, and misogyny. Both prior to and after the flood, her world is particularly brutal and oppressive to children and women. In addition to the aforementioned for-harvest children for organs, children are routinely sold by families who cannot afford them, and there is a thriving industry of child pornography and pedophilia tourism. Crake and Jimmy first see Oryx on HottTotts, a global child pornography site, when they are teenagers and she is about 8 years old. They both develop a fascination with her in that moment, saving a still shot of when she looks directly into the camera. From the moment Oryx is sold by her mother, she is a form of biocapital for the use and pleasure of men. Her status as biocapital is highlighted not just by what happens to her as a child, but also by both Crake and Jimmy, with Crake first using her picture as a gateway to the Extinctathon game he plays, having Student Services at Watson-Crick track her down so he can hire her as a prostitute, later bringing her on to help him develop the Crakers and unwittingly spread the waterless flood, and Jimmy saving her picture his entire life and being consumed with knowing everything he can about her past once he finally meets her in person and they

develop a romantic relationship at the same time she involved with Crake. While Jimmy and Crake seem to view and value her differently, for both of them she is ultimately a possession. Oryx's case is not unique, as children and women are routinely classified as objects and resources.

Like children, women are also forms of biocapital used for the pleasure of men. The sex trade has gone fully corporate, virtually eliminating prostitution that is not owned by the corporations. In some ways, the narrative of the trilogy revolves around Scales and Tails, a strip club where the women wear bio-suits that make them look like animal/human hybrids. Ren works there as a trapeze dancer prior to the flood, and she survives the flood because she is in a sealed containment room at Scales and Tails when the disease begins to spread. She believes she had found a good place to work: "Scales and Tails took care of you, they really did. If you were talent, that is. Good food, a doctor if you needed one, and the tips were great, because the men from the top Corps came here" (Atwood, *Flood*, 7). Her view of Scales and Tales illustrates what life is like without being connected to a corporation; without the support the Gardeners have, it can be so difficult and dangerous that she considers herself lucky to work in a place where she is directly called "a valuable asset" (7) and where her value is based on what she can do for the company. It is also indicative of how women are viewed by both the public and corporations—they are assets—and many women have internalized this mode of thinking both in the trilogy and in the current moment. Ren believes she is valuable because she is valuable to Scales and Tails. Her personal identity and worth are defined by market forces, and she begins to see herself as an extension of the company, like those who work in the compounds and like Jimmy will feel later in his life, illustrating the all-

encompassing nature of biopolitical capitalist systems. The connections between women's oppression and animal oppression in patriarchal culture is well documented, and questions of animal rights and subjectivity are linked "rather directly to other investigations in contemporary cultural studies that focus on difference, identity, and subjectivity" (Wolfe 8). The Corps men fetishize women who look like their own creations, linking them together as sexualized, consumable products designed for entertainment and use.

Both the Scales and Tails costumes and the meat industry prior to the flood illustrate the ways in which Atwood's society preys on both in intersectional ways. Ren is "owned" by Scales and Tails, much like the compound scientists, with both more and less freedom. Like the designed animals, she is, in many ways, property kept to turn a profit, a status on display through the suits she wears.

In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol J. Adams argues that animal oppression and women's oppression are linked and that meat consumption relies on "patriarchal attitudes including the idea that the end justifies the means, that the objectification of other beings is a necessary part of life, and that violence can and should be masked" (14). The connection between patriarchal control over and violence to both women and animals is symbolized by the character of Blanco in *Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*. While Blanco will be one of the escaped painballers in *MaddAddam* that I mentioned previously, he is a manager at a fast food restaurant called SecretBurgers when Atwood first introduces him. No one is entirely sure what ingredients are in the SecretBurgers burgers, which is part of their gimmick, and it was not uncommon to find cat hair or mouse tails in them, and credible rumors insisted the local pleebmobs used them to

dispose of human bodies (Atwood, *Flood*, 33). When Toby gets a job there, the girls warn her that Blanco has a pattern of picking one of the girls, forcing her to sleep with him, and abusing her. He is also known for being able to “take a girl apart,” and attacking and “ripping up” a girl at Scales and Tails is how he lost his job bouncing there (35-36). Blanco is a violent misogynist who believes he owns and is owed the women around him, and soon after Toby begins working there, he kills the girl he is sleeping with, Dora, and turns his attention and abuse to Toby.

It is fitting that one of the worst abusers of women in the trilogy works at a company that sells mystery burgers that makes no pretense of ethically sourcing the meat they use. The sloppy grinders at SecretBurgers may leave small, perceptible traces of what animals made the burgers, but traditionally, “(t)hrough butchering, animal become absent referents. Animals in name and body are made absent *as animals* for meat to exist,” and “a dead body replaces the live animal” (Adams 40). The slightly detectable animal referents are simultaneously taboo and thus enticing for those who eat their burgers and marks those who do as part of the inferior lower classes. For Blanco, both women and animals are bodies to be consumed, and as Adams argues, consumption follows objectification, and “(m)eat has long been used in Western culture as a metaphor for women’s oppression” (48). Both Scales and Tails and Blanco signal the connections in the text between animals’ oppression and women’s oppression. By building off of the work of Abrams, Wolfe notes her book presents

a ready-made symbolic economy that overdetermines the representation of women, by transcoding the *edible* bodies of animals and the *sexualized* bodies of

women within an overreaching “logic of domination”—all compressed in what Derrida’s recent work calls ‘*carnophallogocentrism*. (8)

Blanco is the character who best represents the intertwined nature of women and animals’ consumption and abuse, and the Scales and Tails costumes are the visual representation of how the system classifies and views them. However, the links between women and animals are also seen by characters who do not view both as consumable objects, speaking to Atwood’s desire to highlight the connection and power of market conditioning.

After they are in a romantic relationship, Zeb explains the sexual connection between women and animals to Toby: “(w)e [men] like to think you’re wild animals,” says Zeb, ‘(u)nderneath the decorations’” (Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 171). He continues by stating, “(a) scaly, feathery woman is a powerful attraction. She’s got an edge to her, like a goddess. Risky. Extreme” (172). While Zeb and Toby have one of the few positive romantic relationships in the trilogy, and Zeb is clearly Blanco’s antithesis, having both Blanco and Zeb illustrate this connection in various ways shows how purposeful Atwood’s comparison is and how pervasive such thinking is. Even Jimmy’s aforementioned compassion for animals is linked to the feminine, as masculinity in the text consumes both women and animals as objects. While Crake and Jimmy have a distinct predator and prey relationship, Jimmy does his best to compensate for his perceived femininity by performing hyper-masculinity, as illustrated by he and Crake watching both pornography (including child pornography) and animal torture videos at the same time and together; once again exemplifying how patriarchal capitalism classifies both women and animals as objects for distribution and sale. While Atwood’s society is

kind to few beings, it is particularly brutal to both animals and women, and both are inherently linked as consumable objects and bodies. While the connection between women and animals is most prominent in these scenes, the consumable nature of animal bodies is, of course, also practiced by the rich who have access to higher quality food and more exotic meat.

The rich have both “an endangered-species luxury couture operation called Slink” and gourmet restaurants called Rarity (Atwood, *Flood*, 30-31). The endangered species clothing gave those who could afford to wear them “bragging rights” because all animal lives are up for sale and worthy of consumption as a marker of status. After the animals are skinned for clothing, they are sold to Rarity. The public dining rooms sold the kind of meat familiar to many readers, such as steak and lamb, cooked rare, and publicly, the chain explained their name based on this cooking method. However, “in the private banquet rooms—key-club entry, bouncer-enforced—you could eat endangered species. The profits were immense; one bottle of tiger-bone wine alone was worth a neckful of diamonds” (31). Even endangered species are consumable objects up for sale, despite this practice being technically illegal. Despite the laws against it, no one in the surrounding neighborhoods turned them in because there was no way to know which of the CorpSeCorps could be trusted (31). The realities of how these animals are treated is far more important than a law that is not enforced, and the endangered species are worth far more dead than they are alive. Like in Dick’s novel, the price of these animals is linked to their rarity, and their market price is their ultimate value. The value of endangered species here is in what the products made from their bodies will get on the market and the status consumption of these objects give to the wealthy in much the same way the public



display and care for a large animal denote status in Dick's novel. Both the status they have and the money they have is enough to protect them from the CorpSeCorps as long as the illegal activities they partake in are activities that support the economic system and keep it in motion.

