UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍAS INGLESA Y ALEMANA

Programa de Doctorado: Lenguas, Textos y Contextos

Redefining Humanimal Bonds in Three Contemporary Irish Novels

PhD Dissertation

Vanesa Roldán Romero

Supervisors Dr. Margarita Carretero González and Dr. Manuela Palacios González

Granada, 2024

To Berto and Iria,
who have taught
me so much.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Who wills, Can.

Who tries, Does.

Who loves, Lives. (A. McCaffrey, *Dragonsong* 89)

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Margarita and Manuela, whose unwavering support and guidance have been invaluable throughout this academic journey. Their exceptional qualities as academics, branded by kindness, open-mindedness, and unwavering determination, have illuminated the path even during the dimmest moments of this long and challenging journey.

I am deeply indebted to Manuela for affording me the opportunity to embark on this doctoral thesis within the framework of "The Animal Trope: An Ecofeminist Analysis of Contemporary Culture in Galicia and Ireland" (PGC2018-093545-B-I00 MCIU/AEI/FEDER, UE). This initiative not only provided a foundational structure for my research but also introduced me to Galiza. I will forever cherish one of the earliest lessons I received from my doctoral colleagues in Santiago de Compostela, "Nunca choveu que non escampara." This expression, which they often shared during moments of despair, has been a source of inspiration throughout the years.

To Margarita, my heartfelt gratitude extends far beyond the bounds of words. Her invaluable contributions to our academic discussions surrounding this thesis are, without doubt, praiseworthy. However, it's not merely her scholarly insights that I appreciate. More significantly, it's the support she has generously provided over the years that has truly illuminated this challenging academic path. Margarita's guidance has not only assisted me in navigating the often-tempestuous sea of academia but has also served as a comforting beacon during the numerous trying moments of this journey.

In addition, I must express my profound gratitude to the project "Relatos de frontera: cambio global e identidad en la narrativa breve británica contemporánea" (PID2021-122433NB-I00), coordinated by Dr. Laura María Lojo Rodríguez and Dr. Jorge Sacido Romero. Their steady support and the opportunities this project provided were crucial in bringing this thesis to fruition. To them, I extend my deepest gratitude and resolute indebtedness.

My heartfelt thanks also extend to my family, whose support has been a constant pillar in the face of any circumstance. However, my deepest gratitude is reserved for my partner. His unwavering support has been the bedrock upon which this thesis stands. His role transcended that of a mere listener to my frustrations during the thesis-writing process; he actively propelled me forward. Words alone cannot encapsulate the depth of my gratitude for his steadfast companionship during this defiant journey.

Throughout the course of this academic voyage, a transformation has taken place in tandem with the passage of time during the thesis-writing process. In the face of numerous obstacles and hurdles that have crossed my path, I find myself in a unique position to reflect upon this journey. Without reservation, I can declare that I have indeed *willed, tried,* and *loved* every moment that has played a part in shaping this dissertation. These instants have not only contributed to the creation of this thesis but have also been integral in my own growth as an academic researcher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"How does one go about reading literary animals?" (Lönngren 37).

Throughout the course of this dissertation, a pressing question posed by Ann-Sofie Lönngren has lingered in my thoughts: how can we truly comprehend and interpret literary animals? Are they mere tropes or do they embody something more profound? If so, what does this elusive essence entail? And, perhaps most crucially, should our approach to reading and understanding literary animals undergo a transformative shift in which we cease to read them as merely literary figures? Motivated by these inquiries, this doctoral thesis embarks on an intellectual journey through the complex tapestry of literature, striving to illuminate the construction of literary animals and the profound implications it may hold for readers and authors.

At its essence, this thesis celebrates the symbiotic relationship between literature and how humans interact with other animals. It goes beyond viewing literature as an artistic discourse, a way to represent issues in extratextual reality and recognises it as a potent force that actively shapes and reshapes our perceptions, beliefs, and aspirations, including those concerning the more-than-human. Drawing upon a multidisciplinary approach, this thesis interweaves ecocriticism, critical posthumanism, feminism, and the historical context of twentieth and twenty-first-century Ireland to shed light on the complexity of humanimal relations in contemporary Irish fiction through an analysis of three novels written by women: Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987), Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), and Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015). These novels not only feature members of other species and explore interactions between humans and other-than-human animals — such as the rider/horse in *The Lady*, the human/sheep relationship in *One Day as a Tiger,* and the human/dog connection in *Spill Simmer Falter* Wither — but also offer a broader perspective on the exploration of the human-animal[1] bond. Analysing this trio of novels strikes a balance between providing a comprehensive overview of the bond between humans and other species in recent Irish fiction and maintaining the manageability of a doctoral thesis.

---

[1] In order to avoid anthropocentric dichotomies, this dissertation shall use the term "humanimal" rather than "human-animal."

This doctoral thesis opens with a concise overview of the Irish novel, with particular emphasis on the significant influence of the Gothic and the Big House genre. Attention then shifts towards the emergence of women writers, with a focus on the twentieth century, highlighting their notable contributions to Irish literature, as they opened the path for subsequent authors, including the three examined in this dissertation. Subsequently, key periods from recent Irish history are briefly presented, illustrating their function within the three novels under analysis and highlighting the role of literature as a form of resistance against various oppressive systems. Building upon this contextual foundation, the introduction proceeds to articulate the general and specific aims of the dissertation, presenting the corpus of works under examination, and outlining the structure of the thesis. The provided layout aims to facilitate seamless navigation through the pages, thereby enabling readers to engage with its contents in a coherent and meaningful manner.

0.1. Irish Literature as a Site of Resistance

At the heart of Ireland's literature lies a tapestry of colonisation, political strife, and cultural revival. The profound impact of British rule on Ireland cannot be overstated, as it subjected the nation to the suppression of language, culture, and political autonomy under the yoke of the British Empire, often through the "animalisation" of the Irish. As Maureen O'Connor explains,

> Ireland is certainly not the only historical victim of colonialism's dehumanization of its others, but the longstanding predominance of the rural in defining Irish culture and "authentic" Irish identity has also contributed to the development of a conflicted attitude toward the nonhuman, implicitly associated with both the humiliations of colonial occupation and the embarrassing survival of cartoonish images of thick, bumpkin "Paddy," who enjoyed suspiciously congenial relations with his pig. ("Irish Animal Studies" 363)

In other words, this period of colonisation — which can be traced back as long as 1170 with the arrival of Richard fitz Gilbert, nicknamed Strongbow (Howe, "Colonized and Colonizers" 68) until the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 (Howe, "Colonized and Colonizers" 75) — and its aftermath laid the groundwork for the social, political, and cultural

dynamics that would shape Irish literature, offering a fertile ground for exploration and artistic expression, perhaps best exemplified by the Irish Literary Revival.

Also known as the Celtic Revival or the Irish Renaissance, the Revival was a cultural movement that took place in Ireland towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the first two decades of the twentieth century. It was felt most strongly in literature, drama, and the Irish language but was also evident in art, design, music, and sport. It is important to note that the political and economic dimensions of the Irish Revival were multifaceted, reflecting a range of perspectives rather than a unified stance. During this transformative era, central figures such as William Butler Yeats, John Millington Synge, and Sean O'Casey, emerged, and they often drew inspiration from the poems and ballads of Young Ireland, the antiquarianism of John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, and the heroic histories of Standish James O'Grady (McDonald 52). Through their collective works, these influential figures spearheaded a cultural renaissance that aimed to reclaim and celebrate Irish identity, language, and heritage. By drawing inspiration from Irish mythology and folklore, they revitalised the Irish literary landscape and played an integral role in shaping the nation's cultural trajectory.

The writers and intellectuals involved in the Irish Literary Revival were not only engaged in literary pursuits but also actively supported Irish nationalism, thus intertwining cultural and political aspirations. By emphasising Irish culture and heritage, the Revival fostered a sense of national pride and provided a platform for expressing grievances against British rule. The 1916 Easter Rising, an insurrection by militants who aimed to destroy British power in Ireland (McGarry ix), was a pivotal event in Irish history. It further intensified the call for independence and left a lasting impact on Irish literature and cultural consciousness. Despite its initial suppression, the Rising became a symbol of Irish resistance and ignited a surge of nationalist sentiment, which, in turn, influenced numerous Irish writers who sought to capture the significance of the Rising in their literary works. Constance Markievicz, according to Karen Steele, exemplifies the connection between the Revival and the Rising. Steele explains that, "[l]ike many writers and activists of the Irish revival, she regarded the preparations for Ireland's liberty as both an intellectual and a military enterprise, one that depended equally on independent and on collective action" (1). Therefore, an understanding of twentieth-century Irish literature necessitates recognising the interplay between the Irish Literary Revival and the 1916 Easter Rising, as both movements shared the goal of reclaiming Irish identity, challenging British dominance, and establishing an independent Ireland. In other words, the Revival

laid the foundation for the rising tide of Irish nationalism that culminated in the Easter Rising, and, conversely, the Rising exerted a profound influence on the literary and cultural landscape of Ireland in the years that followed.

0.1.1. The Irish Gothic

Jarlath Killeen emphasises the knotty relationship between words, history and Irish literature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This connection gains particular strength against the backdrop of British colonialism and the Irish struggle for independence (*Emergence* 22). These historical forces have shaped the Irish novel tradition, which, Killeen argues, often embraces gothic themes as a means of delving into these profound issues. As Killeen notes, the gothic has exerted a pervasive influence on Irish fiction, which he proves by documenting numerous Irish authors who have adeptly employed gothic motifs to illuminate the complexities and anxieties arising from societal transformations, thereby highlighting the interplay between tradition and modernity (*Emergence* 22). In Killeen's words, the gothic is about the:

> transition from a "traditional" to a "modern" society and [it] traces the dangers and difficulties involved in such an epistemic transformation. In its repeated recurrence to the refusal of the past to go away, the Gothic demonstrates the kinds of neurotic replications that occur when a society or an individual attempts to deny the force of the traditional. (*Emergence* 22-23)

Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the gothic elements present in the novels under examination in this thesis can offer valuable insights into how these literary works explore both the past and present of Ireland. It is worth noting that the term "gothic" — which is itself notorious for its elusive nature in literary criticism, as it may encompass various definitions such as a genre, domain, mode, discursive site, literary space, or even a niche in the ecology of literature (*Emergence* 13) — is often used to represent the "irrational." As Álamo Felices and Bonachera García explain, in the colonial context of the late eighteenth century, Catholicism became associated with the irrational, while Protestants positioned themselves on the side of the rational Self, seeking to exorcise these perceived irrationalities attributed to the colonised Irish (23); significantly, this period — the eighteenth century — coincided with the emergence of Irish gothic literature, as noted by

Killeen (*Emergence* 12). Therefore, the gothic — whether approached as a genre, a theme or in any other form — can serve as a means to explore those entities deemed "irrational" within the always-changing Irish context.

Given that humanism has often associated the irrational with questions of otherness, this shared preoccupation in the gothic and the postcolonial becomes evident, as discussed by Tabish Khair (3). Thus, delving into the three novels comprising the corpus of this dissertation while not only examining gothic elements but also scrutinising the irrational Other, which humanism arguably associates with women, nonhuman animals, and, I contend, mentally ill individuals, as "lacking" in rationality (Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* 148), may significantly contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex humanimal bond and its representation in literature, ultimately illuminating the broader socio-cultural contexts of Ireland.

0.1.2. The Big House Motif

Within the realm of Irish Gothic fiction, the Big House assumes a profound symbolic significance, representing the intricate web of social and political tensions deeply rooted in Irish society. This enduring motif has been recurrent in Irish fiction, reflecting the historical and political weight attached to these residences in the past century. Vera Kreilkamp asserts that the emergence of the Big House genre as a distinct national literary form can be traced back to 1800 with Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800)*,* which portrays the decline of the gentry residing in these grand estates (Kreilkamp 61). In this genre, the neglected Big House becomes a potent symbol of the relationship between Ireland and England not only because the owners are often Anglo-Irish, and therefore exponents of British colonisation but also because of the decay of these estates as a result of the absent colonisers on the island. Hence, the Big House often symbolises the problematic consolidation of power and privilege, embodying the decaying dominance of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the remnants of colonial rule. It stands as a stark reminder of Ireland's complex relationship with its colonial past and the lingering spectre of social inequality. As Kreilkamp explains, these novels often feature "the neglected house as symbol of family and class degeneration, the improvident landlord alienated from his duties, the native Irish usurper of the Ascendancy estate" (62).

Kreilkamp explains that the Big House genre has endured long after the establishment of independent Ireland in 1922 (61). Throughout the twentieth century, we

can find numerous examples of this genre, such as Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), JG Farrell's *Troubles* (1970), John Banville's *Birchwood* (1973) — which contains a dark and unexpected secret involving the identity of blood relatives (Nakamura 6) — William Trevor's *Fools of Fortune* (1983) — which develops a kind of paradise regained in which the old order has been displaced (Norris 112) — and Jennifer Johnston's *Fools Sanctuary* (1987), set during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) and which follows the survival of an Anglo-Irish family. These works share a common thread: eccentric characters and a decaying social order that threatens their lifestyles and even their lives. Hence, the Big House, often an imposing mansion set amidst a sprawling estate, serves as a literary construct that extends beyond its physical presence. It assumes a metaphorical weight, representing the socio-political structure of Ireland during a period marked by profound social transformations and historical upheavals. Within the confines of its walls, the Big House harbours not only the secrets and shadows of its inhabitants but also the collective unconsciousness of a society grappling with its identity.

Moreover, within the walls of these houses, the microcosm of Irish society comes to life. The characters who inhabit this complex setting embody the various layers of Irish society, each with their own motivations, desires, and insecurities. The aristocratic families, often depicted as morally corrupt or haunted by their past, occupy the upper echelons of power. Their lives are intertwined with those of the servants and lower-class individuals who navigate the convoluted web of social hierarchies, simultaneously serving and challenging the established order. Because of this, the Big House serves as a site of resistance and subversion, challenging the established power structures and questioning the morality of the ruling class. By portraying the conflicts and tensions within the space of these houses, authors of Irish Gothic fiction may provide a nuanced critique of societal norms, shedding light on the inherent forms of injustice and hypocrisy that persist within Irish society. The Big House becomes a battleground where the forces of tradition and progress collide, reflecting the struggle for national identity, the fight for independence, and the dismantling of oppressive systems. Hence, through the exploration of the Big House, authors can unravel the layers of privilege and oppression, exploring the tensions that arise when disparate social classes converge as well as the negotiation of gender roles within a confined space.

0.1.3. Women Writers

In light of the core role of the Irish struggles against British colonialism, as exemplified by the Big House motif, the emergence of women's writers in Irish literature becomes a significant turning point, as it amplifies the voices of women and reshapes the feminist discourse within an unequal Irish society. By tracing the trajectory of women's writing in Ireland, a rich interweaving of narratives unfolds, challenging societal constraints, advocating for gender equality, and presenting nuanced portrayals of female characters that defy stereotypes.

Historically, the canon of Irish literature has been predominantly male-dominated, with women's voices relegated to the margins. However, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a transformative shift as women writers began to carve out their literary spaces and engage with pressing social and political issues. This period of literary awakening coincided with the wider feminist movement and the fight for women's suffrage, providing a fertile ground for women writers to express their views and challenge the *status quo*.

Notably, we can find few exceptions to the male-dominated field of Irish literature, with one remarkable figure being Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849). She was a prominent figure in the nineteenth century and delved extensively into issues surrounding Anglo-Irish relationships and social matters. Tellingly, her influence on later Irish women writers has been acknowledged within academic circles (Cahalan 35). Thus, despite the scarcity of female exceptions in the predominantly male literary landscape, Edgeworth stands out as an example of women who laid the groundwork for the emergence of numerous women writers in twentieth-century Ireland.

Some prominent women writers who appeared in the twentieth century perhaps precisely thanks to Edgeworth's work are Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973), renowned for her psychologically nuanced novels and Irish-set short stories, and Kate O'Brien (1897-1974), whose works engaged with themes of gender, sexuality, and Irish society. Similarly, Edna O'Brien (born 1930) fearlessly explored taboo subjects and Irish women's experiences, while Maeve Brennan (1917-1993) poignantly captured the complexities of Irish immigrant life in the United States through her short stories. The arrival of women writers in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century was not merely a matter of representation but also a catalyst for social change. By writing against

the grain and pushing the boundaries of conventional storytelling, these women writers carved out a distinct literary identity. Their works provided a counter-narrative to the dominant patriarchal discourse, offering fresh perspectives on women's lives and aspirations.