Prior to the flood, capitalism dictates the kinds of relationships humans have to one another, ensuring those with money oppress those without, but it also mediates and informs the kinds of relationships humans have with animals, as I have discussed in relation to how they are consumed. However, prior to the flood, animals are also routinely genetically modified to serve human needs more efficiently. Despite being modified with human neocortex tissue, by creating pigeons to be "shells" for organs and to prevent human baby orchards, they are never classified as subject in a dialectical engagement. Their status as patented product created to both enhance and protect human life is noted early in the trilogy, and they are not considered to be beings with rights despite their obviously high intelligence and biological connection with humans. OrganInc's policies dictate the relationships humans have to animals and the ways in which humans view animals. Outside pets are seen as a threat to the pigeons in the compound because of the risk of "foreign microbes" from outside of the compound (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 51), reinforcing the idea that that safety of the compound is under constant threat and is achieved through corporate regulation and security for more than just the human inhabitants. Both humans and animals from the pleeblands are "foreign" and lesser and thus present unique threats to all life within the compound walls. However, some of the animals created inside the compound are kept as pets, such as the rakunk, a racoon/skunk hybrid, which Jimmy's father gives him for his tenth birthday.

Jimmy names him Killer, and Killer soon becomes the only being Jimmy truly loves. However, despite the importance of their relationship, Jimmy's relationship with Killer still signifies how OrganInc, and thus people within the compound, situate animal life. The compounds do not have wildlife; therefore, by prohibiting outside animals, the only animals the people in the compound see and interact with are animals who are designed by humans to be commodities. Such removal from both natural and outside animal life ensures a removal from the concept of animals as beings and classifies them as products the people in the compound create and own. Jimmy/Snowman recalls, "(t)here'd been a lot of fooling around in those days: create-an-animal was so much fun, said the guys doing it; it made you feel like God" (51). The only animals the people of the compound know are animals designed to be commodities and experiments, and the animals they do not know are characterized as threats to their livelihood and creations. The ways in which the compounds and those who live in them dictate the perception and value of animal life is apparent in Jimmy's initial confusion about how animals are treated at OrganInc.

When Jimmy is young, around 5 or 6, he is a kind boy who is fond of animals. One of Jimmy's earliest memories is of attending a bonfire with his father. The bonfire is for burning the bodies of dead animals who have been infected with a disease from a rival corporation. Jimmy is concerned about the animals, but his father explains they are dead and just like steaks. However, young Jimmy doesn't exactly understand or believe this comparison because steaks don't have heads, and he thinks, "the suffering animals were his fault, because he had done nothing to rescue them" (18). Jimmy's concern and confusion indicates he has a sense of responsibility to the living creatures with whom he shares the Earth perhaps not typical of other children his age and characterizes Jimmy as

a compassionate and sensitive child, in addition to linking him with the feminine. His concern is certainly not typical of the culture at OrganInc, where the pigeons are a valuable form of biocapital that have been sabotaged by a rival corporation. The concern Jimmy feels for the animals must be expressed by a child young enough to not be fully integrated into compound culture. Jimmy's view aligns more with the Gardeners than that of OrganInc., and a similar perception held by an adult would not be tolerated by the system, as illustrated by both his mother and the treatment of the Gardeners. Both his mother and the Gardeners are outsiders who object to and attempt to live outside of the system. Because of this, both are classified as threats, Jimmy's mother is eventually executed, the Gardeners are outlawed, and many Gardeners are captured.

Jimmy's compassion for animals is both feminized and connected to his ability to excel at the humanities, which (as noted earlier) results in both shame and overcompensation. Jimmy even questions the morality of eating meat. One day when having lunch with his father at work, he is upset by the adults who joke about "pigeon pie" and "he was confused about who should be allowed to eat what. He didn't want to eat a pigeon, because he thought of pigeons as creatures much like himself" (24). Such concern shows compassion and awareness on Jimmy's part, and it is difficult to believe this very same boy will be watching animal torture videos roughly 10 years later with Crake<sup>80</sup>. Jimmy particularly likes the baby pigeons, pigeonlets, and he enjoys visiting them. However, he is disturbed and confused by the adult pigeons because "the adults were slightly frightening, with their runny noses and tiny white-lashed pink eyes. They

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<sup>80</sup> It is primarily Jimmy's desire to appear masculine despite his failures at science that encourage him to display a penchant for both animal torture videos and child pornography when spending time with Crake. Additionally, this also explains his hyper-sexuality and habit of using and leaving women.

glanced up at him as if they saw him, really saw him, and might have plans for him later” (26). For as much as Jimmy thinks of the pigeons as “creatures much like himself” in the abstract, the reality of confronting them as such is disquieting, and he is not ready for it. As Derrida notes, most humans regard animals as receptacles for their gaze and do not consider whether or not the animals look back. Here Jimmy is confronted with animals who are looking back in a “human” way, and this slight disruption of the human/animal boundary is an uncomfortable one, even for a child who values the pigeons as something other than a receptacle for growing organs or a source of meat to be consumed and who wishes to identify with them.

The pigeons are designed to be a resource for life itself since they exist to harvest organs, which in turn theoretically protects the children who had previously been used for this purpose. While the pigeons are the most prominent genetically modified animals in the trilogy, there are entire industries centered around creating animals for more productive human use and consumption. All animal life must be justified and designed as serving a human utilitarian purpose, rather than existing for the sake of existing, because of their general good to the environment, or because they have the right to live.

When rakunks are created, they are designed as resources for companionship. They supplant cats and dogs in the compounds, ensuring the only animals the people in the compounds develop a relationship with are animals that have been created for them, as I previously discussed. Additionally, rakunks lack the function of cats and dogs. Rakunks are not pest hunters, and they are not protectors, altering how the humans who own them view their relationships with the animals in their homes. A cat or dog who hunts, or a dog who barks at unfamiliar noises near the home, is an animal with a form of

agency as well as the capacity for companionship, even if this agency ultimately benefits the human owner. Yes, dogs can be taught to protect, but just as cats do not have to be taught to catch pests in the home, most dogs do not need to be taught to do the same or to be protective over their homes and families. Dogs and cats do these things largely because of instinct, reminding their human companions that they have wills and desires of their own, even if these wills and desires have been selectively enhanced through breeding, as is the case with many dogs. Animal labor has traditionally been seen as adding value to animal lives, and this removal of animal labor from the companion animal in the compounds, rather than showing a form of animal liberation, further removes the status of animal as being and reinforces the concept of animal as designer good/product.

ChickieNobs, bio-engineered “chickens,” are animals who are genetically designed to be more “productive” and profitable food sources, and consumption of this food is used to reaffirm two distinct class systems, the human/animal boundary, and the idea that access to non-modified meat is a sign of economic wealth. When Jimmy visits Crake at the Watson-Crick Institute, Crake gives him a tour of some of the projects they are working on, and ChickieNobs are one of them. The ChickieNobs are so far removed from looking like animals that Jimmy does not even initially recognize them as such:

(w)hat they were looking at was a large bulb-like object that seemed to be covered with stippled whitish-yellow skin. Out of it came twenty thick fleshy tubes, and at the end of each tube another bulb was growing.

‘What the hell is it?’ said Jimmy.

‘Those are chickens,’ said Crake. ‘Chicken parts. Just the breasts, on this one.

They’ve got ones that specialize in drumsticks too, twelve to a growth unit.’ (202)

As Adams argues, one of the reasons animals are the missing referent in meat consumption is because of how it is marketed and packaged, as disembodied parts, rather than wholes, and the ChickieNobs are a living metaphor for this practice. However, by making the ChickieNobs almost entirely unidentifiable, and giving them only the “necessary parts,” it becomes even more difficult for the people working on them, and ultimately the consumers, to see them as animals who were once alive. The term “growth unit,” instead of “cage or coop,” is rhetoric that removes life and focuses on process and product. Since those living in the compounds do not eat these products, their consumption is for the plebs and is a marker of economic status. The ChickieNobs exist for human profit and for policing the boundary between economic classes, providing a further remove from the concept of animal existence beyond human innovation and need. ChickieNobs are not beings; they are innovation, resource, and class marker crafted solely for consumption.

ChickieNobs are designed to grow faster than normal chickens and to eliminate “waste,” thereby ensuring they are more profitable for the company. The scientists “removed all of the brain functions that had nothing to do with digestion, assimilation and growth” (203). While this is marketed as more humane because the ChickieNobs feel no pain, it reduces the animal to a being that can only perform the basic functions needed to stay alive and grow and as being that only exists to fill human need, producing “the utilitarian’s dream creature” (McHugh 191) devoid of any agency. Faces are often how people identify both humans and animals, and removing their faces, specifically,

objectifies them and leaves humans with no way to identify them as subject. Ren recalls, “I couldn’t deal with meat very well ever since the Gardeners, but Mordis said that ChickieNobs were really vegetables because they grew on stems and didn’t have faces. So I ate half of them” (Atwood, *Flood*, 129). Mordis locates the face as the defining characteristic of whether or not they are animals. As objectified resource created to be objectified resource, ChickieNobs are not only denied their referent through marketing and sale, they are beings that never had one in the first place.

Atwood’s ChickieNobs have a clear literary predecessor in *The Space Merchants*, Chicken Little, as noted by Susan McHugh (192). Chicken Little is a regenerative “grey-brown, rubbery hemisphere some fifteen yards in diameter” kept in a concrete “nest” so the Master Slicer can carve off portions of her for sale to those who cannot afford “natural” meat products (Pohl and Kornbluth 83). Like ChickieNobs, it is difficult to recognize Chicken Little as a chicken based on her physical appearance, and both are horrific visions of industrial farming that shock and disgust. Perhaps most importantly, consumption of both ChickieNobs and Chicken Little are used to reaffirm an economic class system where the lower classes are not given access to natural and superior food products, ensuring corporations have complete control over what those classes eat, the nutritional value of their food, and thus their lives and lifespans. Evoking Chicken Little for her characterization of ChickieNobs allows Atwood to rely on a tradition of SF to critique the control corporations have over food supplies and life itself. In addition to animal bodies serving as food, the Corps also engineer animal bodies to serve as weapons for the state.

The wolvogs are created on behalf of the CorpseSeCorps to be weapons. The wolvogs are part wolf and part dog, designed to look harmless and yet be deadly. They are the last innovation Crake shows Jimmy at Watson-Crick. When Jimmy first sees them, they look like dogs eager for affection and attention, and Jimmy wants to know if they are for sale because “(h)is old longing for a pet came over him” (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 205). However, Crake tells him they are not for sale and not to pet them because “(t)hey aren’t dogs, they just look like dogs. They’re wolvogs—they’re bread to deceive. Reach out to pat them, they’ll take your hand off.” (205). The CorpSeCorps men want to put them in moats for security, and unlike traditional dogs, there is no way to become friends with or tame wolvogs. They are bioweapons designed to protect the interests of the state, and like ChickieNobs, are allowed to have only one purpose, which increases their value as resource. Jimmy knows at the time that this is a dangerous idea<sup>81</sup>, and he is overwhelmed by what Crake has shown him: “he was worrying about the ChickieNobs and the wolvogs. Why is it he feels some line has been crossed, some boundary transgressed? How much is too much, and how far is too far?” (206). For Crake and those like him, nature and animals are both resources to be manipulated and harnessed for corporate benefit, and they practice a form of science that answers to and predicts the needs of the market. Jimmy’s questioning of the morality and wisdom behind the ChickieNobs and the wolvogs recall an earlier version of himself. In this brief scene, he is very much the little boy who considered the pigeons his friends and who found meat eating confusing, and his position is made possible by being rejected and cast aside by the system and by his interest in and his aptitude for the humanities. Jimmy’s questioning

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<sup>81</sup> Predictably, the wolvogs are free after the flood and kill and eat every domesticated dog, as well as pose a threat to Jimmy/Snomwan (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 108).



here illustrates both the dangers of the humanities to the system and the dangers of rejecting people from the system. Since Jimmy is not fully integrated into compound life and philosophy, and considered unimportant by the “powers that be,” he does not feel a strong allegiance to the system and is able to question it, despite the entire system being designed to minimize and remove dissent, which is in no small part accomplished through devaluing and degrading the humanities.

Only animals that serve specific functions, which they are designed and created to fulfill, are allowed inside the compounds, severing ties between human and animal life and ensuring these relationships are removed at the highest levels of power and decision making. Removing wildlife and traditional pets from compound life ensures that those who are removed from animal life and who view it as a resource to be manipulated are those with higher amounts of money, higher amounts of status, and more cultural capital and control. To care for and respect animal life is a distinct threat to the system, and so it is associated with being outside of the system and a pleeblander. No solution is offered for either animals or humans to exist within the system and not be subjected to some form of exploitation, albeit it to varying degrees, by the corporations. Capitalism demands a service to the market, as illustrated by the bio-engineered animals and Jimmy’s feeling of uselessness in excelling at the humanities. It is not until Crake hires Jimmy to do the ad campaign for BlissPuss<sup>82</sup> pills that Jimmy begins to feel useful and regain some of his confidence. For as much as Jimmy is distrustful and resentful of the system that cast him

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<sup>82</sup> Initially explained by Crake to Jimmy as a solution to sexually transmitted diseases that would provide an “unlimited supply of libido and sexual prowess, coupled with a generalized sense of well-being” that would inhibit violence and control population at the same time by secretly sterilizing everyone who took it (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 294), the BlissPuss pills are how Crake spreads the disease that kills most of humanity.

and his skills aside, he is indoctrinated into it enough that his sense of self-worth is very much tied to how useful he can be to that system. The system must consume and assimilate as many people as it can, while making people and animals the most profitable assets that it can.

The emphasis on assimilation into the biopolitical capitalist system is a major factor as to why Martha Graham is not valued. Despite the school touting their utilitarian degrees, what is taught and learned at Martha Graham was “no longer central to anything” (188) because of the masculine emphasis on competition, market logic, and biotechnology. Like Ren, Jimmy must assimilate and accept a form of exploitation, in his case at the hands of Crake, before he can be free of the “shame” of his mother abandoning the system, and thus him, and of the system rejecting him due to his feminine tendencies. In order to be free from exploitation, it is necessary to exist outside of the system, and thus treated as threat to it, like Jimmy’s mother, the Gardeners, and the MaddAddamites.

Based loosely off Abrahamic mythology, the Gardeners believe a second flood will come and destroy most human life on Earth, an event they are quietly preparing for by learning survival skills, sustainability, and by stockpiling provisions. While they don’t seem to know Crake’s plan and don’t necessarily expect the flood to be a virus, their prediction is correct, and while they are not completely prepared, they are more prepared than anyone else. The Gardeners trace their responsibility to animals to Genesis. Adam One teaches his followers that their god entrusted animals to human care, and the section where Adam One discusses Genesis is striking for a few reasons:

Then God says a noteworthy thing. He says, ‘And the fear of you’ – that is, Man – ‘and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air...into your hand they are delivered.’ Genesis 9.2. That is not God telling Man that he has a right to destroy all the Animals, as some claim. Instead it is a warning to God’s beloved Creatures: *Beware of Man, and of his evil heart*. Then God establishes his Covenant with Noah, and with his sons, ‘and with every living creature.’ (90-91).

The Gardeners do not teach that showing respect for animals is a choice, but rather a commandment from their creator, and one at which humans were almost destined to fail because of their evil hearts. Their interpretation allows the Gardeners to believe that animals have souls because only a being with a soul can enter into a covenant, establishing a binary opposition between how the Gardeners view animals and how the capitalist system views them. One of the major foundations of their religion strikes at the heart of the human/animal boundary and aims to disrupt one of the main characteristics of their society, rampant exploitation, commodification, and murder of animal life. Adam One teaches his followers that preserving and respecting animal life is not just the correct thing to do; it is a moral imperative and cornerstone of their religion, and one life is not more important than another. It might be initially surprising, then, when Adam One admits the Gardeners might need to turn to meat eating after the destruction of civilization. Ethics and religious doctrine are important to them, but they are not more important than survival, and Adam One’s statements indicate putting animal and human life on equal footing is a luxury afforded to people who choose to drop out of the capitalist marketplace. Interestingly, it is precisely this marketplace that has made their

practices of sustainability and compassion such necessities. The destruction of this marketplace, however, might very well result in the Gardeners having to eat their fellow creatures, while asking for forgiveness, of course<sup>83</sup>.