The role of women in Ireland has not remained unchanged, though. Especially since the 1970s, some core changes have taken place. For instance, the marriage bar was finally lifted in 1973 (Foley 83), condoms could be bought with no restrictions in 1993, providing women with more choices to avoid unwanted pregnancies (Enright and Cloatre 262), and divorce finally became legal in 1997 (Fahey 244). Considering all the changes that took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that expectations of Irish womanhood mutated despite patriarchal resistance. As Ángela Rivera Izquierdo brilliantly explains, there was an "antithesis of both Catholic and 'feminine' values, representing the emergence of a 'new Irish woman;' a woman who was no longer voiceless but who rebelled against the Catholic patriarchal society she lived in" (105). In this regard, Alan Hayes concludes in the "Afterword" to *Look! It's a Woman Writer!,* that the position of women writers in Ireland has undergone a remarkable evolution, transitioning from the conservative post-Independence era to the present-day publishing landscape of the 2010s and 2020s (314).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, prominent women writers continued to enrich the Irish literary scene. Anne Enright (born 1962), who was awarded the Man Booker Prize for her novel *The Gathering* (2007), delves into introspective explorations of family and Irish identity. Eimear McBride (born 1976) is renowned for her innovative and experimental writing style, often addressing themes of gender, sexuality, and trauma, as exemplified by her debut novel, *A Girl Is a Half-formed Thing* (2013). Emma Donoghue (born 1969) has garnered acclaim for her diverse range of works, including historical fiction and contemporary novels such as *Room* (2010).

While this short list is evidently far from being exhaustive, these examples highlight the significant impact women have had in shaping the Irish literary scene and challenging the previously male-dominated narrative. Crucially, women writers have fearlessly explored themes related to women's experiences, agency, and identity. They have confronted issues such as gender inequality, domesticity, sexuality, and societal expectations and, by doing so, they have defied the notion of women as passive objects and reclaimed their agency as writers.

In essence, Irish women writers have played a pivotal role in reshaping feminist discourse by engaging with issues specific to Irish women's experiences. They have grappled with the interplay of tradition, religion, and cultural expectations that have influenced women's lives in Ireland. As second-wave feminism emphasised in the late 1960s, notably Carol Hanisch's essay "The Personal is Political" (1970), women writers have interrogated power dynamics and shed light on the complex web of social, political, and cultural factors that shape women's choices and opportunities. Through their literary contributions, these writers have illuminated the multifaceted nature of Irish society, while challenging and redefining prevailing narratives surrounding women's roles and experiences.

0.1.4. Other Animals

It may be argued that the attention that Irish writers have paid to the presence of nonhuman characters could stem from the recognition of the role of nonhuman animals in shaping Irish human identities, as Donna L. Potts highlights in her insightful analysis, in which she elucidates the historical significance of other-than-human animals within Irish ontologies, both during the period of colonisation and the subsequent establishment of the Republic. The plight of wolves, which eventually led to their extinction, serves as a parallel to the subjugation of the Irish people, resulting in the erosion of their linguistic and national identity (*Contemporary Irish Writing and Environmentalism* 147). This profound interplay between the exploitation of nonhuman animals, both materially and symbolically, on the Irish island and the colonisation of the Irish vividly demonstrates their instrumentalisation in the process of dehumanising and colonising the Irish population (Kirkpatrick, "Introduction" 8).

Moreover, even after the establishment of the Irish Free State, the association between the Irish and nonhuman animals endured, as exemplified by William Butler Yeats' involvement in the design of coinage in 1924, which featured various depictions of nonhuman creatures, a thought-provoking case. While one might initially interpret this selection as a symbolic tribute to the lives of nonhuman inhabitants on the island, Potts explains that it can also be seen as an attempt to legitimise Ireland's perceived "mastery over animals" (144). In any case, Potts argues that Yeats' choice of animals over Irish revolutionary heroes on the coinage invokes both the mythology of ancient Ireland as well as its agricultural roots (*Contemporary Irish Writing and Environmentalism* 144). In

other words, the use of other-than-human animal images here serves an instrumental purpose at its worst and a problematic tribute to other species at its best. Thus, Irish identities become, albeit not uniquely, intricately intertwined with the colonialist-infused anthropocentric relationship between humans and other species even at the foundation of what would become the Republic of Ireland, revealing a complex reason for their representation as metaphors in Irish literature.

Maha Mohamed Hosny Mostafa highlights the growing recognition within gender studies and women's literature of the presence of literary animals in numerous narratives authored by women, especially since the mid-twentieth century and onwards (150). Perhaps precisely because of the frequent presence of the more-than-human in fiction, Marian Scholtmeijer contends that:

> [t]he otherness of women from an androcentric perspective finds a correlate in the more radical otherness of the animal from an anthropocentric perspective. On both scores—the magnitude of abuse and the extent of alienation—the analogue of animal otherness is an idea that can serve to free women from the equivocation that might lead them to collude with their abusers. If the object of feminism is to defeat androcentric culture, then animals offer an ideational model for ontological defiance. Despite abuses up and down the scale, animals have not come over to the side of their oppressor. (240)

Regarding Irish fiction, Maureen O'Connor focuses specifically on the role of other species in women's writing, highlighting how, "[w]herever it appears, the figure of the animal negotiates questions of control of language and imagery, the appropriation of alien experience, the rendering of violence into metaphor" (*The Female and the Species* 2). O'Connor likewise explores the detailed representation of animals in the works of women writers. Notably, Edith Somerville and Violet Ross extensively employ the figure of the fox in their fiction, which connects the "Irish RM" stories, a trilogy of books set in the turn of the twentieth-century west of Ireland that was turned into a television series in the 1980s. However, this figure is especially problematic. As O'Connor explains, "[t]he fox may be elusive and wily, a trickster and sorcerer in Somerville and Ross's fiction, but he is hunted, and often caught, by man – and woman – not for food or survival, but for the *pleasure* of killing" (*The Female and the Species* 117; emphasis in original). By delving into the complex representation of animals, this dissertation seeks to uncover the

multifaceted and sometimes troubling connections between women and the animal figure in Irish literature.

In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the examination of nonhuman animals in contemporary fiction and its connection to historical moments, it is crucial to delve into the significant historical events that have shaped Irish society, politics, and culture. This exploration forms the backdrop for the analysis of three novels situated in distinctive and pivotal periods of Irish history: the Troubles in *The Lady*, the Celtic Tiger era in *One Day as a Tiger*, and the 2008 economic crisis in *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*. These three distinct periods not only delineate varying economic contexts but also offer insights into the evolving values within Irish society over the decades, encompassing the treatment of nonhuman entities. The Troubles, a period of intense conflict in Northern Ireland spanning from the late 1960s to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, had profound implications for Irish society and its literature. This era was marked by political and sectarian violence, deep-rooted divisions, and the struggle for national identity. The Troubles not only shaped the political landscape but also influenced the literary imagination of Irish writers, who grappled with themes of conflict, identity, and the consequences of violence. As Joseph McMinn observes, the Troubles cast a long shadow over Irish literature, with authors such as Shaun Herron, T.W. Target, Benedict Kiely and Eugene McCabe exploring the impact of the conflict on individuals and communities (116–17).

The Celtic Tiger era, characterised by unprecedented economic growth from the mid-1990s until 2008, brought about significant social and cultural changes in Ireland. During this period, Ireland experienced a rapid transformation from an agrarian economy to one that attracted international investment and became known as the "Celtic Tiger." The economic prosperity of the Celtic Tiger era had far-reaching effects on Irish society, as reflected in literature. In an interview, the writer Claire Kilroy acknowledges that there has indeed been a Celtic Tiger fiction indeed. As the writer states,

> [i]t's filtering through to a lot of novels – Anne Enright's *The Forgotten Waltz*, about homeowners buying and selling, Paul Murray just published *The Mark and the Void,* about bankers. I just read a really good one by Dermot Bolger called *Tanglewood*, again about an ordinary Irish person trying to make money on his house. (Lozano García 159)

However, the euphoria of the Celtic Tiger era was short-lived, as the global financial crisis of 2008 severely impacted Ireland's economy, leading to a period of economic downturn and austerity measures. The 2008 economic crisis exposed the vulnerabilities of Ireland's financial system and resulted in a deep recession, high unemployment rates, and emigration. This crisis had profound social, political, and cultural implications, which reverberated through Irish literature. Several authors, such as Anne Enright, Donal Ryan, William Trevor, Dermot Bolger, Claire Kilroy, and Kevin Barry, have delved into the ramifications of the crisis, addressing themes of loss, disillusionment, and the enduring resilience of the Irish people, as highlighted by Marie Mianowski (2016). The lasting impact of these events on Irish society, politics, and culture is undeniable, and their imprint on Irish literary works can be discerned through an analysis of themes, motifs, and narratives. By comprehensively analysing key texts and investigating the representation of these historical events, this thesis endeavours to illuminate the intricate connections between real-world events and the artistic imagination. Through this exploration, a deeper understanding of the interplay between history, society, and literature in Ireland will be achieved, revealing the profound ways in which literature engages with and reflects upon its socio-historical context.

The examination of societal changes can be effectively achieved through the lens of literature, given its ability to delve into the otherness of women and animals while simultaneously challenging the oppressive practices rooted in androcentrism and anthropocentrism. Scholtmeijer strongly criticises the authorisation and perpetuation of acts of cruelty towards animals, such as hunting, bullfighting, and rodeos, which not only underscores the marginalisation of animals but also parallels the subjugation of women, both of whom are here perceived as inherent parts of nature rather than cultural beings, thus serving as a justification for their oppression under androcentrism (240). Scholtmeijer also argues that, through the realm of fiction, women writers may be able to concretise, affirm, and empower the state of embodying the Other, a state that is often objectified and perceived as weak within dominant ideologies, and finds resonances in the experiences of both women and nonhuman animals (240). Although there are inherent risks in aligning feminism and animal rights, primarily due to the historical and essentialist association of women with nature (Scholtmeijer 241), Scholtmeijer contends that,

[e]xcluded, women are in a good position to comprehend otherness and to use otherness to subvert the self-designated "realities" of authorized culture. Indeed, warning marks belong on "reality" and not on otherness. Otherness in the abstract bridges feminist and animal causes. Literature gives material reality to otherness, and women's narratives empower otherness by locating it securely in bodies, identities, and worlds. It is not the "otherness" embraced by reason that challenges dominant culture, but all of the "others" who live alongside the culture that denies them. (265)

According to Scholtmeijer, fiction has the potential to bring to light and deconstruct the unquestioned belief systems that sanction violence against sentient beings. A crucial prerequisite for recognising animal rights involves liberating them from the cultural frameworks imposed by humans. However, this liberation does not entail substituting one cultural construction with another that merely serves animals' interests; rather, it necessitates acknowledging and respecting the inherent autonomy of animals beyond the constraints of culture as a whole (241).

Scholtmeijer likewise contends that the concept of animal identity serves as a direct challenge to prevailing cultural assumptions regarding individual subjectivity, thereby exposing the oppressive nature of dominant culture. Works of fantasy create an imaginative realm where animals and humans coexist as communities, offering a glimpse into alternative social systems that transcend the conventional victor-victim paradigm (243). Moreover, Tzachi Zamir further emphasises that by featuring nonhuman animals as central characters in narratives, their material existence is highlighted, and they become present rather than invisibilised, resisting their discursive disappearance (1062). Possibly owing to the capacity of the animal trope to prompt inquiries into contradictory discourses regarding women's bodies and female desire (Palacios-González et al. 129), women writers can play a crucial role in disrupting the traditional narrative use of animal victims through various strategies. They may establish connections between the suffering of women and animals, ensuring that animals are not isolated in their pain and questioning the societal norms that condone aggression towards them (Scholtmeijer 243). Thus, the analysis of how animals are portrayed in literature becomes a means to uncover — and contest — underlying ideologies and restore animals with a sense of material presence.

0.2. Objectives, Corpus, and Structure

As discussed above, literature possesses the power to explore the otherness of women and animals, effectively contesting the oppressive practices associated with androcentrism and anthropocentrism. This position aligns with Katherine Hayles's assertion that through stories, we can understand how a given society conceives subjectivity (153). By incorporating the narratives of women and animals, literature serves as a platform to expose and challenge the cultural constructions that uphold violence and victimisation. Furthermore, literature provides an imaginative space wherein alternative social systems can be envisioned and explored, thereby empowering women and animals by recognising and embracing their inherent otherness. Through the literary realm, the potential for transformative change and the dismantling of oppressive structures becomes evident, fostering empathy and justice towards all living beings.

Taking all the above in mind, this doctoral thesis aims to investigate the evolution of the humanimal bond as depicted in Irish literature. It does so through an examination of three selected novels by women: Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987), set in 1970s Ireland, Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), occurring during the Celtic Tiger, and Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015), which unfolds in the aftermath of the economic boom. Specifically, the thesis explores how these writers construct the nonhuman characters and reimagine the humanimal bond in their texts as well as the resistances against anthropocentrism and androcentrism in different periods. By addressing these research questions, the thesis aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding the intersection of gender, literature, and the nonhuman.

A significant aspect of this study involves investigating the potential influence of the authors' gender on the portrayal and development of the humanimal bond. Building on Scholtmeijer's assertion regarding the shared otherness between women and nonhuman animals as a potential bridge between feminist and animal causes as well as how this can be explored through literature (265), this thesis delves into how the authors' gender as well as that of the characters may have shaped their depiction of the humanimal relationship and influenced the treatment of animals within the chosen works. By exploring these aspects, the thesis aims to shed light on the interplay between gender,

literature, and the representation of the humanimal relationship, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding these themes in Irish fiction.

To achieve these objectives, the analysis of the novels includes an examination of the thematic, narrative, and stylistic devices employed by the authors to convey the complexities of the humanimal bond. Through this analysis, the thesis seeks to gain insights into the authors' strategies for representing the nonhuman in their narratives. Additionally, the research assesses the cultural, social, and historical contexts surrounding the novels, including the Troubles, the Celtic Tiger era, and the 2008 economic crisis. By exploring these contextual factors, the thesis aims to understand their impact, if any, on the portrayal of the humanimal bond and how societal changes and challenges may have influenced the treatment of animals in Irish literature.

By shedding light on the evolving dynamics between humans and animals over time, this research contributes to the existing literature by offering insights into broader discussions on animal rights, ethics, and the relationship between humans and the natural world. This study pursues to offer broader implications for the field of Irish literature as it emphasises the intricate interplay between humans and animals as a vital aspect of storytelling. It also contributes to ongoing discussions within literary and cultural studies, fostering a deeper understanding of the connections between literature, gender, and the humanimal relationship. Ultimately, by offering new perspectives and enriching our understanding of the interspecies bond in Irish literature, this research strives to foster a greater appreciation for the more-than-human and their material dimension, resisting their reduction to mere literary instruments.

As part of this doctoral thesis, the first novel under examination is *The Lady* (1987) by Anne McCaffrey (1926-2011). Set in rural Ireland in the year 1970, the narrative employs a third-person narrator to depict the unfolding events and explore the humanimal relationship within this historical context. The narrative revolves around the Carradynes, an Anglo-Irish family with a longstanding tradition of breeding and training exceptional horses for over two centuries on their estate, Cornanagh. Despite the picturesque surroundings, domestic harmony eludes the Carradynes, revealing underlying conflicts. At the heart of the family's conflicts lies Catriona, the youngest member, a spirited thirteen-year-old girl whose aspirations concentrate on riding her family's remarkable jumpers and show horses. Catriona's father, Michael, encourages her riding, sparking a clash of wills with his devout and anti-horse wife, Isabel. In stark contrast to her husband's passion for horses, Isabel seeks to impose rigid expectations of propriety,

attire, and flawless manners upon Catriona. Their relationship becomes a battle of pride and desire, a tense stalemate with deep implications that profoundly hurt Catriona — until the arrival of Lady Selina Healy. Poised, enchanting, and yearning for genuine affection, Selina is a rider who understands the limitations of an unfulfilling marriage, becoming sympathetic to Michael's situation. She is captivated by the beauty of Cornanagh, possesses a deep appreciation for fine horses, and quickly develops a profound fondness for Catriona, in whom Selina discovers the daughter she never had, forming an emotional bond that transcends biological ties. She is also romantically and sexually drawn to Michael, who refrains from showing any kind of sexual behaviour until he becomes a widower. Through the dynamic interplay between characters, McCaffrey delves into the profound emotional connections forged between humans and animals, exposing the transformative power of the humanimal bond.

The second novel under examination is *One Day as a Tiger* (1997) by Anne Haverty (born 1959). The novel is narrated from a first-person perspective, with Martin serving as the primary narrator. Martin makes a pivotal decision to leave his academic career at Trinity College in Dublin and return to his family farm in County Tipperary following the tragic car accident that claimed the lives of his parents. However, his homecoming is marked by an uncertain and competitive relationship with his brother Pierce, and an escalating infatuation with Etti, his sister-in-law. Amidst these complexities, Martin acquires a genetically modified sheep named Missy, whom he cares for as if she were his own child. Missy is a result of advanced technoscience in the rural village of Fansha in Ireland, portrayed as a place in decline in contrast with the growing cities. In his quest for rural traditions and an Irish sense of "authenticity," Martin instead confronts a world where most farms are populated by sheep altered with human DNA. This introduces the speculative concept of genetic engineering, and the novel revolves around the irony of the narrator's search, leading him to a place that fails to offer the "authenticity" or "essence" he seeks. Within *One Day as a Tiger,* the interplay of Martin's personal journey, his complex relationships, and the introduction of genetic engineering probe themes of identity, disillusionment, and the collision of tradition with scientific advancements. By analysing Haverty's work as one of the selected novels, this thesis aims to unravel the evolving treatment of the nonhuman in Irish literature, highlighting the narrative's exploration of authenticity and the consequences of tampering with nature during the Celtic Tiger.

Concluding the examination within this doctoral thesis, the final novel under scrutiny is *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015) by Sara Baume (born 1984). Notably, this novel adopts a unique narrative approach, employing a second-person narrator. The story depicts an unlikely friendship between Ray, a lonely middle-aged man, and a one-eyed terrier named One Eye in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Divided into four parts, each corresponding to a season of the year, the novel traces the evolving relationship between Ray and One Eye. Ray leads a socially awkward and reclusive life in a small Irish town, residing in what can be considered a parody of the Anglo-Irish Big House. He experiences deep isolation as the sole surviving member of his family. With no close friends or family, Ray's existence revolves around reading books within the walls of his "big house." However, when he adopts One Eye from a local animal shelter, his life takes an unexpected turn. One Eye, a spirited and mischievous terrier, quickly becomes Ray's steadfast companion. They embark on lengthy walks along the Irish coast, igniting a newfound sense of purpose and meaning in Ray's life. By analysing *Spill Simmer Falter Wither,* this thesis aims to unravel the intricate portrayal of the humanimal bond in Irish literature, exploring themes of companionship, isolation, and the transformative power of posthumanist kinship.

This introduction to the doctoral thesis provides an overview of the research focus and objectives. The significance of this research lies in filling a gap in the existing literature by offering a fresh perspective on the humanimal relationship in Irish literature, specifically through the works of women authors. This study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the portrayal of the nonhuman in Irish literature. To investigate these themes, the doctoral dissertation is structured into two main parts. PART I establishes the theoretical framework for the analysis. It begins with an exploration of the historical influence of humanism, focusing on anthropocentrism and patriarchy. The discussion then moves to the context of (post)colonial Ireland and introduces posthumanist ethics, including concepts such as companion species, posthumanist alliances, necropolitics, vulnerability, and grievability. The representation of fictional animals is likewise examined with a specific emphasis on the dangers of reducing members of other species to mere metaphors and their implicit cultural biases. The chapter concludes with a detailed presentation of the three species analysed in this dissertation: horses, sheep, and dogs.

Part II delves into the analysis of the selected corpus. The first chapter in this section analyses McCaffrey's novel *The Lady* and its portrayal of horse-crazy girls and their

equine companions. It explores the role of horses in defining the "human," addressing topics such as animal exploitation in rural Ireland, unstable national identities of the Anglo-Irish in the context of 1970 Ireland, as well as how both women and animals can be used to support patriarchy. The chapter also examines the resistance displayed by certain characters against these oppressive discourses and the extent to which these acts of resistance succeed.

The subsequent chapter focuses on Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* and examines the representation of sheep and their symbolic meaning in the context of Celtic Tiger Ireland. It explores the anthropocentric necroeconomics portrayed in the story, including the depiction of farms as war zones and the concept of sheep as pets. Additionally, it examines the problematic dehumanisation of certain groups of humans as well as how the sheep can be used to re-enact the colonial discourse once applied to the Irish. The chapter concludes with an analysis of a Cain and Abel-like brotherly rivalry and the symbolism of the sacrificial lamb.

Finally, the third chapter of the thesis analyses Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* and the theme of kinship between misfits, specifically a dog and a destitute man, in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland. It explores the impact of austerity measures, the legacy of the Big House, and the portrayal of pets and road-kills as grievable. The chapter delves into interspecies communication, gendered ontologies, the absent mother and the struggles between fathers and sons as well as the role of the dog character in this issue.

Collectively, these chapters hopefully contribute to a comprehensive exploration of how animals are explored in contemporary Irish fiction. The thesis aims to illuminate the complex relationships between humans and other animals while examining the societal dynamics surrounding them. By doing so, it uncovers the deeper implications of these relationships for issues such as identity, power dynamics, and resistance. This research endeavour deepens our understanding of the humanimal relationship in Irish literature and sheds light on the influence of gender perspectives. Through a rigorous analysis of the selected texts, this study offers novel insights, challenges existing theories, and fosters a heightened appreciation for the role of the nonhuman in storytelling. By expanding the discourse surrounding animals in literature, this scholarly inquiry enriches our understanding of their significance within the Irish cultural context.

Having outlined the structure of the thesis and the specific chapters that delve into the analysis of the three chosen novels, the forthcoming section will introduce the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This framework will provide an in-depth

exploration of the theoretical perspectives and concepts that inform the analysis of animals as metaphors in Irish literature. By employing this framework, we can hopefully critically examine the selected texts and make valuable contributions to the existing scholarly discourse on the subject.

PART I

THEORETICAL

FRAMEWORK

1. The Long Shadow of Humanism

> For, seen from the outside, from a being who is alien to it, reason is simply a vast tautology. Of course reason will validate reason as the first principle of the universe—what else should it do? Dethrone itself? Reasoning systems, as systems of totality, do not have that power. If there were a position from which reason could attack and dethrone itself, reason would already have occupied that position; otherwise it would not be total. (Coetzee 25)

Originating during the Renaissance in Europe, humanism emerged as a response to the dominant religious and scholastic frameworks of the time. It celebrates human reason, autonomy, and the pursuit of knowledge, placing human beings at the centre of moral and intellectual inquiry. The term "humanism," first used in English in 1589 (Copson 1), (Copson 1), finds its roots in the Italian word "umanista," after Renaissance humanism began in Italy in the fourteenth century (587). It is a cultural and intellectual movement that sought to revive and engage with classical Greek and Roman literature, philosophy, and art. Humanists were deeply influenced by the idea of human potential and the belief that individuals had the capacity to shape their own destinies through reason. In Rosi Braidotti's words,

> [h]umanism is a doctrine that combines the biological, discursive and moral expansion of human capabilities into an idea of teleologically ordained, rational progress. Faith in the unique, self-regulating and intrinsically moral powers of human reason forms an integral part of this high-humanistic creed, which was essentially predicated on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century renditions of classical Antiquity and Italian Renaissance ideals. (*The Posthuman* 13)

At the core of humanism lies a fervent defence of reason, or what Val Plumwood refers to as "rationalism." Plumwood argues that rationalism serves as a crucial tool in maintaining the *status quo*, as it naturalises and justifies the domination and exploitation of entities considered non-rational (*Environmental Culture* 26). Plumwood connects this rationalism-dominance link to Cartesianism, which she argues positions the rational, typically associated with privileged humans, as the sole significant aspect in the universe. According to Plumwood, "the rational (usually identified with elite humans) is the only

thing that fundamentally counts in the universe. The Cartesian division of the world which is based on the assumption that "the criterion of consciousness […] picked out just the class of the human. Animals were automata entirely lacking consciousness" (*Environmental Culture* 148). Consequently, humanism relies heavily on a hierarchical dichotomy, where the rational Self holds privilege, while the "irrational" Other faces oppression. Braidotti supports Plumwood's critique by asserting that humanism sustains an irrational and paradoxical faith in the exceptional, self-regulating, and inherently moral capacities of human reason (*The Posthuman* 13). As a result, rationalism occupies a central position within humanism, functioning as a discursive tool to marginalise individuals who do not conform to constructed rationalist norms.

Building upon the concept of humanism and its instrumentalisation of reason, the notion of the "human" becomes the central bearer of reason within discursive frameworks. This privileging of the human and the systematic othering of nonhuman species are deeply rooted in humanism, as Braidotti argues. According to Braidotti, the concept of the "human:"

> never was a universal or a neutral term to begin with. It is rather a normative category that indexes access to privileges and entitlements. Appeals to the "human" are always discriminatory: they create structural distinctions and inequalities among different categories of humans, let alone between humans and nonhumans. ("A Theoretical Framework" 35)

Anthropocentrism, an inevitable consequence of humanism's preoccupation with the human, further reinforces the belief in human exceptionalism. Braidotti elucidates how anthropocentrism perpetuates the notion of human exceptionalism and establishes a binary between the Self and the Other, relegating nonhuman entities to an inferior status based on their perceived deficiency in qualities traditionally assigned to humans, such as intelligence and agency ("A Theoretical Framework" 35). The utilisation of rationalist dichotomies by humanism further reinforces this detrimental narrative, sustaining unequal power dynamics and impeding critical engagement with environmental issues. According to Jacobson and Stephens, the rationalism of the "human" heavily relies on binary thought, which:

is historically linked to the art of scientific reasoning, championed by Descartes's formalisation of the subject-object dualism. The rationalist paradigm, to which positivist science is aligned, uses dualistically construed dichotomies to polarise differences and construe them along superior/inferior lines, minimising shared characteristics and viewing the inferior side as a means to the higher ends of the superior side. (160)

The hierarchical mindset resulting from humanism carries significant environmental implications as it presents the Other in negative terms due to the lack of qualities attributed to the Self, perpetuating a reductionist hierarchy that disregards the multiplicity of the marginalised Other; as Jacques Derrida argues, classical philosophical oppositions establish a violent hierarchy, where "one of the two terms governs the other (axiologically or logically, for instance) or has the upper hand" (*Positions* 41). In western societies, these dichotomies predominantly favour privileged subjects, positioning them as the superior Self and justifying the exploitation and degradation of the environment, while rationalist dichotomies further reinforce an artificial boundary between humans and nonhumans, fostering a misguided sense of superiority and entitlement within the human species. Consequently, this perspective obstructs meaningful dialogue and effective action on environmental issues by disregarding the interconnectedness of ecosystems and perpetuating the belief that the more-than-human exists solely for human benefit.

The hierarchical binary system of thought within humanism leads to the unequal valuation of lives, as certain animals are deemed more valuable than others, perpetuating the danger of human/nonhuman hyperseparation, according to Margo DeMello's analysis (*Animals and Society* 4). This system reflects the presence of speciesism, defined by Estela Díaz and Óscar Horta as "the discrimination against those who do not belong to a certain species" (167). As long as speciesism continues to shape our societies, animals will be treated based on their perceived usefulness to humans, disregarding their inherent worth and suffering. Judith Butler further argues that these anthropocentric binaries in western societies stem from the shared vulnerability of all living beings, which anthropocentrism conveniently denies, ultimately subjecting certain entities to otherisation while providing an illusory sense of ontological protection for the Self (*Frames of War* 2). Therefore, anthropocentrism has received criticism for its perpetuation of unequal treatment and consequences borne by the Other, highlighting the

urgent need for a reevaluation of these hierarchies and a recognition of the interconnectedness and vulnerability of all beings.

Embedded within humanism, a patriarchal understanding of gender gives rise to a hierarchical distinction between man and woman, perpetuated by rationalism, which further reinforces patriarchal dichotomies that otherise women as "irrational." As Sylvia Walby defines it, patriarchy functions as a system that enables men to dominate, oppress, and exploit women in various spheres (214), while women, children, and animals, as O'Connor highlights, are symbolically associated and marginalised, representing the very foundation of language itself (*The Female and the Species* 8). This hierarchical structure finds embodiment in Leonardo da Vinci's iconic representation of the humanist ideal, the Vitruvian Man, which, Braidotti contends, "combines the biological, discursive and moral expansion of human capabilities into an idea of teleologically ordained, rational progress" (*The Posthuman* 13). Consequently, rationalism further solidifies the man/woman distinction by linking rationality to the male Self while relegating emotions and nonhuman entities to the feminine. This dualistic understanding encompasses the male/female difference and includes gendered binaries such as active/passive and aggressive/sensitive, among others. This way, rationalism justifies male superiority within the androcentric framework (Whitehead and Barrett 11). Thus, patriarchy operates through social structures and practices that grant men power and control over women, while the iconic representation of the humanist ideal and the influence of rationalist doctrines perpetuate and reinforce this hierarchical structure, subordinating women and upholding male superiority within humanism.

In the context of Ireland's post-independence era, the issue of masculinity emerges as a persistent source of anxiety, intricately linked to the country's colonial history and the feminisation of Irish men. Maureen O'Connor argues that, after gaining independence, Ireland struggled to distance itself from colonial stereotypes of the "savage" and irrational Irish, which had long been imposed by their English oppressors (*The Female and the Species* 135). Instead, Ireland found itself assuming the role of a custodial patriarchal and masculinist society, mirroring that of the British colonisers.

That twentieth-century Ireland was predominantly patriarchal is evident in several ways. As Evelyn Mahon explains, domestic unpaid work remained the primary form of employment for women until the 1930s (1283). Moreover, various laws restricted women's entry into the labour market until the 1970s. It was only during this period that some of these laws were replaced by more progressive ones, such as the Equal Treatment

in 1977 and the Maternity Act in 1981. These legal changes led to a significant increase in women's participation in the Irish labour market between 1979 and 1988, with the employment rate for women reaching 31,8% (Mahon 1287).

During the Celtic Tiger, the entry of women, including those with children, into the workforce became massive precisely because of the economic changes brought by the boom (Kennedy 95). This demographic shift disrupted the established patriarchal order more profoundly than in previous decades, posing a substantial challenge to traditional Irish masculinities. This shift placed Irish men under immense pressure, as they grappled with the expectations to conform to rigid gender roles. As Will H. Courtenay argues, societal norms demanded men to embody extreme traits associated with traditional masculinity, including notions of independence, toughness, and emotional detachment, while their society underwent deep changes (1387). The ensuing demand for unwavering adherence to these expectations placed a tremendous burden on Irish men, exacerbating anxieties related to their sense of self and identity. The destabilisation of traditional gender dynamics during this period highlights how masculinities in contemporary Ireland have become a potential source of ontological anxiety, as men navigate the complexities and challenges arising from shifting societal norms and the reconfiguration of gender roles. Understanding the complexities of Irish masculinities is vital for comprehending the intricate interplay between gender dynamics, societal expectations, and the transformation of traditional norms during the twentieth century, including the Celtic Tiger.

Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland presents a crucial context for examining the influence of neoliberalism on gender dynamics. Debbie Ging highlights the significant impact of neoliberalism on masculinities, particularly their reinforcement, rooted in biodeterminism — a concept that attributes most human characteristics primarily to biological factors, often overlooking other environmental or societal influences. This correlation between neoliberalism and biodeterminism in gender discourse was amplified during the economic boom of the 1990s. As Ging explains,

> neoliberalism's mutually beneficial rapport with biodeterminism has arguably diminished the responsibility of the government vis à vis a range of social problems including crime, anti-social behaviour, social exclusion and paedophilia, since it locates these problems in the genes, hormones or brainwaves of individual bodies. ("All-Consuming Images" 69)

Understanding the multifaceted interplay between anthropocentrism, patriarchal systems, colonial legacies, and the challenges posed by neoliberalism is crucial in comprehending the complexities of gender dynamics in Ireland. The examination of masculinities provides valuable insights into the ways in which societal, economic, and political forces shape gender roles, identities, and power dynamics. By unravelling the intricate connections between neoliberalism and masculinities, we can gain a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of gender in contemporary Ireland and work towards fostering more inclusive and equitable societal structures.