As Canavan argues, an astounding number of Gardeners do survive the waterless flood, despite being unprepared for the waterless flood to take the form of a carefully planned pandemic (155). By *MaddAddam*, a number of ex-Gardeners and MaddAddamites have turned to eating animals, including pigeons. The adult pigeons are capable of killing a human. In addition to the physical threat they pose, the pigeons have been causing trouble for the survivors because they keep breaking into their garden, and the survivors have killed and eaten some of the them. One of the survivors, Manatee, mentions she still feels “kind of weird” about eating them because the pigeons have human neocortex tissue (19), and multiple characters insist the pigeons hold a grudge against the survivors for killing fellow pigeons. Even outside the system that relied on it, the existence of the pigeons is a confusing disruption to the human/animal boundary, and even people who spent years preaching against the ethics of that boundary are not entirely sure how to navigate the reality of its erosion. By initially keeping this boundary intact, even after the total destruction of human society, Atwood argues the boundary is so ingrained in human consciousness that it would take more than the destruction of the market to replace it, as I will discuss in my conclusion. The survivors refrain from eating their Mo’Hairs, genetically modified sheep with human hair, because they appear to be too human and remind them of the actors and actresses in shampoo advertisements (205).

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<sup>83</sup> The Gardeners and MaddAddamites are similar to Pohl and Korthbluth’s Consies. The Consies are a secular resistance movement who aim to abandon an Earth plagued by corporate greed, depleting resources, and a blatant disregard for the natural world by colonizing Venus.

Atwood again presents us with the question: who gets to eat whom, and adds a second, when?

Prior to the flood, the Gardeners resist the values of the system and practice a life of self-sufficiency outside of the market. Not only are they not consumers and therefore add no value to the market, but their existence proves to those living in the pleeblands that other ways of life are possible, making them both an active and metaphorical threat to the system. When the Gardeners rescue Toby from SecretBurgers, they hold a rally in front of the store. While the rally is a ruse to rescue Toby, holding a protest in front of SecretBurgers is consistent with Gardener ideology, and the rally gives them the opportunity to campaign for vegetarianism in front of a large audience. Adam One says to Toby, “do you have any idea what you are selling? Surely you wouldn’t eat your own relatives” (Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 40). Adam One is not only arguing there is something immoral about meat eating here; he attempts to equate eating animals with cannibalism, an almost universal taboo based on the tenants of human exceptionalism. Adam One attacks one of the basic tenants of human society, the human/animal boundary, and strongly suggests humans and animals are brethren in a public setting and in front of one of the more popular purveyors of meat. He continues trying to convince Toby to join them by stating, “(e)very day you stand here selling the mutilated flesh of God’s beloved Creatures, it’s injuring you more. Join us, my dear—we are your friends, we have a place for you” (41). Adam One informs Toby that the practice of selling meat is a danger to her being, to her soul. The Gardeners publicly claim that meat eating is so reprehensible, that it is irreligious and dangerous for the people who enable it to happen. Blanco then yells at Adam One to, “(g)et your fuckin’ paws off my worker, you fuckin’ pervert” (41). In this

one sentence, Blanco perfectly illustrates how important the human/animal boundary is to Atwood's capitalist society. The best way he can think of to insult Adam One is by equating him with both an animal through the use of the word "paws" and by showing his argument about animal life is so outside of "normal" that it is perverted. This brief scene shows some of the dangers the Gardeners pose to the system, by both confronting it and showing alternatives exist. By practicing and preaching strict vegetarianism, as well as refusing to engage in the market at all, the Gardeners are a direct threat to the system and are eventually outlawed. For as much of a threat as the Gardeners pose, Zeb wishes to take a more active role towards destroying the system, resulting in a break between the Gardeners and the MaddAddamites.

Zeb forms his own group, the MaddAddamites, in an attempt to actively disrupt and destroy the system. While some of his followers are ex-Gardeners, his group also includes top scientists who left the Corps because they hated what the Corps were doing and everything they valued (Atwood, *Flood*, 333). These are people who had a high status in their respective compounds, signaling both the personal and financial risks they take to leave and the immorality and unsustainability of the system. Prior to the flood, they coordinate and communicate through the MaddAddam Grandmaster chatroom in Extinctathon, the videogame about extinct animals that Crake and Jimmy play as teenagers. Although she is not part of MaddAddam, after Toby is forced to flee the Gardeners, Zeb gives her an Extinctathon account so she can keep in touch with him, and she sees the regular updates about their activities, initially not understanding the MaddAddamites are responsible for the majority of them:

(m)any of these were about strange outbreaks of new diseases, or peculiar infestations—the spice porcubeaver that was attacking the fan belts of cars, the bean weevil that was decimating Happicuppa coffee plantations<sup>84</sup>, the asphalt-eating microbe that was melting highways. Then the Rarity restaurant chain was obliterated by a series of lethal bombings. (270)

While the bombings are not the work of MaddAddam, the other instances are. The MaddAddamites know the Corps will blame the Gardeners, and shortly after the bombing, the Gardener home is destroyed, the Gardeners are outlawed, and they are all forced to go underground (270-71). Unlike the relatively passive tactics and religiosity practiced by the Gardeners, the MaddAddamites function as a secular bioterrorist organization that targets infrastructure in the hopes that if it is significantly disrupted or rendered unusable, people will consider their actions and the planet will have a chance to heal itself (333). By attacking infrastructure, the MaddAddamites attack both the Corps and the system itself, making themselves an enemy of the state, and most of their members are executed or sent to the Painball Arena, except for the top scientists who Crake decides will be useful for carrying out his plan to exterminate and replace humanity.

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<sup>84</sup> Happicuppa coffee is developed by HelthWyzer “so that all of its beans would ripen simultaneously, and coffee could be grown on huge plantations and harvested with machines. This threw all of the small growers out of business and reduced both them and their laborers to starvation-level poverty.” A global resistance movement and later a war, televised for all to see over the internet, follows (Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 178-179). Happicuppa coffee is one small example of a transnational corporation exerting biopolitical control over populations by controlling what they consume and removing all alternatives, and the ensuing war televised for entertainment illustrates the ways in which enemies of the system are subdued with violence and then disseminated to the population as a warning marketed as entertainment. Happicuppa’s clear literary predecessor is Coffiest in *The Space Merchants*, a highly addictive coffee substitute designed for the lower classes with an added alkaloid (Pohl and Kornbluth 7), which also gives the corporation that owns it biopolitical control, but over the lower classes, specifically.

By playing Extinctathon, Crake convinces the MaddAddamites he is one of them and pretends to join them. However, after he graduates college and secures a high profile job, he turns them in to the Corps, and the scientists are given the choice to be executed or to work for Crake in the Paradise Dome developing the Children of Crake, and so they return to working for the Corps. In addition to working on developing the Crakers, Crake forces them to put the plague in the BlyssPluss pills (395). Crake needs a group of highly skilled and intelligent workers who are in no position to disobey him in order for his plan to work, and he does this by making them fear for their lives. Crake finding an organization that wants to damage the system was one of the best possible outcomes for him because attacking the livelihood of the Corps is seen as the worst of all crimes, so the MaddAddamites have more to fear than most when they are caught. They also have no misconceptions about what will happen to them. Unlike Blanco, the MaddAddamites are scientists who do not want to hurt other living beings, not hardened criminals who do not fear death or who would survive in the Painball Arena. By exploiting the very nature of the system, its refusal to tolerate resistance, Crake is able to set in motion his plan to destroy not just the system, but all of humanity with it.

Both the Gardeners and the MaddAddamites cease to function as before with the destruction of the economic system. While they both detest the rampant exploitation and commodification of Atwood's capitalist system, they exist because of it and must alter themselves after its collapse. As Adam One predicted, many of the survivors turn to eating meat, including pigeons, despite the discomfort this gives them. While in some respects this is a practical concern—meat is readily available, it takes time to plant crops, it takes them a while to find both one another and a place to live—they continue eating



meat after it is no longer necessary. Their decision suggests that despite Adam One's teaching about humans and animals being equal, such equality was both enabled by the very system built on denying it and that such equality was more of a protest than a deeply held conviction. If equality between humans and animals had been a deeply held conviction, then the survivors would have abandoned eating meat as soon as they were able. The survivors only abandon the eating of certain meat when they are forced to recognize the pigeons as equals, as I will discuss in my conclusion. In some ways, both the Gardeners and the MaddAddamites need the system they hate in order to provide a clear antithesis to their way of life. Similarly, the compounds require the pleeblands as their own antithesis because without them, they would have no one on whom to test or to sell their products.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy argues that violence is an intrinsic part of capitalist systems and that this violence is partially founded on and justified by the human/animal boundary. Both the capitalist system and the resistance movement in the trilogy require clearly defined others to function, suggesting both the need for this distinction and the ways in which capitalist systems rely on inequality or binaries. While the text clearly critiques the ways in which humans treat animals, and Atwood works to disrupt the human/animal boundary, this disruption does not provide meaningful and practical suggestions for achieving a more just world for animals. Instead of offering solutions to animal exploitation under capitalism, Atwood chooses to destroy the market, indicating she sees an inherent relationship between animal exploitation and capitalism. The exploitation of animals in the text is directly linked to physical and systemic violence, and these forms of violence are essential aspects of Atwood's society prior to the

waterless flood. For Atwood, animal exploitation is also linked to human exploitation, where some humans are worthy of protection and others function primarily as biocapital. The trilogy suggests it is necessary to interrogate how economic systems, specifically capitalist systems, shape the ways humans see one another, animals, and the environment. By recognizing the influence of these systems, readers can consider the ways in which we might imagine more viable alternatives than Atwood's trilogy offers.

### Conclusion: Out of the Capitalist System and Political Animals

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *We3*, and the *MaddAddam* trilogy are three texts that have rightly received attention from Animal Studies because of their promotion of animal welfare. These texts and their respective authors attempted to change the conversation surrounding animals and imagine alternatives to traditional thinking surrounding animal subjectivity. Despite their intentions, however, the authors fail to depict non-exploitative relationships with animals within capitalist systems, suggesting an inherently exploitive relationship between animals and biopolitical capitalism.

Capitalism requires the objectification of animals and the denial of animal agency because it is not able to withstand reflection of past and current capitalist demands, values, and practice. Recognizing animals as beings deserving of and entitled to full subjectivity would require a re-shaping of both the basic foundations and principles of human societies since they, in part, rely on animal objectification and resourceification (Wolfe ix). Additionally, such recognition would also require a re-shaping of capitalism itself. As I discussed in my Introduction, many people incorrectly argue capitalism is an inevitable byproduct of human advancement (Wood 12). Viewing capitalism as both inevitable and natural suggests the ways in which humans and animals are treated under capitalism is also inevitable. Since capitalism works to make social relationships adjuncts to the market, capitalism dictates the ways in which humans view both other humans and animals, often designating others as either competition or resources. By viewing this turn

as inevitable and by viewing relationships primarily within the context of the market, oppression and exploitation under capitalism can be viewed as both logical and necessary to the continuation of society.

In Chapter One, I explored the relationship between animals, empathy, and capitalism in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968). While *Androids* is one of the most studied works of SF and has been of particular interest to animal studies scholars, past research has not discussed the essential role of capitalism within the text. In this chapter, I argued Dick characterizes the relationship between animals and capitalism as inherently exploitative and seemingly incompatible with empathy. Additionally, capitalism shapes the ways in which characters in the text view human, android, and animal life. Humans reduce other humans to competition or "less than" status, androids are marketed as slaves, and animals are objectified as expensive status symbols, rather than companions, and these relationships are both dictated by and reinforced by patriarchal colonial capitalism. By analyzing the role of shame inherent in patriarchal capitalism, I illustrated how the commodity relationship humans have with their animals does not increase the value placed on animal life in any meaningful way beyond their price tag. Despite a religious emphasis on empathy and rampant empathy posturing present in Dick's future America, the majority of human characters and social practices are decidedly unempathetic due to the novel's colonial capitalist system. Ultimately, *Androids* suggests while important, an emphasis on empathy is not enough to save animals and nature from human exploitation, particularly in an inherently exploitative system such as patriarchal colonial capitalism.

The majority of characters in *Androids* are human. While animals are often discussed and Deckard's desire for a biological animal informs the plot and his motivations and actions, biological animals themselves are largely absent from the text due to widespread environmental destruction and mass extinction. Very few animals within the text are confirmed to be biological, rather than android, and like many of Dick's novels, there are multiple questions of what is real and what is not. Vint even questions whether biological animals are truly present within the text ("Speciesism" 112). Of the animals who are present, none are given a voice or characterization, a metaphorical representation of how the humans within the text view them and their status as biocapital. While Chapter One focused on objectified animals without a voice or characterization, Chapter Two focused on animal protagonists with the power of speech in Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's *We3* (2005). While the animals in *Androids* provided a representation of animals as luxury good, the animals in *We3* illustrate the ways in which science, the government, the military, and biopolitical capitalism use and reconfigure animal labor and animal bodies as sources of profit and weaponry.

Morrison and Quitely's *We3*, short for Animal Weapon 3, tells the story of three animals—a dog (Bandit), a cat (Tinker), and a rabbit (Pirate)—who have been turned into biorgs as part of a government funded and controlled military research project. In Chapter Two, I argued the interconnected systems of science, the military, the government, and capitalism in *We3* must reject the evidence they are given of animal subjectivity because acknowledging animal agency and subjectivity would undermine the graphic novel's capitalist system. Since the domination of animals (in one way or another) lies at the base of capitalist power structures and the level of profit through exploitation, to perceive or

conceive of a self-determined animal agency would undermine the basis for the capitalist model. The anxieties surrounding animal agency and subjectivity are best expressed through Senator Washington and the general's pronounced discomfort with the animals' power of human speech and their desire for an animal weapon who lacks these abilities. The animals' power of speech reminds the humans who witness the Animal Weapon Project that these animals are thinking, feeling beings with their own desires and needs. In order to justify modifying the animals as weapons and sending them into dangerous situations, the humans involved in the project must see them as unthinking and instinctual beings. Human speech makes their classification as biocapital uncomfortable and forces moral introspection with the potential to disrupt the entire Animal Weapons Project. After a long and arduous adventure, Pirate is killed, and Bandit and Tinker find their "home" with a homeless man. As Bandit and Tinker can only escape exploitation and resourceification by dropping out of the system entirely, I argued that *We3* suggests there is no room for animal subjectivity and agency under biopolitical capitalism. Indeed, animal subjectivity and agency present such an attack on the moral reasoning behind biopolitical capitalism that their recognition has the potential to disrupt the entire system.

I also argued that Dr. Berry, the scientist in charge of and responsible for working with Bandit, Tinker, and Pirate is classified as more animal than human by the men representing science (Dr. Trendle), the government (Senator Washington), and the military (the unnamed general). Her treatment is a direct result of her identity as a woman and the ways in which patriarchal capitalism animalizes women as consumable objects. Despite receiving more characterization than any of the male figures in the text, Dr. Berry and her treatment are not meant to be a significant portion of the narrative. Such a

distinction does force readers to focus on the animal protagonists, which is arguably necessary when human characters are present, but it also speaks to the ways in which patriarchal capitalism seeks to silence women.

The most compelling and well-rounded characters in *We3* are animals, not humans. The animals are linked to both the homeless man and Dr. Berry. The animals, Dr. Berry, and the homeless man are abandoned by the systems of science, the military, and the government when they are no longer useful. Additionally, both the homeless man and Dr. Berry are treated like animals by the men who see no value in them. The parallels between these characters suggest the ways in which biopolitical capitalism relies on patriarchal and economic standards of value. I explored the connections between animals and women more in depth in Chapter Three using Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, as well as the ways in which corporations classify each as raw material to be shaped into biocapital.

The three novels that constitute Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013), depict and explore a dystopian America that has been transformed from deregulated biopolitical capitalism to complete societal collapse. Prior to the waterless flood, the pandemic that killed the majority of humanity, Atwood's America is run entirely by corporations that are virtually indistinguishable from the government. Animals are conceived of, and in some instances created, by these corporations as resources for the furthering of profit under late stage capitalism and are blatantly exploited for this purpose as profitable biocapital. In this chapter, I argued that violence is an intrinsic part of capitalist systems in the text and that this violence is partially founded on and justified by the human/animal boundary. Both

the capitalist system and the resistance movement in the trilogy require clearly defined others to function and thrive, suggesting both the need for this distinction and the ways in which capitalist systems rely on inequality through the enforcement of binaries. Caring for and showing empathy for animals is characterized as both radical and feminine, ensuring those who share these feelings are exploited or expelled by the system. By linking animals and women, both are classified as consumable bodies for the appetites of men and corporations, and both suffer extreme forms of exploitation as biocapital under the system. In order to justify animal exploitation through the human/animal boundary, women in patriarchal society must be classified as more animal than human and as less deserving of human dignity than men. Atwood's text provides no meaningful solutions for the exploitation of women and animals in the trilogy, and instead depicts the destruction of capitalism and near extinction of humanity as the only possible means to an end of this practice. I argue the text illustrates that the human animal boundary is so ingrained in Western society that it would take the destruction of human society to remove it. The text shows how corporations and the market can dictate the relationships humans have to one another, animals, and the environment, and exemplifies the importance of interrogating those systems.