The convergence of speciesism and patriarchy within humanism yields a third consequence: the legitimisation of colonialism. Just as speciesism reinforces the separation between humans and other species and patriarchy emphasises the division between men and women, colonialism magnifies the contrast between the coloniser and the colonised. Plumwood highlights this aspect, stating that:

> Colonisers exaggerate differences (for example marking themselves off from the Others in terms of exaggerated cleanliness, "civilised" or "refined manners", body covering, and alleged physiological differences between what are defined as separate races). They may ignore or deny relationship, conceiving the colonised as less than human, without souls. The colonised are described as "stone-age", "primitive", as "beasts of the forest", and contrasted with the civilisation and reason attributed to the coloniser. (*Environmental Culture* 102)

Essentially, colonisation thrives on negative differentiation, stripping the colonised of their "humanity" and reducing them to irrational "beasts." Thus, colonialism not only magnifies the divide between the coloniser and the colonised but also establishes an inherent hierarchical and oppressive dynamic, similar to the mechanisms of speciesism and patriarchy. The process of otherisation serves as a justification for the domination and subjugation of the colonised so that the *status quo* remains unchallenged.

One notable (post)colonial context that serves as an exemplification of these dynamics is Ireland. However, characterising Ireland's historical position as a (former) colony is far from straightforward. This complexity is notably amplified by "revisionist historians." Especially prominent during the twentieth century, these scholars have diverse and intricate origins, which renders it challenging to pinpoint a single inception

point for revisionism, although scholars such as James Dingley place its origin in the journal *Irish Historical Studies* (102). Their prominence grew in response to evolving political and social landscapes, significantly influenced by factors such as Ireland's struggle for liberation, the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the nation's entry into the European Union (Boyce and O'Day 6).

Despite the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes "revisionism" and who qualifies as a "revisionist," in general terms, there is a consensus that revisionists aim to reevaluate and challenge traditional historical narratives, drawing inspiration from German revisionism (Boyce and O'Day 2). They undertake this task by focusing on contentious issues like the Irish Revolution, the struggle for independence, and the role of prominent historical figures. As articulated by the revisionist historian Stephen Howe, these historians often argue that the relationship between Ireland and Britain was too complex to be reduced to a simple colonial model and that the term "colony" is not fully accurate (Howe, "Questioning the (Bad) Question" 141). It is also worth noting that the complex relationship between Ireland and Britain contributes to the substantial emotional and political weight that Irish history bears. Revisionists, George Boyce and Alan O'Day argue, frequently find themselves under suspicion arising from their view that newly established States, like the Republic of Ireland, tend to guard their approved histories jealously, as they provide legitimacy and a sense of continuity in the face of social and political changes (Boyce and O'Day 2).

Revisionism has nonetheless been heavily criticised. As Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh denounces, "revisionism relies on partial interpretations designed to reinforce the status quo" (204). Therefore, while it is important to note the role of revisionists and the debate they promoted in the field of Irish history, this doctoral thesis aligns with the view of other scholars such as Corey Lee Wren, who argues that Ireland is a "heavily colonised region, having been controlled by the Celts, Christians, Vikings, Normans, and British across its several thousand years of human inhabitancy" (142). Actually, historian Tom Walker explains that the British colonisation of Ireland can be traced back to at least 1601, following the Irish defeat in the Battle of Kinsale (Walker 214), although earlier efforts by the British to establish dominance date back to 1175 when the English Crown asserted lordship over the island. Regardless of the specific timeline, Ireland's history seems to testify to a longstanding experience of colonisation, particularly under the British Empire. This intricate history challenges any attempt to oversimplify the complexities of Ireland's

colonial past, prompting a nuanced exploration of its multifaceted interactions with the British Empire.

British colonial discourse has traditionally subjected the Irish to feminisation and dehumanisation. Maureen O'Connor highlights the prevalence of satirical newspapers and novels that portray the Irish as "pigs" and inferior to the supposedly superior English. Drawing attention to Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland* (1633), O'Connor underscores how the Irish were likened to the shape-shifting Scythians who transformed into wolves, effectively aligning the Irish with nonhumanity and savagery in need of subjugation (*The Female and the Species* 6). The dehumanisation of the Irish persisted well into the nineteenth century, exemplified by an anonymous article from 1862 in *Punch* titled "The Missing Link." In this article, O'Connor explains, the Irish were described as a blend of "Gorilla" and the "Negro," as well as "the lowest species of Irish Yahoo" (*The Female and the Species* 11). Such discursive representations perpetuate negative stereotypes, marginalising and subjugating the Irish by denying their humanity and reinforcing a sense of inferiority in relation to the English.

The animalisation of the Irish in British colonial discourse goes hand in hand with the association of femininity with madness and hysteria (*The Female and the Species* 7), serving to suppress any potential rebellion against British rule. The Act of Union of 1800 serves as a stark example of this feminisation. O'Connor elucidates that this act was often metaphorically referred to as a marriage, with the salvation of Ireland depicted as dependent on her rescue and "marriage" to John Bull, symbolising England. As O'Connor explains, "[t]he salvation of Ireland, often figured in colonial discourse as weak and helpless Hibernia, lay in her rescue and 'marriage' to John Bull", and so the term "Union" readily "took on connotations of sexual and marital union" (*The Female and the Species* 5). Hence, British colonial discourse has long subjected the Irish to feminisation and dehumanisation, perpetuated through satirical portrayals, comparisons to shape-shifting Scythians, and the metaphorical "marriage" in the Act of Union of 1800, all serving to suppress Irish rebellion and reinforce the subordination of Ireland to England.

The enduring legacy of Ireland's experience with feminisation and animalisation during colonialism may have given rise to a rich tradition of animal rights activism on the island. This tradition finds its roots in prominent figures from the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries, including Colonel Richard Martin, or "Humanity Dick" Martin (1754-1834), a former member of Grattan's Irish Parliament who later relocated to London after the Act of Union in 1800. After he moved from Dublin to London, he was

considered something of a public nuisance as he roamed London streets attempting to arrest people for abusing animals, as noted by O'Connor. Actually, he "is famously reported to have had a maltreated donkey appear in court as a witness against its abuser." It is worth noting that all modern animal rights legislation worldwide can be traced back to the landmark "Martin's Act" of 1822, a testament to Martin's enduring impact on animal rights advocacy (M. O'Connor, *The Female and the Species* 3). Therefore, the Irish experience of feminisation and animalisation under colonialism seems to have fostered a strong tradition of animal rights on the island.

Furthermore, Ireland not only resisted the detrimental effects of anthropocentrism and the exploitation of other species but also exhibited a presence of feminist movements as early as the nineteenth century. According to Senia Pašeta, "feminist thought and activism was a feature of Irish political life in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (193). Within this historical context, Irish feminists made significant contributions, including figures like William Thompson, who often goes unnoticed. Thompson's groundbreaking treatise on women's rights in 1825 provided a radical critique of the intertwined systems of patriarchy and capitalism. As O'Connor notes, in the concluding pages of his work, Thompson perceptively notes, "to be a woman is to be the inferior animal" (Thompson 174, as quoted in *The Female and the Species* 3).

Irish feminism continued to evolve throughout the twentieth century, frequently intertwined with aspirations for Irish independence. One example is Charlotte Despard, a feminist, vegetarian, antivivisectionist, workers' advocate, and an Irish nationalist who actively supported Sinn Féin and the IRA during the War of Independence. For Despard,

> [t]he Women's Movement is related also with the other great movements of the world […] The awakened instinct which feels the call of the sub-human which says: - "I am the voice of the voiceless. Through me the dumb shall speak", is a modern phenomenon that cannot be denied. It works itself out as a food reform on the one hand, and on the other, in strong protest against the cruel methods of experimental research. Both these are in close unison with the demands being made by women. (44)

Despard's statement underscores the interdisciplinary nature of feminism during the 1910s, as it examines the oppression of women from various angles. Despite enduring centuries of colonial oppression, Ireland serves as a testament to resistance against both

speciesism and patriarchy, ideals that held significance for certain Irish nationalists. Hence, Ireland's commitment to challenging the exploitative paradigms of anthropocentrism and the oppression of women is deeply rooted in its historical trajectory. From early feminist thinkers like William Thompson through the multifaceted activism of Charlotte Despard, Irish feminism has played a vital role in advocating for gender equality and confronting interconnected systems of power.

Despite having achieved independence from British rule and establishing itself as a sovereign state, the Republic of Ireland continued to struggle with the enduring legacies of colonialism and the arguably patriarchal Catholic faith, which remained integral to the identity of many Irish nationalists (Mahon 1278). These influences remained deeply rooted, maintaining patriarchy as a prevailing force shaping Irish society. This is exemplified by the 1937 Constitution drafted by Éamon De Valera, which stands as the foundational document of the Republic of Ireland, symbolising the purported end of British colonial rule. Notably, Article 41 of the Constitution places a strong emphasis on the role of women within the (heteronormative) family structure:

> 1.2. The State, therefore, guarantees to protect the Family in its Constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State

> 2.1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

> 2.2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home. (*Constitution of Ireland* 56)

Thus, the establishment of the Republic of Ireland perpetuated a societal framework that confined Irish women to the domestic sphere as wives and mothers, reinforcing a rigid gender binary aligned with humanist ideals. It becomes evident that the legal constitution of the Republic did not immediately liberate Ireland from the enduring influence of colonial ideologies that had been imposed over centuries, nor did it dismantle the patriarchal practices perpetuated by certain nationalists. The lingering presence of patriarchal power in the post-colonial era serves as a stark reminder of the intricate and

persistent nature of patriarchal legacies within Irish society and perhaps as a call for attention to avoid taking feminist advances for granted.

Throughout the twentieth century in Ireland, despite the regressive provisions of the Constitution, feminism achieved notable victories, signalling significant societal transformations. The 1970s proved to be a turning point, marked by significant milestones such as the removal of the marriage bar in 1973 (Foley 83) — which allowed women to pursue professional careers without the limitation of marriage — and the availability of condoms in 1993 (Enright and Cloatre 262) — which granted individuals greater control over their reproductive choices. Additionally, the legalisation of divorce in 1997 (Fahey 244) represented a momentous step towards recognising and protecting the rights of individuals in troubled marriages. These triumphs in the face of adversity demonstrate the progress of feminism in Ireland.

It is crucial to acknowledge that despite the advancements made by feminism in the twentieth century, there is a notable resurgence of patriarchy in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, reminding us not to take progress for granted. In her analysis of contemporary Ireland, Debbie Ging illuminates the persistent influence of patriarchal norms in the country. Ging laments the diminishing impact of feminism and highlights the prevalent misconception among the Irish that "equality is a *fait accompli* and that feminism's work is done" despite the many typically patriarchal images we can see in current Irish media, including the "war-of-the-sexes" discourse ("All-Consuming Images" 53). These observations serve as a stark reminder that while Ireland has experienced significant social changes, patriarchal ideologies and practices continue to persist in Irish society today. This underscores the ongoing relevance and necessity of feminist perspectives and the importance of resistance against the othering effects of patriarchy. In essence, despite the strides made, it is evident that vigilance and sustained efforts are imperative to challenge and dismantle the remaining patriarchal structures that persist in Irish society.

While patriarchal ideologies and practices persist in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, it is important to recognise that they are not the only enduring legacies shaping Irish society. Contemporary Irish attitudes continue to reflect the ingrained anthropocentrism rooted in a historical legacy of colonial strategies, which perpetuated social stratification through the humanisation of the dominant class and the animalisation of the subjugated class (Wrenn 142). The ongoing influence of nonhuman entities in shaping Irish society is evident, as demonstrated by Eóin Flannery's examination of shifting attitudes towards

nature, particularly influenced by the economic boom of the 1990s that reduced the perception of "land" to mere "value" (1).

Spanning from 1995 to 2007, the Celtic Tiger period in Ireland, named after a nonhuman animal and influenced by the island's colonial history, ushered in a significant era of economic growth that brought about profound social, cultural, and economic changes. However, this unprecedented commercial expansion came at the expense of Ireland's natural environment, as highlighted by Catherine Conan and Flore Coulouma, who observe the degradation of once pristine landscapes into polluted and deteriorating spaces, symbolised by the emergence of "ghost states" that blighted both rural and suburban regions (7).

Moreover, the Celtic Tiger era exposed the coexistence of two contrasting perspectives on nature within Ireland. On the one hand, there was the romanticised notion of tranquil pastoralism interwoven with Catholicism and Celtic spirituality, which served as the bedrock of Irish nationalism. On the other hand, remnants of the colonial mindset persisted, portraying the Irish as dehumanised entities closely associated with animals (Conan and Coulouma 8). This dichotomy illuminated the complexities of Irish society's relationship with nature during this transformative period, which is strongly connected to neoliberalism.

The economic boom in contemporary Ireland has engendered the profound emergence of neoliberalism, a transformative force that has instigated new desires, identities, and relational dynamics. However, the impact of neoliberalism extends beyond these transformative aspects, as it also engenders conditions of otherness, exacerbates inequalities, and engulfs society with a pervasive sense of precarity. Cornwall et al. aptly note that "[n]eoliberalism has wrought far-reaching effects on all of our lives" with its promises of freedom (1). Consequently, this unsettling process dismantles established certainties, disrupts conventional norms, and ushers in a climate of uncertainty, notably characterised by gendered dynamics. In this landscape, individuals cope with the exigencies of survival within this new order. Thus, Ireland finds itself wrestling with oppressive ideologies that marginalise certain groups while favouring others, reminiscent of the historical oppression imposed by the British on the Irish. As Mary Kelly states, "[o]ne of the legacies of colonialism in Ireland and elsewhere is its effect on how we understand and approach the past" (137). Consequently, Ireland's oppressive colonial history continues to cast a long shadow over the country's cultural production, regardless of the many socio-economic changes that have taken place in the twentieth and twenty-

first centuries. Considering these dynamics, the following section explores critical frameworks that have scrutinised the inherent hierarchical thought within humanism, particularly, critical posthumanism.

2. (Post)humanist Ethics

In this second section of the theoretical framework, a succinct overview of relevant paradigms used to explore the relationship between humans and the more-than-human will be presented, accompanied by the introduction of key concepts that will later be revisited in the analysis of the three selected novels. The present era's urgent environmental challenges have sparked a critical reassessment of the interconnections between humans and the more-than-human. As a response, interdisciplinary fields of study have emerged to scrutinise these intricate relationships and propose fresh perspectives for comprehending and engaging with the natural world. Among these fields, "green" humanities in general have gained considerable prominence.

In 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, a work often regarded as foundational in the environmental movement. This groundbreaking text not only inspired the founding of Earth Day but also paved the way for the establishment of the Rachel Carson Center (RCC), a non-profit institution founded in 2009 to advance the environmental humanities as a globally significant and expanding field ("Our Mission"). Carson's critique of pesticide use and her examination of the exploitation of feminised nature and women, as elucidated by Joni Seager (38), served as a catalyst for change and can be seen as a pivotal moment for the environmental movement and the emergence of green humanities in the 2000s (Emmett and Nye 5). Also known as the environmental humanities, they encompass a branch of scholarship that integrates ecological concerns into the study of literature, art, philosophy, and other humanistic disciplines. Through the analysis of cultural and artistic expressions, green humanities aim to deepen our comprehension of human-nature interactions and foster environmentally responsible perspectives.

Various frameworks have appeared to analyse the intricate relationships within the more-than-human world, including deep ecology, critical animal studies, ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and critical posthumanism, to mention but a few. In the case of ecofeminism, it delves into the interconnected oppressions of gender and the environment, recognising the parallel systems of domination that subjugate women and

nature, rooted in a patriarchal worldview. Ecofeminist scholars advocate for recognising the interdependence between the subordination of women and the degradation of the environment, calling for feminist ecological activism. According to Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen,

> [e]cofeminism posits that the domination of "nature" is linked to the domination of "women" and that both dominations must be eradicated. (Of course there are a number of ways to understand both "nature" and "women".) Analyzing mutually reinforcing logics of domination and drawing connections between practical implications of power relations has been a core project of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism has a rich history in feminist struggles against militarism, capitalism, racism, colonialism, environmental destruction, and patriarchy. (1)

Hence, ecofeminism constitutes a potent tool to analyse the cultural connections between humans and the more-than-human world. It underscores the significance of exploring hierarchical dichotomies related to gender, the body, and the environment. Ecofeminism, as a theory and a movement, seeks to expose and challenge the dualisms that have justified the domination of otherised entities. As Greta Gaard argues, ecofeminists aim to dismantle the feminisation of nature and the naturalisation of women, which have been used to justify the subjugation of women, animals, and the Earth (*Ecofeminism: Women* 5). Ultimately, ecofeminism strives to reveal the shared origins of oppression experienced by women and the more-than-human.

However, the use of ecofeminism as the primary framework for this thesis has its limitations and potential criticisms. Among them are accusations of essentialism, ethnocentrism, and anti-intellectualism, despite numerous efforts to refute these charges (Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited" 33) and the fact that ecofeminism seeks to question and deconstruct traditional oppositions historically found in the western binary system of thought (Estévez-Saá and Lorenzo-Modia 126). Since this thesis focuses on three women writers and the exploration of interspecies interactions, which occasionally involve women, there is a risk of ecofeminism being accused of essentialism, which associates women closer to nature than culture (Ortner 70). Hence, this dissertation takes an ecofeminist stand in denouncing the shared oppression of women and nonhuman animals and, in adding the lens provided by critical posthumanism, the analysis of the novels

concerned will benefit from the transformative potential of posthumanism-informed ecofeminism.

Posthumanism, as Cary Wolfe explains, encompasses a broad spectrum of interpretations and perspectives, often giving rise to conflicting notions (*What is Posthumanism?* xii). Within this umbrella framework, Francesca Ferrando identifies various related terms, including transhumanism, new materialisms, antihumanisms, posthumanities, and metahumanities ("Posthumanism, Transhumanism" 26). Despite its relative novelty, gaining traction only in the mid-1990s,[2] posthumanism has garnered significant popularity (Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* xii). It has undergone extensive debates and refinements to establish itself as a distinct concept separate from ideologies like transhumanism, which revolves around promises of technology-mediated and controlled human evolution through prostheses (Ferrando, "Posthumanism, Transhumanism" 27). Critical posthumanism is often regarded as more rigorous and philosophical than posthumanism, which tends to focus on technology and its potential to transform humans into "posthuman" states, aligning more with transhumanist postulates. In contrast, critical posthumanism is concerned with the ongoing deconstruction of the normative figure of the "human" — male, white, European and able-bodied (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 24) — and his hierarchical premises (Herbrechter et al. 3).

By transcending the boundaries of gender and the environment, a posthumanism-informed ecofeminist approach acknowledges the intricate interconnectedness of all beings within the more-than-human world. As a result, it arguably enables a more nuanced comprehension of power dynamics and various forms of oppression. Moreover, posthumanism-influenced ecofeminism actively challenges anthropocentric and androcentric perspectives, emphasising the agency and inherent worth of nonhuman entities. Through its decentring of the human species and the idealised construct of the "human," it advocates for an inclusive and egalitarian approach to environmental ethics and activism.

By applying ecofeminism informed by critical posthumanism, this dissertation enriches its theoretical foundation and ensures a robust and insightful analysis of the intricate dynamics and transformations encompassing the interplay between gender, nature, and power. Furthermore, to effectively investigate the dissolution of species

---

[2] The term might also be traced back to Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1970).

boundaries and the negotiation of social identities through animal metaphors, the utilisation of "critical posthumanism," as formulated by scholars such as Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, and others, proves more fitting for framing the discussions arising from the selected corpus in this doctoral thesis (Ferrando, "Posthumanism, Transhumanism"; Braidotti, *The Posthuman*; Haraway, *When Species Meet*).

Similar to ecofeminism, critical posthumanism seeks to challenge the hierarchical divisions ingrained in humanism (Calarco 30–31). This ontological perspective is translated into posthumanist ethics, which are characterised by a rejection of anthropocentric hierarchies and a focus on the concept of zoe — which is the "dynamic, self-organizing structure of life itself" that includes human and more-than-human life (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 60) — as elucidated by Ferrando ("Posthuman Feminist Ethics" 156). In contrast, bios refers exclusively to human life, excluding any other forms (Braidotti, "The Politics of Life as Bios/Zoe" 180). In short, as Braidotti argues, in traditional western thought, "[b]ios is almost holy, whereas zoe is certainly gritty" ("The Politics of Life as Bios/Zoe" 177). Posthumanism challenges this association by western philosophy that confines bios to the human realm and assigns zoe to other forms of life. Given that Braidotti contends that posthumanist ethics are post-anthropocentric and zoe-centred (*The Posthuman* 194), to follow posthumanist ethics implies the dismantlement of hierarchical dichotomies and the subsequent oppression of the Other.

We cannot help but note that, similar to ecofeminism, posthumanism has not been immune to critique, particularly in relation to its perceived connection with the Gaia hypothesis formulated by chemist James Lovelock, which proposes that living organisms interact with their inorganic surroundings to create a self-regulating and complex system that helps to maintain life conditions (Lovelock 9). This theory has nonetheless been criticised for its implicit technophobia, even by prominent posthumanist scholars. As Braidotti clarifies, her conception of critical posthumanism does not align with the Gaia hypothesis because it:

> has two drawbacks. Firstly, its technophobic aspect is not particularly helpful in itself, considering the world we are living in. Secondly, it paradoxically reinstates the very categorical divide between the natural and the manufactured which it is attempting to overcome. (*The Posthuman* 85–86).

As a result, the inclusion of critical posthumanism in this thesis serves as a proactive measure to counteract biases against technological and scientific advancements. Instead of outright rejection, the primary focus is on criticising dualistic frameworks, regardless of their origins in scientific or other fields of study. Indeed, the integration of critical posthumanism within this thesis serves to bolster the ecofeminist deconstruction of hierarchies, sidestepping potential essentialism criticisms, and concentrating on a critical examination of the concept of the "human." Having established the foundation of this dissertation, which incorporates elements of both ecofeminism and critical posthumanism, we will now proceed to introduce the key concepts that will shape our analysis and inform the conclusions drawn in this study in order to facilitate the navigation throughout the text.

2.1. Kinship in the Chthulucene

Initially rooted in its original definition as a geological time, provided by Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in their seminal work published in *The Future of Nature* (480), the concept of the Anthropocene has garnered significant attention from posthumanist scholars due to its broader implications for the human-environment relationship (Steffen et al. 843). In the context of the ongoing climate crisis, the Anthropocene involves "the destruction of places and times of refuge for people and other critters" (Haraway, "Anthropocene" 160). Although the term places humanity as a geological agent, the Anthropocene impacts all forms of life, engendering widespread devastation that ironically unites us all under its destructive force. Therefore, the Anthropocene may be seen as a catalyst for critical reflections on the ethical responsibilities and urgent actions required to address the devastating consequences of human activities on the planet and its inhabitants. It prompts us to reassess and reimagine our relationship with the more-than-human world, shifting towards more inclusive, empathetic, and sustainable practices that acknowledge the intrinsic value and interconnectedness of all life forms.

In this regard, Haraway argues for a response to the destructive nature of the Anthropocene by envisioning the emergence of the Chthulucene — an epoch characterised by a comprehensive and resilient reconstitution of biological, cultural, political, and technological realms ("Anthropocene" 160). This transformative epoch seeks to dissolve boundaries and embraces the inclusion of "the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus" ("Anthropocene" 160). By rejecting

anthropocentric perspectives prevalent in contemporary western societies, the Chthulucene offers an alternative framework. In contrast to the Anthropocene, where all living beings are rendered as refugees, Haraway contends that the Chthulucene represents a shift towards a future where destruction ceases ("Anthropocene" 161). Haraway's concept of the Chthulucene calls for a profound reimagining of our relationships with the more-than-human world. It urges us to move beyond human-centred perspectives and embrace a multispecies approach that recognises the agency and value of nonhuman entities. In this vision, humans are not privileged over other beings but rather understood as interconnected and interdependent with the diverse forms of life that share this planet.

Within the context of the Chthulucene, the entrenched binary constructions of humanist thought can be effectively challenged, opening up possibilities for interspecies alliances to contest the Anthropocene. Haraway's provocative call to "Make Kin Not Babies!" urges a reimagining of kinship beyond the confines of traditional human-centric boundaries ("Anthropocene" 161). Concurrently, Braidotti underscores the importance of cultivating empowerment and recognising the intricate interconnections that enable the formation of alliances grounded in posthumanist principles ("Animals" 530–31). As a result, these posthumanist alliances, liberated from anthropocentric and androcentric biases, hold significant potential in confronting and subverting the marginalising tendencies inherent in humanism and its hierarchical dichotomies. In other words, the Chthulucene invites us to reimagine kinship and forge alliances that transcend traditional boundaries. It challenges us to embrace the interconnectedness of all beings and engage in transformative practices that challenge the oppressive legacies of humanist thought. Through posthumanist alliances, we have the potential to disrupt hierarchical dichotomies and strive towards a more inclusive and egalitarian future that honours the complexity and diversity of life on our planet.

To thoroughly explore the potential of posthumanist alliances in challenging humanist ontologies and transcending human-centric boundaries, it is crucial to scrutinise the concept of "kinship" and its practical implications. This examination becomes particularly significant in the context of interspecies alliances. An avenue for such alliances can be found in the cultural practice of pet-keeping, which gained prominence in the eighteenth century and led to a greater prevalence of households housing companion animals (L. Brown 33). Unlike other animals, pets occupy a distinct position within anthropocentric societies due to their proximity and interconnectedness with humans. In comparison to other animals, pets possess a notable "privilege" that sets them

apart; for instance, they are named, a customary practice in the United Kingdom dating back to at least the eighteenth century (N. Charles, "Animals" 717). This act holds significant importance, as Nickie Charles elucidates, as it endows animals with attributes traditionally associated with humans, thereby individualising them ("Animals" 717). Hence, this naming process bestows a sense of uniqueness upon certain nonhuman animals.

However, the naming of certain animals is often the result of anthropomorphism, defined by Fredrik Karlsson as "the habit of attributing traits, believed to be uniquely or typically human, to nonhuman entities, such as divinities, machines, or animals" (709). The implications of anthropomorphism vary depending on whether it manifests as naïve — supporting anthropocentrism — or critical anthropomorphism, as argued by Gordon Burghardt (138). Plumwood provides a vivid example of the detrimental consequences of deeply anthropocentric anthropomorphism through the portrayal of a monkey dressed in human attire and forced to perform on a circus bicycle. In this case, the monkey becomes subject to ridicule as a result of a deliberate but parodic attempt to blur the boundaries between humans and nonhuman animals, ultimately simplifying and assimilating the nonhuman animal (The Concept 68–69). Hence, if kinship is created on the grounds of anthropomorphism, we risk entering hazardous territory where we reinforce anthropocentrism rather than challenge it.

Unfortunately, pets are too often imbued with "human" characteristics in a simplistic — and anthropocentric — manner. This form of naïve anthropomorphism can give rise to misguided comparisons that, according to Ortiz Robles, result in hybrid creatures that do not necessarily blur humanist dichotomies; instead, they tend to reinforce notions of otherness. Ortiz Robles asserts that this occurs because "the 'otherness' of the animal is not often encoded as fully Other: dogs, cats, horses, and songbirds among others tend to be portrayed in literature as familiar beings whose strangeness, that is, their nonhumanity, only compels us humans to examine our ideological investments" (147). Hence, the presence of hybrid identities does not automatically foster posthumanist alliances, particularly in the case of animals classified as "pets," as they are frequently subjected to a form of anthropomorphism that denies their true nature as members of their respective species.

Power dynamics pose another challenge when it comes to establishing kinship through pets. One possible view on pet-keeping is Yi-Fu Tuan's, whose influential work, *Dominance and Affection—The Making of Pets* (1984), precisely highlights the role of

dominance in the practice of pet-keeping. According to Tuan, pet-keeping originates from "man's inherent insecurity and need to display his power to subdue the unruly forces of nature" (5), a view that suggests that pet-keeping is rooted in the exercise of domination, as it serves to alleviate the anxieties of (male) humans when faced with the forces of "nature." Thus, when examining the human-pet relationship from Tuan's viewpoint, it becomes apparent that the privileges bestowed upon pets can be easily revoked, reflecting the underlying dominance dynamics.

In contrast to the categorisation of animals as mere pets, Haraway introduces the term "companion species" as a more inclusive alternative and emphasises the significance of "relating" as a central concept. According to Haraway, "relating" involves embracing a messy and challenging form of love, where the other is encountered in all their tangible complexities within a mortal relationship. This process involves both comic and tragic mistakes in an ongoing quest for intimate knowledge of the other (*The Companion* 34). By adopting a perspective of companionship, rather than a hierarchical pet-owner relationship, we can dismantle hierarchies and subsequent dichotomies. This shift allows us to view other species as companions, opening up possibilities for fostering posthumanist alliances. Through non-hierarchical and non-dominant interactions with nonhuman beings, we can challenge the processes of othering prevalent in anthropocentric and androcentric societies. By recognising members of other species as kin rather than objects of control, we can transcend the limitations of the Anthropocene and embark on a transformative journey towards the Chthulucene.

Hence, the analysis of literary animals in this thesis can benefit from the urgency of addressing the challenges posed by the Anthropocene. By reimagining our relationships with companion species and rejecting dominant dynamics, the texts can foster posthumanist alliances that challenge anthropocentric biases and oppressive legacies. Importantly, such alliances hold the potential to disrupt hierarchical dichotomies and cultivate a more inclusive and egalitarian future, transcending human-centric boundaries. Through these transformative practices, we can navigate the complexities of the Anthropocene and embrace a multispecies kinship that honours the interconnectedness and intrinsic value of all life forms.

2.2. Necropolitics

In the context of the Anthropocene, the concept of necropolitics, closely intertwined with the destructive implications of this era, can be useful to shed light on the power dynamics that dictate who lives and who dies. By exploring the interconnectedness between the plight of literary animals and the conditions of the living dead — those individuals who, while not biologically deceased, undergo a social or political death by losing sovereignty over their lives and bodies (Mbembe, "Necropolitics" 13) — we can attain a comprehensive understanding of the present-day politics within the Anthropocene.

Building upon Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics and with a specific focus on (post)colonial contexts, Achille Mbembe elucidates in his influential work *Necropolitics* (2016) that contemporary forms of sovereignty manifest in the power to determine who lives and who dies, constituting necropolitics. By emphasising "necro" instead of "bio," Mbembe introduces alternative avenues for analysis. Necropower and necropolitics encompass the diverse strategies employed to annihilate individuals, giving rise to "death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to the conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead" ("Necropolitics" 40). Thus, Mbembe's perspective necessitates an exploration of death and the state of the "living dead" to attain a profound comprehension of present-day politics. These living dead, rejected by society and institutions, are deprived of subjectivity, reduced to what Giorgio Agamben terms "bare life" — a life stripped of its political dimension (28). Within the realm of necropolitics, these lives inhabit a liminal state, neither entirely alive nor dead. In summary, Mbembe elucidates in his article on necropolitics:

> I have put forward the notion of necropolitics and necropower to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead. ("Necropolitics" 40)

Necropolitics not only influences the socioeconomic landscape of contemporary Ireland but also plays a role in shaping constructions of gender. While Mbembe acknowledges

the "manipulation of questions of gender for racist ends" (*Necropolitics* 60), he does not extensively explore this dimension. In contrast, Ege Selin Islekel argues that "overlooking gender and sexuality ignores the modes of resistance that emerge in necropolitical contexts that specifically deploy and mobilize gendered categories and identities" (4). The term necropatriarchy captures the intersection between patriarchy and necropolitics, highlighting how the patriarchal system operates by legitimising violence against gendered subjects. Sayak Valencia emphasises that women's bodies are frequently subjected to violence, and the state's response to such violence is often inadequate, with the institutional violence against women being legitimised through patriarchal discourses (185). By considering the gender dimension of necropolitics, we gain a deeper understanding of the modes of resistance that emerge and the specific deployment and mobilisation of gendered categories and identities. This perspective challenges us to critically examine the interconnectedness of power, violence, and gender in contemporary contexts, and to question the ways in which patriarchal systems uphold and perpetuate forms of violence against marginalised gendered subjects.

The issue of necropatriarchy in contemporary Ireland is particularly evident in the context of the Magdalene laundries and Mother and Baby Homes, which operated since 1922 with the Free Irish State until 1996 already in the Republic. These institutions, operated by the Catholic Church, sought to control and punish women who were considered to have transgressed societal moral standards. Within these institutions, women endured physical, emotional, and sexual violence, while their children were often forcibly separated from them and put up for adoption. As Maeve O'Rourke argues in her study of the legacy of these institutions, they were part of a broader system of patriarchal violence where women's bodies were subjected to violence and control in the name of morality and social order with the complicity of the state (200).