Only with the destruction of capitalism in the *MaddAddam* trilogy or completely opting out of the capitalist model in *We3* can the animal be seen and recognized as a being with independent agency outside of human constructions or anthropomorphism. Each of these authors are interested in animal welfare, with Atwood and Morrison/Quitely showing a significant interest in animal subjectivity and agency. Such characterization from authors inherently interested in animal welfare suggests animal



studies scholars who have ignored capitalism's relationship to the animal have missed a fundamental aspect to animal exploitation and denial of subjectivity. All three texts illustrate that their respective capitalist systems are essential to understanding the motivations and justifications for animal exploitation. By removing animals from both exploitation and capitalism (in the cases of Atwood and Morrison/Quitely) or by leaving animals subject to exploitation under capitalism (in the case of Dick), the texts invite readers to consider the ways in which capitalist economic systems are all-encompassing and present grave consequences for humans, animals, and the environment. By not providing ways in which animal exploitation can be avoided under capitalist systems, the solutions in the text range from implausible to fantastical.

As I argued in Chapter Two, living with the homeless man is the best solution for Bandit and Tinker in the text, despite all the problems having pets while homeless presents. Outside the world of the text, this is obviously not a viable solution to animal exploitation under capitalism. Even within the text, while the Animal Weapons Project is being investigated and has been shut down, the conditions that resulted in its justification have not changed, leaving the door open for future projects done in a seemingly more ethical manner that the public might support or those hidden from public view. Indeed, Senator Washington himself makes multiple suggestions of what might make the project palpable to the public, and there is no indication in the text that The Animal Weapons project would be under investigation if it had not resulted in the deaths of humans who were not designated targets for assassination.

In Chapter Three, I mentioned that Atwood gives her pigeons political representation and agency, a solution even more farfetched than having animals live with

a homeless person. The political animal is an almost fantastical or magical way of gaining animal subjectivity, personhood, and agency. Political animals do represent the potential and ability of SF to imagine other possibilities, experiences, and subjectivities, and political animals are an excellent opportunity for readers to imagine nonhuman experience. Reading about these animals offers great potential for readers to empathize with nonhuman others. However, unlike Bandit and Tinker, who are animals who primarily act like animals, the pigeons are a bit more human than animal and share human neocortex tissue. Thus, while they are in pig bodies and exhibit pig behaviors, they are also partially human and engage in the human practice of politics. The “humanness” of the pigeons might have the effect of forcing readers to consider what traits they share with animals, an important intellectual exercise. However, characterizing the pigeons as human-like through genetic manipulation offers limited potential for improving animal welfare, particularly for species who seem incredibly alien to humans or who are perceived to have low intelligence. It is only through their ability to practice politics that the pigeons “earn” full rights and personhood from the Gardeners and MaddAddamites, and these are humans who care about animal life in a way that was classified as antithetical to society before it collapsed. Even humans who care about animal welfare and who previously preached against human exceptionalism need to be confronted with animals who can ask for and demand recognition before they are prepared to grant it.

The political animal imagines the animal commanding agency. Like historical examples of oppressed peoples, the pigeons are only given full rights when they demand them and have something to offer in return. The humans in the text do not seem to feel

the pigeons are “owed” these rights from the start. The pigeons must both demand and earn them. The pigeons’ attempt at finding their political voices is an attempt to mimic the dominant culture (humanity) with the ultimate goal of bettering their situations and gaining fundamental rights. Animal liberation achieved through political animals implies only animals who have human characteristics, and perhaps only animals whose “human” characteristics outweigh their “animal” ones, have or can have their subjectivity recognized. Not every animal in the *MaddAddam* trilogy is granted these rights—only the ones who can practice full politics and communication. It is only after the complete collapse of human societies that this is possible, and only with humans who spent years preaching that animal and human life were equal. The situation suggests both the dangers of all-encompassing capitalist markets, even to those who object to capitalist markets while living in them, and the importance of talking and teaching about animal welfare.

In order to exemplify the political animal, it is necessary to return to Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy in depth and discuss the relationship between the surviving MaddAddamites and Gardeners, the Crakers, and the pigeons in the final novel, *MaddAddam*. As I discussed in Chapter Three, at this point in the trilogy, human society has largely collapsed, and the remaining humans consist largely of ex-MaddAddamites and Gardeners who live in a communal home. An injured and sick Jimmy/Snowman is also with them, as well as the Crakers. The Crakers are continuing to advance and learn, largely under the teachings of Toby, beyond what Crake had initially envisioned. Adam One is still missing and presumed dead. The painballers are still alive and exist as a source of anxiety and fear. The painballers are fond of murder and rape and know the MaddAddamites and Gardeners have both food and shelter. However, one of the biggest

animal antagonists the MaddAddamites and Gardeners face is the pigeons. The transgenic pigs have the intelligence of humans, live in groups, routinely break into the humans' farm to steal food, and pose a physical danger. Zeb finds a dead pigeonlet who has been shot and had her leg torn off, and they take it as evidence that the painballers are still near their shelter (Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 157).

The painballers kill pigeonlets as a warning to both the MaddAddamites and Gardener survivors and the adult pigeons. Deeply troubled by this, the pigeons visit the Gardeners and MaddAddamites asking for help in one of the most remarkable scenes in the trilogy. A group of 50 pigeons come to the survivors' shelter in a funeral march, complete with flowers and leaves and a second dead pigeonlet whose throat has been slashed. The Crakers exist as beings who are part human and part animal. They can understand the pigeons' language and one of them, by the name of Blackbeard, translates between human and pigeon. The pigeons explain the painballers are now travelling in a group of three, not two. We later learn this third man is Adam One, and he is being kept as their prisoner. Knowing the MaddAddamite and Gardener survivors have guns and knowing what guns can do, the pigeons want the survivors to kill the painballers.

Blackbeard explains:

‘In return, if you help them to kill the three bad men, they will never again to eat your garden. Or any of you,’ he adds seriously. ‘Even if you are dead, they will not eat you. And they ask that you must no longer make holes in them, with blood, and cook them in smelly bone soup, or hang them in the smoke, or fry them and eat them. Not any more. (270).

In the short chapter where this meeting takes place, the survivors learn the pigeons have a strong social group, have language, mourn their dead, hold funerals, know the humans can kill them, know the humans sometimes cook and eat them, and are capable of engaging in a political process. The pigeons have offered these humans a peace treaty, a peace treaty they developed, discussed as a group, and to which they are all willing to agree. The pigeons show an awareness of their enemies, the ability to prioritize threats (arguably far better than Rabbit does in *We3*), and the ability to find solutions to their problems.

Before the pigeons leave, they tell the survivors they may eat the dead pigeonlet since they have finished their mourning. However, the survivors are decidedly uncomfortable with this because “it would be like eating a baby” (273), and so they bury the little pigeon (275). Higher order thinking and practicing politics are human characteristics, and now that the MaddAddamites and Gardeners know the pigeons possess these traits, they can no longer think of the pigeons as suitable food, despite being offered the pigeonlet for precisely this purpose and despite being in a situation where stores no longer exist and food is in short supply. Now that the humans have been given indisputable proof that the pigeons severely disrupt the human/animal boundary, they no longer feel the pigeons are an acceptable source of food. It is precisely the pigeon’s ability and willingness to engage in a political process that makes them seem more human than animal, and this creates a feeling of discomfort with the idea of consuming the pigeon related to cannibalism. Despite being of a different species, the pigeons now benefit from speciesism—animals are for eating, but humans are not.