The necropatriarchal violence inherent in the Magdalene laundries is perhaps best exemplified by the presence of mass graves within these institutions. As O'Rourke explains, "155 'Magdalenes' were buried at the High Park plot in Glasnevin, 101 at the Gloucester Street plot in Glasnevin, 72 Consecrated Magdalenes at the Sisters of Mercy Foster Street convent in Galway, 241 at the Good Shepherd plot at Mount St Lawrence Cemetery in Limerick, and 72 at the Sisters of Charity plot at St. Finbarr's Cemetery in Cork" (212). These communal gravesites serve as powerful symbols of the necropatriarchal violence inflicted upon women within these institutions. Therefore, the pervasiveness of necropatriarchy in twentieth-century Ireland cannot be denied and

demands recognition and resistance. As Islekel argues, "[c]onsidering gendered death allows for articulating how necropolitics can be, and is, continuously subverted" (4). It is then imperative to acknowledge and challenge the system of necropatriarchy, which perpetuates violence against women and restricts their agency and autonomy. By examining the gendered dimensions of violence and death, we can contribute to dismantling the structures of power that uphold and perpetuate necropatriarchy in contemporary Irish society.

Scholars have also expanded the concept of necropolitics to include its economic dimension. Marta del Castillo Bravo argues that hyper-consumerist capitalism is inherently violent, permeating our bodies through seemingly harmless advertisements and packaging, resulting in constant frustration and explicit aggression (59). Fatmir Haskaj, drawing on Mbembe's framework, asserts that neoliberalism plays a significant role in the prevalence of necroeconomics in contemporary societies, particularly in former colonies. Haskaj posits that the shift observed since the 1980s is not merely a change in the global economic system, but rather a reorganisation of the system's very logic. This shift "is the hegemonic reorganization of not just economic production but also socio-cultural production" (1153). Importantly, Haskaj denounces that neoliberalism does not come from a ruling elite, but rather it "is in us and all around us, even if neoliberalism's force comes from the structural and ideological realignments it is enacted on and through the individual, and it is at the level of the individual that it is sustained and replicated" (1154). Privileging individual profit above all else, neoliberalism generates a tendency to view certain groups, particularly the unemployed, as "death-subjects" or "necrotariat" (1155). As Haskaj explains, under the influence of neoliberalism:

> In a necroeconomy it is not the physical body alone (organ trafficking), or the productive capacities of that body as labor power that are of value, but the humanity of the necrosubject. For example, in a necroeconomy, the target of expropriation is not gold, timber or rubber as in the European rush for overseas colonial domains in the 16th and 17th centuries, but the very body of the human as corpse, not material flesh, but the death of personhood. (1163)

Therefore, although the concept of necropolitics encompasses the dynamics of living dead subjects in general, other scholars have expanded it to pay special attention to the economic dimension. Given that in contemporary Ireland neoliberalism has gained

significant influence, by critically engaging with necropolitical frameworks, we can shed light on the oppressive systems that perpetuate marginalisation and advocate for alternative forms of politics that uphold the dignity and agency of all individuals.

By exploring the parallels between the plight of literary animals and the conditions of the living dead, we can attain a comprehensive understanding of the complex politics within the Anthropocene. The analysis of necropolitics not only provides critical insights into oppressive systems and structures but also serves as a foundation for advocating alternative forms of politics that uphold the dignity and agency of all individuals, transcending anthropocentric and androcentric boundaries and fostering a more inclusive and egalitarian future in the face of the Anthropocene.

2.3. Vulnerable Lives

The discussion on literary animals and necropolitics can prompt us to examine the concept of precariousness, which complements our understanding of the vulnerability and disposability of certain lives in contemporary societies. Judith Butler's exploration of precariousness, as articulated in *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?,* distinguishes between precariousness and precarity. Butler emphasises that:

> Precariousness and precarity are intersecting concepts. Lives are by definition precarious: they can be expunged at will or by accident; their persistence is in no sense guaranteed. […] Political orders, including economic and social institutions, are designed to address those very needs without which the risk of mortality is heightened. Precarity designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. (*Frames of War* 25)

By focusing on the interconnectedness between the Self and Others, Butler highlights the importance of adopting a materialist perspective that acknowledges our perpetual exposure and interdependence. Ethical encounters play a crucial role in recognising the precariousness of other species. As Calarco explains, through such encounters, "I encounter the Other as ethically different […] The Other here issues a challenge to my way of life and allows me to recognize that there are Others who are fundamentally different from me and to whom I unthinkingly do violence in my daily life" (32).

Central to Butler's exploration of vulnerability is the question of who is deemed grievable, as the value and care for life become apparent only when the possibility of loss exists. According to Butler, grievability is a subjective determination in which we choose which lives matter and are worthy of consideration. As Butler states, "[p]recisely because a living being may die, it is necessary to care for that being so that it may live. Only under conditions in which the loss would matter does the value of life appear. Thus, grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters" (*Frames of War* 15). Therefore, the forging of interspecies alliances becomes crucial in expanding the scope of our grief to include other species. Moreover, the exploration of precariousness, as articulated by Butler, deepens our understanding of the vulnerability and disposability of lives in contemporary societies. Recognising the interconnectedness between humans and other species through ethical encounters allows us to confront and challenge the violence and inequalities that permeate our relationships.

The precariousness of life demonstrates the interconnectedness between vulnerability and liminality. As Madeline Burghardt argues, vulnerability naturally leads us to the concept of liminality, which involves occupying a marginalised social position on the borderlines of the convention. Those labelled as vulnerable find themselves in an uncertain and liminal space, simultaneously in need of care and protection yet perceived as "a social risk" (559). Expanding the exploration of liminality to include animals, it becomes apparent that species boundaries and anthropocentrism are also subject to (de)construction. Wrenn notes this broader application of liminality beyond humans (155). This notion is further exemplified by Philip Howell's concept of "liminanimality," which emphasises the fluidity between species, the dichotomy of "wild" and "domesticated," and the division between "nature" and "civilization" (395). Howell argues that animals frequently find themselves in human-dominated or human-influenced environments, exposing them to liminal existence due to their vulnerability and the precarity of their circumstances (Howell 401–02). This understanding of liminality is significant as it imposes an obligation upon us, as Butler suggests, to acknowledge and address the precariousness of life (*Frames of War* 2). Thus, the recognition of the precariousness of life reveals the interconnectedness between vulnerability and liminality. Liminality extends beyond humans to encompass the (de)construction of species boundaries and the impact of anthropocentrism. The concept of liminanimality highlights the fluidity between species and the divisions imposed by human-centred perspectives

and, acknowledging and addressing the precariousness of life, as advocated by Butler, carries ethical responsibilities that may result in changes in the *status quo*.

Having examined the dynamics of the Anthropocene, vulnerability, and posthumanist ethics, we now turn our attention to the question of how animals are represented in literature. By considering the representation of animals in literary texts, we can explore the ways in which these narratives reflect and shape our understanding of humanimal relationships, and the ethical implications that arise from these portrayals.

3. Representations of Animals

> If a lion could talk, we could not understand him (Wittgenstein 225).

The challenge of understanding members of other species, even if they possessed the ability to communicate, has sparked ongoing discussions within the field of animal studies, drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein's assertion that communication between humans and animals would remain incomprehensible. This issue resonates with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal inquiry in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), where she delves into the representation and systematic political silencing of the colonised Other, attributing their inability to "speak" to their lack of access to hegemonic power (308). Expanding on this line of thought, Fayaz Chagani critically examines the field of postcolonial studies and raises the question "Can the Postcolonial Animal Speak?" Chagani contends that "because [postcolonial studies] has not fully examined its own anthropocentrism, it continues to reproduce a rather conventional humanism in spite of many claims to the contrary" (619). In other words, postcolonial studies, despite claims of challenging human-centred perspectives, have occasionally overlooked the "animal question" and perpetuated hierarchical humanist dichotomies. This neglect of the animal dimension is significant, given the historical association between colonised individuals and nonhuman animals, necessitating a deconstruction of the representational frameworks surrounding other species in order to uncover the underlying ideologies at play. Because of this, this section of the theoretical framework focuses on how humans represent other species through metaphors as well as how ideology permeates these constructions, particularly in literary texts.

3.1. Metaphors and Cultural Biases

Literature serves as a powerful medium for exploring our relationship with the natural world and challenging cultural biases through the representation of animals. From fables featuring talking animals to nuanced portrayals of animal subjectivity, literature creates a space for empathy, understanding, and reevaluation. When engaging with literary animals, a significant challenge arises due to the continuous generation, replication, and alteration of animal tropes and motifs, which impedes direct access to animals themselves within our culture. As Baker aptly argues, the "thick but transparent mesh (or mess) of history, culture, public opinion, received ideas" is one reason why our reading of other species is commonly mediated by a cultural lens.

Furthermore, this cultural lens and its ideological biases remain largely implicit and obscured. Baker extends his examination of animal metaphors by criticising the notion of "common sense," asserting that it functions as a monopolistic claim on reality, normalising the use of animals as tropes and relegating the other-than-human to the margins (10). Consequently, nonhuman animals not only endure marginalisation within our cultural productions but the role of human culture in reducing them to symbols is ignored, facilitating the ongoing oppression of material animals with no way for them to contest these potentially anthropocentric practices and so, in a way, to "speak back."

The presence of animals as metaphors in human narratives is deeply rooted and pervasive throughout history. In his renowned essay "Why Look at Animals?," John Berger suggests that animals were the first metaphors, and so the relationship between humans and nonhumans has historically been conceptualised as metaphorical (7). Mario Ortiz Robles takes this notion further, asserting that nonhuman animals have consistently occupied a position in literature "as marginal as […] constant" (16). Their prominence in literary works stems from their dual nature as being "like us, but also unlike us," as emphasised by Margo DeMello. This duality provides a rich metaphorical landscape through which human behaviours, desires, and aspirations can be portrayed without challenging prevailing human(ist) identities (*Animals and Society* 305). Hence, it is undeniable that we are surrounded by literary animals.

One issue with literary animals is that their marginal position in literature simplifies and denies the complexity of their materiality. As Carol J. Adams argues, by reducing animals to symbolic representations, we construct myths and ontologies that overlook the consequences of this reduction (66–67). Hence, nonhuman animals have traditionally

been diminished into symbolic representations when constructing our myths and ontologies, without due consideration for the consequences of this reduction. In this regard, John J. Clark explains that:

> creating fantastic stereotypes of animals who enjoy nothing more than being subjugated is problematic for real animals because such stereotypes imply that animals are happily compliant with their manipulation by humans […] Humans […] embrace these fantastical animal stereotypes because the stereotypes allow us an increasingly consumerist and disposable lifestyle which actually endangers animals and destroys the very environment in which they live. Further […] we give ourselves the means by which to neutralize and overlook all manners of brutality heaped upon these "happy" animals. (179)

The metaphorical reduction of nonhuman animals is far from innocuous; instead, it functions as a means of marginalising and oppressing them while neutralising any potential resistance they might possess. As Claire J. Brown asserts, when considering the materiality of symbols, "one must also consider the impact that a symbol can have in its own right" (70). By reducing animals to mere metaphors, they become "absent referents"[3] and figuratively "disappear," further facilitating their oppression. As Robles contends, "[t]he history of modern literature is […] the history of an absence; an absence made all the more poignant by the cultural embeddedness of animals during the same period" (20). Consequently, other-than-human entities have been systematically erased from discourse through their marginalisation in cultural products, including literature.

The symbolic reduction of animals not only affects them but also influences human perceptions and interactions. According to McHugh, animality operates as a "marker of difference internalized in human species being. This implies that animal subjectivity remains significant only as an essentially negative force against which the human is asserted" ("Literary Animal Agents" 489). Cary Wolfe further expands on this by highlighting how the discourse of animality extends beyond nonhuman animals,

---

[3] Adams acknowledges her indebtedness to Margaret Homan's work, specifically *Bearing the World* (1986), where she first encountered the concept of the absent referent (13). According to Adams, animals can function as absent referents in two distinct ways. Firstly, animals become literally absent referents through their consumption as meat. Secondly, animals serve as definitional absent referents as our language and discourse about them undergo transformations when they are consumed (60).

permeating western societies and shaping how we engage with others ("Introduction" x). Notably, when a human is represented as a nonhuman animal, even partially, it often signifies a devaluation of their worth, as the marginalisation of other species is readily applied to subjugated humans. In essence, the marginalisation of nonhuman animals establishes a precedent for the marginalisation of any human group deemed "subhuman" or deemed to possess insufficient humanity. In light of this, Ortiz Robles proposes that:

> animal studies can provide a valuable lesson for literary scholars: the constant, if marginal, presence of animals in literature not only impels us to reconsider the significance of animal tropes, or, rather, of the animal-as-trope; it also pushes us to reassess the character, morphology, physiology, and force of tropes themselves, of the trope-as-animal. (19)

By examining metaphors of nonhumans, we can shed light on and challenge anthropocentrism while also exposing interconnected ideologies, such as patriarchy and colonialism. Metaphors, being cultural artefacts, carry profound ideological implications, which makes them a potent vehicle for not only exposing but also dismantling these frameworks. Consequently, analysing these metaphors becomes a means to bring attention to these issues, contest anthropocentric perspectives, and foster a critical understanding of the underlying power dynamics and socio-cultural constructs that shape humanimal bonds.

Analysing literary animals poses inherent challenges, as the metaphorical nature of these representations carries heavy ideological implications. Consequently, engaging in such analysis may appear futile due to the endless debates surrounding the thoughts and emotions of other species. However, this dissertation aligns more closely with McHugh's perspective, who argues that:

> It is well worth questioning what we humans can ever know about other species. But my sketch of the history of literary animal agents shows how such self-questioning all too often comes at the expense of moving from studying animals with any established methodology or present value system to imagining ourselves working in (or even against) a newly formulated discursive field that brings together complex and different constructions of and methods for studying animals and studying with them. ("Literary Animal Agents" 492)

While the analysis of literary animals presents challenges, it is not a futile endeavour. By embracing McHugh's call to move beyond established methodologies and value systems, we can tap into the power of the sympathetic imagination. J.M. Coetzee's novella, The *Lives of Animals* (1999), offers a compelling exploration of this concept. Coetzee's notion of the sympathetic imagination, as elucidated by Brenda Deen Schildgen, suggests that humans have the capacity to empathise with the nonhuman world. By engaging our sympathetic imagination, we can envision, though not fully comprehend, the thoughts and emotions of nonhuman beings, bridging the gap between species (323). The sympathetic imagination involves cultivating compassion for the other, extending our capacity for understanding beyond the human realm. It requires us to "think ourselves into the being of another" (Coetzee 34), acknowledging and embracing the interconnectedness of all living beings. While it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the sympathetic imagination (Attridge 39), it remains a powerful tool for delving into the study of the nonhuman Other. Through the sympathetic imagination, we can transcend the confines of established methodologies and value systems, fostering a deeper connection with the nonhuman world. It enables us to approach animals and their experiences with empathy and curiosity, recognising their subjectivity and granting them agency in our analyses. Thus, the sympathetic imagination opens up new possibilities for understanding and engaging with the diverse expressions of life beyond the human, enriching our perspectives and our understanding of the world we share.

The concept of the sympathetic imagination holds particular importance in literature, as it may engage readers' imagination and foster empathy not only within the realm of fiction but also towards real animals. By delving into fictional narratives, readers activate their imagination, allowing them to connect with characters and their experiences on intellectual and emotional levels. Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* serves as an example where readers sympathise with the equine protagonist, establishing a humanimal bond through imaginative engagement (Beiert 217). This is not too surprising when one considers that, neuroscientifically, the human brain processes fictional events as if they were real. As Beiert explains, this "allows [the reader] to identify with others by pretending to be in their situation" (218). This process triggers empathy within the reader and facilitates a deeper understanding and connection with both fictional and real animals. Beiert also highlights that:

> Empathy not only leads people to recognize what is morally good, it also teaches
> them to embrace it and act on it. The dramatic nature of stories helps readers develop
> an emotional attachment to goodness and a desire to do the right thing, because they
> want to follow the good examples set by characters. Stories allow them to 'rehearse'
> moral decisions, strengthening their solidarity with the good [and] help people gain
> the perspective of other animals. (218)

In this way, literature and the sympathetic imagination might enable readers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of and empathy towards the experiences of animals, both real and fictional. In other words, through fiction, readers can cultivate a compassionate and empathetic approach towards the nonhuman world, promoting a greater understanding of their experiences and fostering positive actions rooted in empathy and non-anthropocentric ethics.