The pigoons and the survivors need to travel from the immediate area to find the painballers, and both during their journey and the ensuing fight, the pigoons display basic military tactics, complete with scouts who make intelligence reports, outriders who sniff the air looking for their enemies, and generals (341 and 346). Such tactics are not a result of human suggestion; the pigoons make these decisions on their own and have arrived at the MaddAddamite/Gardener shelter with a plan and strategy they clearly discussed beforehand. The pigoons are not just capable of creating a treaty; they are capable of engaging in military tactics and strategy, as well. In fact, it is the pigoons who lead the humans to the compound where the painballers are sheltering, and a battle ensues. It is made explicit in the text that the pigoons take the lead in terms of tactics and strategy, and the humans and pigoons are able to win the fight against the painballers precisely because they all work together. After losing one pigoon and two humans in the battle, the two painballers are taken as prisoners.

The following morning the MaddAddamities/Gardeners and the pigoons hold a trial to determine what to do with the painballers because some of the humans are inclined to show the painballers mercy. The Pigoons vote collectively, through their leader, and Blackbeard translates. Here, the pigoons engage in one of the basic tenants of many contemporary human societies—a trial to determine someone’s guilt and punishment ending in a vote by jury. They vote for the painballers’ deaths (369-70). The pigoons are able to gather evidence, weigh that evidence, and then come to a consensus as a group. The pigoons have engaged in multiple political processes by then end of the third novel, and they often behave more “human” and certainly more humanely than the painballers. Their ability to transcend their status as purely animal and the help they

provide the MaddAddamites/Gardeners is what allows the pigeons to “earn” their rights and their continued safety. Despite all of the tenants of being a Gardener, when confronted with the reality of what equal footing between humans and animals might look like in a post-apocalyptic society, only the animals who can fight for these rights on human terms are allowed this privileged status.

A while later, time is often difficult the gauge in the trilogy, two young pigeons break into the MaddAddamite/Gardener’s garden and eat the carrots and the beets. The MaddAddamites/Gardeners hold a conference with the pigeons who send a “delegation of three adults” who act much like human parents who are embarrassed about their children’s behavior (377-78) or like diplomats or government representatives who are speaking for a specific group of people. The humans and pigeons agree that the pigeonlets will be punished by the adult pigeons. All is forgiven on the part of the humans, and their treaty with the pigeons remains intact. The pigeons are not just capable of making treaties; they are capable of abiding by them, among the adults, at least, and punishing their own who do not do so. It is difficult to imagine this situation playing out the same way if the adult pigeons were not recognizable as human parents.

At the end of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, it is clear that the world will be inherited by those who are representative of bridging the trans-species boundary, as both the pigeons and Crakers are part human animal and part non-human animal. It is this ability to transcend the binaries that initially divides the human and non-human animal (unlike the Gardeners and MaddAddamites whose equality with the non-human animal breaks down when it seems necessary for the survival of the human). Transcending the human/animal boundary allows species to work in cooperation and engage one another as

equal subjects, avoiding the othering and commodification of one by the other as expressed in the capitalist model. However, because of the restrictions placed on animal subjectivity necessitated by capitalism, this is only possible following the destruction of not just the system, but of nearly all human life.

Atwood's trilogy seems to suggest the necessity of compassion and understanding, while simultaneously suggesting these ideals are easiest within the context of some sort of civilization, even if that civilization is built on exploitation. It is when civilization breaks down that the MaddAddamites and Gardeners break with the strict vegetarianism and the "life is life" philosophy they practiced as rebellion against neoliberalist commodification of life. "Life is life" is a seemingly untenable position in this trilogy, as there is no indication in the end they abandon eating meat entirely as the humans grow their civilization with the Crakers. It is only the animals who display human characteristics that they refrain from eating. By creating political pigs and humans who are decidedly sub-human, Atwood's text questions the nature of the human/animal boundary and forces readers to confront the ethics of exploitation and the commodification of life. There are no "winners" at the end of MaddAddam, except perhaps the pigeons. As for the humans, they do not all survive, and the ending is mixed with sorrow, hope, and unknown danger. While the pigeons successfully lobby for and gain their rights through politics, it is important to discuss an animal who is not so lucky, Chicken Little in *The Space Merchants*. Chicken Little's unsuccessful struggle for a recognition of her consciousness speaks to the importance of animals "acting like humans" in SF texts in order to successfully transcend the human/animal boundary and further illustrates the role of capitalism in animal exploitation.



Another prominent political animal is Frederick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's Chicken Little. As noted by Warren Belasco in his book *Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food*, by embracing the traditions of "Wells and Huxley, Fredrick Pohl, Ward Moore, and John Brunner extended and polished the central themes of dissent: a radical critique of consumer capitalism, technocratic efficiency, and corporate globalization, fears of the unintended consequences of cornucopian science" (126), and I have already discussed the multiple themes shared by *The Space Merchants* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy. *The Space Merchants* depicts a dystopian vision of an America run by corporations. Like many SF texts from the period and the *MaddAddam* trilogy, Pohl and Kornbluth's America is plagued by dwindling food and water supplies. While "new protein," naturally produced meat, can be easily purchased and consumed by the elite, the consumer class lives off "regenerated-protein." This regenerated-protein is carved off a "grey-brown, rubbery hemisphere some fifteen yards in diameter" (Pohl and Kornbluth 83) named Chicken Little. Chlorella Proteins keeps Chicken Little trapped in a "nest" that invokes the worst images associated with modern agribusiness' industrialized farming methods. Chicken Little's "nest" and her definition as a "protein" suggest she is only slightly worse off than a contemporary veal calf. In this way, Chicken Little is treated at best as bare life, and at worst, as a mere object, a thing that is devoid of any capacity for life.

Chicken Little is entirely subject to the corporation which has created and houses her because she cannot escape or even eat for herself. As Susan McHugh notes, Chicken Little is a direct result of "corporate greed run amok" (192), a status she shares with the pricetags associated with Dick's animals, Atwood's bioengineered animals, and to a

lesser extent because of the intertwining power structures in the text, Morrison and Quitely's Animal Weapons Project. Chicken Little was created by a corporation, is imprisoned by a corporation, and is kept alive by the corporation so they can remove pieces of her daily to feed consumers, a distinct underclass also under the biopolitical control of corporations in *The Space Merchants*. Access to naturally produced meat is a hallmark of the wealthy and upper-class, and since America is run by corporations, those working in advertising enjoy the benefits of the highest status. Early in the novel, the protagonist, Mitch Courtenay is in a corporate meeting at his advertising agency, Fowler Schocken Associates. When discussing the Eastern United States' school lunch program, one of Courtenay's co-workers brags all the schools in that area are now using their recommendation of soyaburgers and regenerated steak (Pohl and Kornbluth 3). Among this wealthy and privileged group, "there wasn't a man around the table who didn't shudder at the thought of soyaburgers and regenerated steak" (3). Their reactions suggest a distinct class system at work. Only consumers are lowly enough to consume the regenerated meat corporations produce and control, so much so that those in power are repulsed by the thought of eating it. Chicken Little's highly regulated nutrients and the parts of her distributed for sale are an essential aspect of the biopolitical control corporations exact over the consumer population.

Chicken Little may initially appear as a *homo sacer, zoe*, an objectified life form who is kept alive as a tool of the instruments of power and used to police a distinct class system. Chicken Little "had started out as a lump of heart tissue" and "she didn't know any better than to grow up against a foreign body and surround it" (76), an introduction designed to situate her as a purely objectified lifeform. Chicken Little's body is entirely

regulated, putting her directly under the corporation's biopolitical control. She has no agency over the slicing she endures nightly. She has been designed to grow continuously with as few nutrients and little intervention as possible. In this respect, Chicken Little is a metaphor for the perfect concept of a capitalist market and the ideal colonial subject. She will continue to grow, to the detriment of herself, with as little intervention or cost as possible, for the profit of the elite. She cannot escape the concrete "nest" she is kept inside. Created by Chlorella Proteins through genetic engineering, she exists as an ultimate form of the regulated animal body. It is seemingly easy, then, to read Chicken Little as pure *zoe*.

It would appear Chicken Little's inability for advanced thought and agency are set in stone from her initial creation. After all, she "doesn't know" any better than to keep growing; it is designed instinct to serve the corporation monetarily and biopolitically. However, Chicken Little serves a greater purpose within the novel. She shelters the resistance movement, the Consies. The Consies aim to colonize Venus, to abandon an Earth plagued by corporate greed, depleting resources, and a blatant disregard for the natural world. The Consie cell meets under Chicken Little, who seems to be a physical representation of what they are fighting against. She is a vision of horror:

It was a great concrete dome, concrete floored. Chicken Little filled most of it.