The use of imagination in forging posthumanist alliances with other species must be tempered by a humble acknowledgment of our limited access to knowledge, so as to avoid arrogantly speaking for nonhuman animals, even if from a purely imaginative stance. Embracing Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledge," this thesis rejects the notion that reason alone can comprehensively understand the complexities of other species. Situated knowledge, as Haraway explains, is about communities rather than isolated individuals and recognises the significance of being situated within specific contexts ("Situated Knowledges" 570). It challenges the fantasy of purely objective and disembodied knowledge, advocating instead for the inclusion of partial perspectives and diverse voices in a collective subject position. As Haraway explains, these situated knowledges:

> are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger
> vision is to be somewhere in particular. The science question in feminism is about
> objectivity as positioned rationality. Its images are not the products of escape and
> transcendence of limits (the view from above) but the joining of partial views and
> halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means
> of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions-of views
> from somewhere. ("Situated Knowledges" 590)

In order to delve deeper into interspecies communication and interdependence, it is crucial to move away from unproductive and circular debates that reinforce an

unchallenged anthropocentric and androcentric *status quo*. By critically examining the cultural biases inherent in animal metaphors, literature becomes a potent tool for dismantling oppressive frameworks, cultivating critical awareness, and transforming humanimal relationships. This transformative shift enables us to explore interspecies communication and interdependence from a more inclusive perspective that avoids speaking for the nonhuman Other. Through an embrace of situated knowledge and a critical examination of animal metaphors, we can navigate beyond immobilising debates and engage in meaningful dialogues that challenge oppressive hierarchies. By recognising our own limitations and embracing diverse perspectives, we can foster a more respectful and inclusive approach to understanding and coexisting with other species. In doing so, we move towards a more compassionate and equitable future where the voices and experiences of all beings, human and nonhuman alike, are acknowledged and respected.

To facilitate navigation through the subsequent chapters dedicated to the analysis, this thesis commits a subsection to three prominent nonhuman species: horses, sheep, and dogs. By focusing on these species, it aims to provide a framework for understanding their roles and representations within the selected novels. *The Lady* prominently showcases horses, *One Day as a Tiger* features a ewe, and *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* centres around a dog. This focused examination will hopefully serve as a stepping stone towards a comprehensive exploration of the dynamics and interactions between humans and these nonhuman beings in the context of Ireland.

3.2. Literary Species: Three Cases

The intertwined relationship between humans and animals has played a significant role in shaping cultures and societies throughout history. In the context of Ireland, a land rich in mythology, folklore, and deep-rooted traditions, the presence of animals has been integral to the formation of its cultural identity. This section of the doctoral thesis delves into the history and cultural legacy of three animal species in Ireland: equines, sheep, and dogs.

Corey Lee Wren explains that Ireland's economy has historically relied on animal husbandry, particularly the killing and milking of cattle (142). In the Celtic Iron Age (500 BC-400 AD), Ireland demonstrated exceptional expertise in intensive animal husbandry, with the Celts heavily relying on cattle, sheep, and pigs, considering them symbols of wealth (Green 5). This reliance on livestock extended into early Christian Irish society

(400 AD-1000 AD), where the exchange of cattle served as the foundation for social cohesion and the establishment of political and legal structures within the tuath, or petty kingdoms (McCormick, *Livestock* 31).

The value attributed to animal cattle persisted into medieval Ireland's rural society. McCormick explains that the investments of noblemen in milk cows were "calculated in terms of a value of cattle, expressed in terms of a unit of measurement known as the sét, the value of which varied." McCormick further exemplifies this with the case of the Críth Gablach, where the sét equalled four-fifths of a milk cow (*Livestock* 33). Cattle held such importance that cattle-raiding, though not endorsed by the church, was celebrated by the nobility, demonstrating its cultural significance and acceptance (*Livestock* 33). Thus, it becomes evident that animals, particularly cattle, played a fundamental role in the construction of Irish society throughout different historical periods, echoing a trend found in many countries. The economic, social, and cultural significance placed on animal husbandry remained constant, shaping the identity and functioning of Celtic, Christian, and medieval Irish societies. The profound interdependence between humans and animals underscores the integral role that animals played in Irish culture, highlighting their enduring legacy and the unique bond forged between the two realms.

Given the significant role animals played in Ireland, it is not surprising that Irish folklore is replete with animal motifs. One of the most emblematic tales in the Ulster Cycle,[4] the Táin Bo Cuailnge,[5] revolves around Queen Medb of Connacht's pursuit of acquiring a magnificent bull to match her consort Ailill's. Green explains that:

> the whole story revolves around the desire of Queen Medb of Connacht to gain as
> superb a bull as that owned by her consort Ailill. Her heart is set on the acquisition
> of the Brown Bull of Cuailnge in Ulster, described as thickbreasted, narrow-flanked,
> with a magnificent mane on his neck, and glaring eyes. The two rulers boast of their

---

[4] According to *Britannica*, the Ulster Cycle, also known as the Ulaid Cycle, is a group of legends and tales dealing with the heroic age of the Ulaids, a people of northeast Ireland from whom the modern name Ulster derives. The stories, set in the first century BC, were recorded from oral tradition between the eighth and eleventh centuries and are preserved in the twelfth-century manuscripts *The Book of the Dun Cow* (c. 1100) and *The Book of Leinster* (c. 1160) and also in later compilations, such as Th*e Yellow Book of Lecan* (fourteenth century) ("Ulster Cycle").

[5] The Táin Bo Cuailnge is also known as The Táin or less commonly as The Cattle Raid of Cooley.

possessions, vying with each other for supremacy, but it is cattle which means the most to them. The Ulster hero Cú Chulainn brags that he has slaughtered "hosts of cattle, men and steeds". The great Insular pastoral festival of Beltene at the beginning of May traditionally marked the time of year when cattle and sheep were taken up to the high. (43–44)

This foundational myth underscores the importance of considering nonhuman species when examining Irish fiction, both contemporary and historical. Despite the temptation to dismiss these myths as relics of a bygone era, the centrality of other-than-human species persists in Irish literature and culture. This enduring significance is evidenced by the scholarly works dedicated to exploring the relationship between animals and Irish literature and culture, such as Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó's influential publication *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture* (2015) and Maureen O'Connor's thought-provoking work *The Female and the Species* (2010).

Furthermore, the exploration of animals in Irish literature provides a unique perspective to examine the historical context of Ireland's struggles as a former British colony. Kirkpatrick sheds light on the significance of how the Irish are discursively dehumanised through their representation by British colonialism, as "[t]hese portrayals tell us a great deal about the ways discourses of animality inform the human, and often, the subhuman" ("Introduction" 1). Moreover, the dehumanisation experienced in Ireland is not limited to the entire population but has specifically targeted women, subjecting them to degrading discourses. DeMello's examination of folklore highlights the detrimental effects faced by individuals depicted as "animal-like" in these narratives, with women bearing the brunt of this dehumanisation, as she elaborates:

> And let's not forget the old woman – almost always an old woman who, when not being hunted down in the guise of the hare, is accused of being, and even executed as, a witch. While today in the West, we are much more familiar with a young and sexualized woman transforming into a rabbit as in the Playboy Bunny, the antecedents are the same, and lie in beliefs about, and a concern with, female sexuality. In both cases, the woman and the animal suffer for their alleged crimes and for the ways in which they have been symbolically linked. ("Foreword" xi)

DeMello effectively summarises the perpetuation of essentialist notions of "naturalised" and "animalised" female sexuality, which manifests in western societies through the

identification of women with other species. Consequently, I wholeheartedly concur with DeMello's views, particularly given the enduring influence of animal metaphors in contemporary Ireland. Moreover, exposing the otherisation of nonhuman beings in Irish cultural productions holds the potential to unveil the marginalisation of other entities, whether human or otherwise, and contribute to the critique of oppressive systems of thought, such as humanism, which has faced substantial criticism in recent decades for its reliance on binary frameworks. By revealing that animal-associated symbols are not limited to their biological counterparts, we can deconstruct binary assemblies and potentially reveal the interconnectedness among various marginalised entities.

Even though many species can be found in Irish myths and culture, this dissertation focuses on three specific species: equines, mostly horses and ponies, sheep, and dogs. These species were selected not only for their prevalence in Irish culture but also because they play significant roles in the three novels under examination, which delve into the connections between humans and these species through their interactions, rather than relegating the animals to mere background elements. In the subsequent subsections, we will delve into each animal species individually, tracing their historical trajectories, examining their cultural significance, and analysing their representation in Irish culture.

1.3.2.1. Horses

Horses have historically occupied a significant role in Irish culture, embodying notions of power, nobility, and freedom. These creatures have played pivotal roles in various spheres, including transportation, agriculture, and sport, while also serving as a source of inspiration for numerous literary and artistic creations. From mythical accounts of horses to the renowned tradition of horse racing in Ireland, equines have left an indelible imprint on the country's cultural fabric. Examining the representation of horses in literature, folklore, and popular culture offers a valuable opportunity to comprehend their profound cultural significance and gain deeper insights into their enduring legacy.

The historical connection between humans and horses spans several millennia. Since approximately 1600 BC in Europe, horses have been constant companions, as Green highlights (20). Their indispensable role in battle and transportation, enabling the movement of goods and people across vast distances, is widely recognised (Clark 157). Ortiz Robles further argues that our association with equines has played a crucial role in

enabling human civilisation to thrive (32). In the context of Ireland, the presence of early prehistoric equid remains can be traced back to the Early Bronze Age, with evidence found at Newgrange, County Meath, dating back to around 2400 BC, indicating a long-standing presence of horses on the island (McCormick, "Early Ireland" 86).

Equines feature prominently in numerous myths and legends, which may be attributed to their symbolic significance as representations of pastoral wealth during Early Celtic Ireland (Green 22). A noteworthy instance is found in the tales of Cú Chulainn of Ulster, where the hero is depicted riding two horses, namely the Black of Saingliu and the Grey of Macha. Of particular interest is the grey horse, Liath Macha, hailed as the sovereign among horses in the legends surrounding its rider (Kimpton 16). Similarly, the Giraldus Cambrensis chronicles offer a compelling illustration of horses being employed as political tropes to justify warfare (Green 189). These examples not only underscore the prevalence of equines in Irish folklore but also emphasise their pivotal roles within the narratives.

Celtic Irish tradition features a notable presence of female deities who share a close association with horses. One such deity is the enigmatic Mother Goddess, who exhibits a deep connection to horses, vividly depicted in the image of Macha, a figure of both singular and triple goddess nature. Among her three manifestations, Macha assumes a captivating form as a half-woman, half-horse entity (Green 187). Additionally, the Celtic goddess Epona is intrinsically linked to equine symbolism. Her name derives from a Celtic term specifically used to denote horses, and she is often depicted riding side saddle upon a mare or positioned amidst two ponies or horses. Green accentuates the significance of Epona by highlighting the widespread veneration of her cult in Roman-Celtic society, which endures as one of the most cherished myths in contemporary Ireland (204). Consequently, within Celtic Irish cosmology, we encounter female deities whose association with horses signifies not a submissive stance towards their male counterparts, but rather an intrinsic bond with these creatures.

The enduring potency of equines as symbolic representations may explain the continued prevalence of horses in more recent literary works, including those considered canonical. Notable works such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver Travels* (1726), Samuel Beckett's *The Expelled* (1985), R.A. MacAvoy's *The Grey Horse* (1987), Juanita Casey's *The Horse of Selene* (1985) and Eillís Dillon's *The Island of Horses* (2004) among others, have also contributed to this tradition. Perhaps precisely because of the strong presence of horses in recent Irish literature, Maria Pramaggiore explores the continued prominence

of textual horses on the island. Despite the perception during the Celtic Tiger era that horses and ponies were nostalgic remnants of a bygone agrarian and cultural nationalism ("The Celtic Tiger's" 226), Pramaggiore asserts that horses have "served as a metaphor for validating and renegotiating Irish identities from the middle ages […] to the Enlightenment […] to late twentieth-century popular culture" ("The Celtic Tiger's" 214). Consequently, horse figures have been "potent, and lucrative, symbols of Irish cultural identity" ("The Celtic Tiger's" 215).

The equine not only serves as a symbol for negotiating national ontologies but also plays a significant role in challenging gender norms. Equestrian riding, in particular, provides insights into the evolving gender roles associated with horses. Erica Munkwitz's study of female horse-riding in the United Kingdom shows that between 1860 and 1914, there was a notable increase in the number of women participating in horse-riding activities, marking a departure from its traditional male dominance ("Vixens of Venery" 74). By the 1890s, women were assuming pivotal positions as masters in hunting (Munkwitz, "The Master" 395). Riding, therefore, allowed women to transcend the confines of domesticity and expand their spheres of influence. In essence, the equine figure may serve as a powerful space from which women can potentially resist patriarchal oppression.

The process of "breaking" horses is a critical concern within the realm of riding. Natalie Kay Waran et al. explore the various training methods employed throughout history, ranging from the Mongols and their "horse economy" to contemporary techniques that claim to be more humane. They argue that since the Renaissance, there has been a shift towards a "sympathetic horseman technique" that "emphasises the importance of body language in communication" (175). This approach aims to move away from a dynamic of domination that inflicts physical harm upon the equine. However, it is important to acknowledge that the cultural practice of horsebreaking, popularised in the late 1850s and early 1860s, is strongly associated with the discourse of domination (Dorré 65). Consequently, the education of horses to accept riders cannot be divorced from discourses of dominance over the Other.

Another deeply troubling issue pertains to the fate of these equines, as the vast majority, if not all, eventually meet their end in slaughterhouses. Mary Eberstadt et al. highlight that horse slaughter is considered the quickest, cheapest, and most brutal means of relieving humans from the responsibility of horse ownership (5). As they denounce,

[y]es, they are loved. And they are drugged, used up, and cast off. They do like to run, in open fields, and even race each other. But I doubt they like to compete when their bodies need rest, when bone grinds on bone in knees aged beyond their years. To portray these animals as deprived of something if they're not tacked up and racing on a track is to wear the same blunders as the owners who send their horses to auction. (7)

In essence, regardless of their proclaimed love for horses, owners often reduce them to mere objects, utilised and discarded once they are no longer deemed useful or become a financial burden. Owners bear no ethical responsibility, whether it is in subjecting the horses to breaking and doping or in selling them off for slaughter and human consumption. Tellingly, in Ireland, over 6,500 horses were slaughtered for human consumption in 2018 alone ("Over 6,500 Horses"). Consequently, the horse emerges as an ambivalent figure in contemporary western societies, including Ireland, offering insight into the reshaping of ideologies and mindsets during pivotal moments such as the Celtic Tiger. Additionally, considering the enduring presence of horses in Irish history and society, and acknowledging their capacity to symbolise a "temporal and spatial liminality" (Pramaggiore, "Animal Afterlives" 141), I concur with Maria Pramaggiore's perspective on the profound significance of the horse in navigating Ireland's historical, contemporary, and ideological dimensions.

Finally, equestrian riding also establishes an obligatory form of communication between human riders and equines, a connection that is particularly evident in horse-racing, where the success of the competition depends on continuous interaction between rider and horse. Shelly R. Scott highlights that the jockey conveys cues to the horse, while the equine, in turn, may or may not respond to these signals, demonstrating the agency of the horse within the interspecies communication dynamic (54–55). The training of horses further emphasises their agency, as Scott argues that they display improvisation skills beyond their training, closely linked to their own agency (58).

In establishing a successful rider-equine partnership, it becomes essential to foster mutual understanding between rider and horse. As Scott aptly points out, "[i]n such a relationship, it would be challenging to determine precisely who is exercising agency, or calling the shots" (57). Therefore, equestrian riding provides a valuable means to explore and illustrate interspecies interactions that involve different agencies, which may at times be in opposition. Because of this messy relationship, to examine the role of equines in the

following chapters, particularly in Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987)," may illustrate what kind of interspecies interaction can be seen in Irish fiction.