She was a grey-brown rubbery hemisphere some fifteen yards in diameter.

Dozens of pipes ran into her pulsating flesh. You could see she was alive. (83)

She is described as a vision of industrial farming at its worst, of animal as pure product. Even Courtenay, a man who needs the mechanical to explain the natural, as exemplified when he sees a mother whale milking her calf and thinks the process looks like "an aerial

refueling operation” (55), is in some way repulsed by Chicken Little. When Courtenay first sees her, he gulps, and he shudders later in the scene when she moves (84)<sup>85</sup>. The character must, in a small way, be seen as complicit in Chicken Little’s imprisonment since he has previously been so willing to sell and push regenerated meat. However, Courtenay’s complicity and previous inability to value anything but the profit margin only serve to make his reaction significantly compelling and important. Even a man who cannot understand the natural when it is right in front of him and who would laud Chlorella Proteins’ ability to manage the “bottom line” were he in charge of it, knows something here is amiss.

To get under Chicken Little, Herrera uses Galton’s Whistle, an item which existed outside of the text and which Pohl and Kornbluth describe quite accurately. It is a whistle without a mouthpiece and uses a small air tank fed by a hand pump (84). Herrera pumps the whistle, and Chicken Little pulsates away from the pipe she sits on, revealing a cavity that Courtenay and Herrera crawl inside. Once inside, Herrera must use the whistle a second time to open a manhole, which leads them to a small well-lit office where the Consie cell holds its meeting (84-5). The use of Galton’s Whistle is striking and points to a larger theme within the text. The whistle was used to test hearing ranges, and it is generally accepted as a predecessor to the contemporary dog whistle. However, as Brennen notes, “(f)or Galton, overall sensory acuity was an indirect but reliable measure of general intelligence, so he equipped his testing centers with such devices” (113). Galton also coined the term “eugenics” in 1883 (“eugenic”) and was in favor of bettering society through the selective breeding of the intelligent (“Human Intelligence”). As

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<sup>85</sup> Jimmy’s reaction to the ChickieNobs in *Oryx and Crake* mirrors Courtenay’s reaction in this scene. Both men know what they are seeing is immoral and respond accordingly.

Agamben states, “(f)rom the end of the nineteenth century, Francis Galton’s work functions as the theoretical background for the work of the science of the police, which has now become biopolitics” (*Homo Sacer* 145). Both Agamben and Foucault connect the nineteenth century’s interest in eugenics with the racist and murderous discourse of Nazism and biopolitics. The use of Galton’s whistle points to a large and disturbing theme of eugenics within *The Space Merchants*, outside of the specifics of this study<sup>86</sup>.

However, this use of Galton is important for understanding Chicken Little and her role in the text. It is important to note that while with our contemporary understanding we would generally not consider Chicken Little a product of eugenics, Pohl and Kornbluth would have in 1952. At the time, “genetic engineering” was seen only as eugenics (“genetic engineering”). The term eugenics distinguishing selective breeding and the term genetic engineering as altering a genome were put in use later than 1952. The use of Galton’s Whistle confirms the obvious of Chicken Little; she is an unnatural life form created by humans. However, it is important to return to the fact that Galton considered the whistle to determine intelligence, a whistle Herrera and Courtenay can notably not hear. On some level, Chicken Little possess intelligence beyond what is initially assumed of her by both readers of the text and the characters in it. Her intelligence and the inability of any of the characters to recognize it again suggests the importance of speech to being able to determine an animal’s intelligence in the texts I have used in this study. It is the animals who are granted the ability to communicate with humans (either through

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<sup>86</sup> C.M. Kornbluth’s “The Marching Morons” (1951) also includes themes of eugenics. The protagonist, John Barlow, wakes up hundreds of years into the future to a world in which intellectual “elites” work feverishly for the benefit of “morons.” Barlow designs a “solution” to murder the “morons” and “free” the “elites.” While many scholars, including Gary K. Wolfe and Peter Nicholls, argue the story is deeply and morally flawed, Andrew Duncan argues it is a deeply misunderstood text and explicitly humanist.

strict modification as in the case in *We3*, or through both modification and translation as in the case in the *MaddAddam* trilogy) who are granted agency and subjectivity. Chicken Little cannot speak, and she is not presented as a fully realized subject.

Despite her inability to speak or make sounds, Chicken Little can communicate through movement, and she does attempt to claim her agency. A McHugh correctly insists, Chicken Little plays an “active role” by “sheltering members of the resistance movement working to bring down the system that exploits her” (192). It is through responding to Galton’s Whistle and helping the Consies that Chicken Little can affect political agency, a right denied to bare life. The whistle does not have any power within the text that it does not have outside of it, and so it does not possess any extra abilities to control Chicken Little. By engaging in political action, Chicken Little transcends her role as mere *zoe* and engages in action only afforded to *bios*.

Chicken Little never escapes her fate within the novel, despite attempting to exert her political agency. Unlike the pigeons, Chicken Little does not have a translator who can put her words or thoughts into human speech. She does not even seem to have the power to make sounds. Without either of these things, she cannot demand her rights or force the humans in her world to confront her subjectivity and agency. Since the solution to corporate exploitation for the Consies is to abandon Earth entirely, and the merging of corporations and governments is still active at the end of the novel, there is no way for Chicken Little to escape corporate rule. Again, the animal without speech and subject to capitalism remains an exploited product, while the animals who have the power to communicate with humans at certain points in their respective texts and who are no longer part of capitalist societies are granted the acknowledgment of their full rights and

subjectivities. While the imaginative power of characterizing animals and being able to engage in political processes or communicate with humans has great empathetic potential, it offers a scathing critique of the biopolitical capitalist systems in which these animals are depicted.

The political animal is the most interesting attempt to escape the biopolitical, neoliberal state offered in these texts. Atwood's pigeons successfully escape exploitation through attaining political rights. However, all of the texts (*Androids*, *We3*, the *MaddAddam* trilogy, and *The Space Merchants*) suggest there is no escape from a state of perpetual exploitation and danger for animals, and perhaps humans, under late-stage capitalism. The pigeons move from patented product to political animal, but this journey is only possible due to the utter collapse of capitalism, under a communal society run by the God's Gardeners and MaddAddamites, and after the pigeons prove their "worth" and "humanity." In a communal society, people need one another to survive and are not encouraged to view one another as competition. It is not until the humans need the pigeons and abandon their capitalist thinking that they are competing for resources with the pigeons that they are willing to consider a peace treaty with them. The MaddAddamites must be outside of capitalism to recognize a basic right to survival and well-being for all creatures, at least in practice, rather than theory. Similarly, Chicken Little shelters the Consies, a resistance movement dedicated to fighting capitalism. These political animals, the pigeons and Chicken Little, and the disparity in their success at becoming regarded as fully realized subjects, suggests a recognition of fundamental animal rights is not possible in societies where capitalism remains intact.

In these texts, it is only through the destruction of capitalism that the animal can be seen as a thing in itself.<sup>87</sup> Such characterization from authors inherently interested in animal welfare suggests animal studies scholars who have ignored capitalism's relationship to animals have missed a fundamental aspect of animal exploitation and the denial of animal subjectivity. Not only must we re-think our relationships to animals, we must re-think our relationships to capitalist systems that have the potential to oppress both human and animal life alike. Rather than imagining what animal liberation in a post-capitalist society might look like, it is important to consider what animal liberation within a capitalist system might look like, as no one has done this effectively yet. This signals a possible unwillingness to "fix" the capitalist model and/or the inability to see it as an institution that can be corrected to incorporate the agency of those it has previously exploited. It is also possible SF criticism's heavy reliance on Marxist models have prevented SF scholars from imagining the same, as it is difficult to consider fixing a system which is viewed as so fundamentally flawed. However, the animal lives subject to exploitation under capitalism deserve those of us who are concerned about animal welfare alter our thinking on this subject. By first acknowledging the system's inherently destructive relationship to animals, we can begin to consider ways of changing dominant thinking about human/animal relationships and embark on a journey to the full recognition of animal subjectivity within and outside the texts of the possible.

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<sup>87</sup> What Derrida is trying to get to—to be self-defining, a being that exists outside of human perception with its own desires and motivations.



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