1.3.2.2. Sheep

The second novel analysed in this doctoral thesis is Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger,* which centres around a ewe. Sheep have been deeply intertwined with the rural heritage and agricultural practices that have shaped the Irish countryside. The presence of these creatures has not only contributed to the economic sustenance of communities but has also become emblematic of Ireland's agricultural identity. The wool industry, shepherding traditions, and the symbolism associated with sheep in folklore and mythology reflect their integral role in Irish rural life. By delving into the history of sheep farming, the cultural symbolism attached to these animals, and their portrayal in literature and visual arts, we will uncover the rich tapestry of human-sheep relationships and their lasting impact on Irish society.

In her comprehensive review of sheep history, Sarah Franklin highlights the significant role these animals have played as driving forces across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (57). Their historical importance is further underscored by their frequent use as tributary payments to patriarchs and kings, symbolising human power and status (91). Additionally, Charles Patterson reveals that sheep were among the first species to be domesticated approximately 11,000 years ago in the ancient Near East (19). Thus, it becomes evident, much like horses, that sheep have occupied a central position in human history. In the specific context of Ireland, sheep have also held a pivotal role in its farming history. Unlike in other regions, the inhabitants of the island displayed a particular concern for the welfare of their sheep, as exemplified by the passing of a law in 1635 that prohibited the plucking of wool (Fagan 221). Notably, this legislation marked the earliest instance of animal cruelty legislation in Europe. Consequently, it is evident that the Irish not only have a longstanding tradition of prioritising animal welfare (O'Connell 35) but also that sheep may have profoundly shaped the Irish perspective on nonhuman species.

Sheep not only played crucial roles in Irish history but also held significant positions in folklore. In the Táin,[6] for example, Queen Medb and King Ailill of Connacht possessed a flock that included several rams (Green 17). The Irish myth "Voyage of Teigue" describes an island inhabited by sheep as large as horses, including a particularly enormous ram with nine horns that killed thirty men before being slain by the hero Teigue (Green 192). Interestingly, one prominent figure in Irish folklore is Cirb, a ram who is the king of sheep (Daimler 37). Thus, it is undeniable that sheep feature prominently in Irish folklore.

In addition to Celtic myths featuring female deities associated with horses, Irish Celtic myths also depict women in connection with sheep, highlighting the intertwined relationship between women and this animal. According to Williams, the king of sheep, Cirb, is often linked to one of the most influential female deities in Irish mythology, Brigit (38). Likewise, there is a member of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[7] Brigit, who is notably associated with domesticated animals (109, 161). Cirb, the king of sheep, holds a significant role in this association and is commonly depicted alongside Brigit, underscoring the strength of their connection.

The significance of sheep in pre-Christian Ireland did not diminish with the arrival of Christianity. Instead, the sheep continued to hold importance as a core symbol in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the Hebrew *Ethiopic Book of Enoch,* specifically the "Animal Apocalypse," the extensive use of animal imagery within the Judeo-Christian worldview is evident (Gore-Jones 269). This text metaphorically depicts human history through the lens of nonhuman animals. Within this context, the sheep has been argued to represent Jacob, son of Isaac (270). This is especially relevant given that within Christian lore, the sheep symbolises innocence and martyrdom, a concept embodied by Christ as "the lamb of God" (Stenner 171).

Moreover, some especially important Celtic myths surrounding sheep underwent transformations following the introduction of Christianity. For instance, the immense popularity of Brigit among the Irish was so profound that she was later transformed into Saint Brigid with the advent of Christianity on the island, eventually becoming the patron saint of Ireland (Williams 67). Interestingly, despite this transition from a pagan to a Christian symbol, Brigit's association with the protection of livestock and dairy endures

---

[6] The Táin Bó Cúailnge is the centrepiece of the eighth-century Ulster cycle of heroic tales.

[7] The Tuatha Dé Danann is a supernatural race in pre-Christian Ireland.

a connection that highlights the fundamental importance of this species in both Celtic and Christian Ireland.

Yael S. Feldman states that the imagery of the sheep as martyrs can be traced back to the Bible, where references to "lambs led to slaughter" are not rare. Moreover, Feldman argues that, despite the advent of modernity, nationalism, and secularism, the lamb has persisted as one of the foremost religious motifs (Feldman 142). Probably because of its strength, the symbolism of the sheep remains potent even in the twentieth century. Sarah Franklin highlights that, following the Second World War, the sheep endures as a figure who represents a helpless victim or a passive recipient of injustice, and so one who garners admiration for their stoicism and even reverence for its sacrificial nature (204). This symbolism is particularly applicable when looking at the millions of human beings who were tragically led "as sheep […] to slaughter" during the Nazi Holocaust (Feldman 140).

As spaces where animals are bred for human consumption, farms have experienced important changes throughout history in order to respond to consumers' demands. The significance of sheep farms extends beyond the longstanding reliance of the Irish on these animals for survival (Laoire 104), encompassing the profound transformations they have undergone in recent decades. According to Emma Dillon et al., sheep farms in 1990s Ireland ceased to serve as havens, as they had done in the past, and instead entered a state of crisis, resulting in a decline in the agricultural workforce as individuals sought employment opportunities in urban areas (29). Consequently, contemporary Irish farms not only represent the systemic subjugation of other species but also embody the profound socio-economic and technoscientific changes occurring in Ireland, which were arguably most directly catalysed by the Celtic Tiger. In essence, sheep farms in present-day Ireland serve as potent symbols of both the exploitation of animals and the sweeping socio-economic shifts that have shaped the nation.

One particular sheep that encapsulates the technoscientific advancements of recent decades, notably the 1990s is Dolly, often hailed as "a twentieth-century icon" according to Michael L. Ryder (19). For Sarah Franklin, the cloned ewe represents a significant milestone in the ongoing process of animal domestication and pastoralism, which has played a central role in the formation of societies, nations, colonies, and capital accumulation (3). The cloning of Dolly can be viewed as a moment in which the traditional symbol of innocence (27), becomes technologically tainted thereafter. This

event underscores the profound implications of Dolly's cloning, exposing the complex intersections between science, ethics, and the humanimal bond.

Furthermore, the creation of Dolly by scientists in the United Kingdom has been subject to criticism that highlights the presence of colonialist undertones within this groundbreaking achievement. As highlighted by Franklin, the United Kingdom stands as the global leader in stem cell technologies and "life stock" industries (60). This, Franklin argues, is due to the country's effective promotion of a remarkably permissive biotech research and development environment, which capitalises on its reputation for stability and the high levels of public confidence in the government's regulatory capabilities within the life sciences (63). The United Kingdom's historical faith in its ability to control and manipulate nature and life sciences, dating back to the era of the British Empire, has facilitated its extensive engagement in biotech without encountering the significant social opposition experienced by other nations. Franklin emphasises the significant role played by the sheep species in shaping conceptions of Britishness, British industrial heritage, and the British countryside, even in contemporary times (80). In the eighteenth century, the British Empire commodified sheep as goods within both the domestic market and the colonies, employing nonhuman animals as tools of colonisation (6). Although analysing colonialism through the lens of sheep can be problematic, as Franklin contends, so too is the act of ignoring it (9). Hence, the creation of Dolly and the United Kingdom's prominent role in stem cell technologies and "life stock" industries have been met with criticism that exposes colonialist undertones and highlights the country's historical engagement in biotech, leveraging its control over nature and life sciences without significant social opposition.

In essence, the sheep is strongly tied to its historical significance as both a Christian and pre-Christian symbol and its association with British colonialism, which continues to influence present-day Ireland. The sheep, therefore, provides a compelling lens through which to analyse Ireland's evolving treatment of these animals amidst ongoing technoscientific transformations.

1.3.2.3. Dogs

Dogs, often renowned for their loyalty and companionship, hold a distinctive and significant place within Irish culture. They have long been steadfast companions to Irish

farmers, hunters, and fishermen, fulfilling diverse roles as protectors, herders, and even spiritual guides. The profound bond between humans and dogs is deeply knitted in Irish folklore, where tales of legendary hounds like Cu Chulainn's, Bran, and Gelert resonate with themes of courage, fidelity, and self-sacrifice. Furthermore, dogs have emerged as central characters in Irish literature, featured in the works of esteemed authors such as James Joyce[8] and Samuel Beckett.[9] By delving into the historical backdrop, cultural symbolism, and literary portrayals of dogs in Ireland, our exploration aims to reveal the profound influence they have exerted on the collective consciousness of the Irish people.

Dogs, like horses and sheep, have long coexisted with humans all around the planet, playing a distinct role in our lives, their unique and close relationship with humans dating back to the Stone Age (Green 185). Notably, dogs have been involved in death-related rituals in pre-Christian Europe, with numerous canine remains discovered in deep pits and shafts, potentially serving as offerings to the underworld (Green 185–86). In the context of Ireland, the earliest evidence of dogs as distinct from wolves on the island can be traced back to 5000-4000 BC in Dalkey Island, Co. Dublin, as explained by Finbar McCormick ("Prehistoric Ireland" 8). Considering that the earliest evidence of human settlement on the island dates back to around 7000 BC, it becomes evident that dogs have been an integral part of Irish life throughout history.

The enduring presence of dogs in Ireland has contributed to their relevance in both Celtic and Christian narratives on the island. One notable instance in Celtic Ireland is the tale of Sétanta, a warrior hero and demigod who defended himself by killing Culann's guard dog. In this account, the hero assumes the responsibility of guarding Culann's door until a new guard dog is raised, earning him the name Cú Chulainn, meaning precisely "the Hound of Culann" (McHugh, *Dog* 47). Dogs also feature prominently in other folkloric narratives, including the myth of Fionn, where the warrior's most trusted dogs, Bran and Sceolang, play decisive roles. Notably, their origins, popularised in modern Irish folklore, reveal their close kinship to the hero, as they used to be humans before becoming the dogs who remain connected to the hero (50). Additionally, dogs play a prominent part in the war between Ulster and Connacht, as chronicled in the "Táin Bó Cúailnge" or "The

---

[8] Robert Haas points out that, despite Joyce's fear of dogs, they are among the most frequently recurring animal images in his writing (33).

[9] Ulrika Maude notes that Beckett's writing features a multitude of dogs, ranging from Pavlov's dogs to Pomeranians, dachshunds and various other dog species (89).

Cattle Raid of Cooley" (Green 66). Hence, dogs are generally depicted as positive figures associated with guardianship and warfare in pre-Christian Ireland.

Dogs in Celtic folklore assume various roles, including the representation of the Celtic mother-goddess, who embodies the cycles of life, death, and the underworld. Depictions of the triple Mothers or *Deae Matres* often incorporate dog imagery, symbolising fertility and curative renewal (Green 201). This association highlights the close connection between animals and women within Celtic beliefs. The portrayal of the Celtic mother-goddess seated with a small lapdog on her knees illustrates the intertwined symbolism of the dog and fertility, signifying life and renewal (202). Consequently, dogs in Celtic tradition transcend their associations with war and death, embodying multifaceted symbolism. Their portrayal underscores the complex interplay between animals and women in Celtic folklore, evoking a sense of ambiguity while consistently projecting a positive light.

In Judeo-Christian tradition, the dog also holds symbolic significance. Their representation is often characterised by ambivalence, encompassing both negative and positive traits, according to Berkowitz, for the dog can be "unclean, greedy, savage, and dumb" (91) but it can also possess more positive attributes. The positive portrayal associates the dog with hunting assistance, flock protection, and safeguarding the home, while the negative portrayal depicts it as a fearful figure capable of barking at and biting humans (Berković 91). Interestingly, the earliest mention of dogs in the Bible, as highlighted by Berković, can be found in the story of Cain and Abel, where the species is referred to as the "demon at the door" or the "beast at the door," depending on the translation (82). Consequently, within the Bible, the dog is undoubtedly portrayed in a negative light, instead of as "man's best friend."

We can however find some examples of dogs representing positive traits. Daniel Berković highlights an exceptional positive portrayal of dogs in the story of Tobit, a tale found in the *Book of Tobit* from the third or second century BC. In this narrative, a blind man named Tobit sends his son Tobias to retrieve ten talents. Accompanying Tobias on his journey is a dog and a hired guide, who is later revealed to be the archangel Raphael, who provides assistance throughout the adventure (Berković 77). The limited instances in which dogs are not denigrated in Christian texts, according to Daniel Berković, often serve to uphold the superior status of humans (80), highlighting a dynamic of domination where the nonhuman Other is subservient to the human Self.

The British frequent association of the Irish with dogs could be influenced by the historical associations of dogs in Christianity with both negative attributes ("demons") and positive ones (faithful servants), as noted by Mac Laughlin (55–56). According to Dubino's analysis of the dog trope in *Dracula,* dogs have been used as symbols representing the colonised Irish by the coloniser British (202–03). It could be argued therefore that the dog motif not only appears frequently in Irish folklore but also plays a significant role in the negotiation of Irish identities. We find dogs featuring prominently in a diverse range of literary works from Irish authors. Notable references can be found in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1920), Edith Somerville and Violet Ross's *Some Experiences of an Irish R M* (1899), Alannah Hopkin's *Dogs of Inishere* (2017), and Manchán Magan's *Three Dogs, Banshee Fingers and Other Irish Words for Nature* (2021).

With the transformation of certain breeds of dogs into pets in the nineteenth century, these animals ceased being exclusively subjected to physical exploitation but became objects of love and leisure. Keridiana W. Chez argues that this reimagining transformed these dogs into "lapdogs," who supposedly received more humane treatment, which, in turn, facilitated human connections (2). In other words, some dogs became "pets" in order to provide their owners with a particular social status and a vehicle through which their owners could engage with other humans. The shift in perception led to dogs being categorised as "pets," symbolising both the bourgeoisie and the middle class. As Chez explains, the inclusion of pets, particularly dogs, within Victorian households served to help "the Victorian middle-class family to function where emotional bonds were strained or lacking, doing work that strongly resonated with the mistress' domestic role" (32). Dogs became emblematic of the ideal "happy family," with the patriarch at the helm of a cherished and affectionate hierarchy (Chez 27).

The new role of pet dogs in constructing the Victorian heterosexual family also extends to the negotiation of gender roles. According to Chez, dogs have been utilised as conduits to regulate male emotions in a manner deemed acceptable within the prevailing code of masculinity (3). Chez explains that the interaction between middle-class boys and the family dog was often encouraged as a means for them to develop their masculinity, with periodicals emphasising the importance of pets in shaping gendered subjects according to societal norms (97). However, the emotional bond between men and dogs was constrained. Chez explains that if a man's devotion to his dog becomes excessive and threatens his privileged position, he may be compelled to "euthanise" the dog, effectively removing the responsibility of men from the act of killing pets because it portrays them

as "hopeless fools of love" (122). Thus, within the hegemonic discourse of masculinity and anthropocentrism, dogs can be transformed into symbols of masculinity without any consequences for the men who choose to exploit them.

In the construction of womanhood, the lapdog has emerged as a prominent dog motif, as noted by Brown (33). Chez's analysis of animal symbolism in various English novels, particularly in *Dracula* (1897)*,* highlights the inherent association of the lapdog with a lady. Within an anthropocentric patriarchy, Chez argues that ladies and their canine companions share a marginalised status, subject to misogynistic assumptions since the eighteenth century (109). This shared experience has been utilised to symbolically dehumanise women and feminise nonhuman animals, rationalising their marginalisation and subsequent exploitation.

Despite the instrumentalisation of the lapdog trope to further marginalise women, Chez suggests that these pets also instilled anxieties about the close bond between ladies and their lapdogs. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, attempts were made to dissociate women from their "suspicious intimacies with dogs" (109–10), often carrying sexual connotations. Interestingly, this negative representation of the lapdog stems from a fear that women, if they grew "too close" to their canine companions, might form relationships that transcend anthropocentrism, thereby challenging the power dynamics of the dominant humanist Self — white, middle class, abled, heterosexual males. Ultimately, the object of female affection becomes a matter of power, as Chez explains that the patriarch of the household must be the recipient of the "woman's love" (110). Hence, dogs as pets within the heterosexual family can be useful in exploring how gender roles are negotiated and to what extent they are reduced to instruments for humans.

In short, dogs occupy a distinct position within Irish culture, representing key attributes such as loyalty, companionship, and working abilities. They are deeply embedded in Irish folklore, embodying qualities of courage, fidelity, and self-sacrifice in legendary tales such as Cú Chulainn's hound. Notably, canonical Irish authors like James Joyce and Samuel Beckett have prominently featured dogs in their literary works. Through an exploration of the historical backdrop, cultural symbolism, and literary portrayals of dogs in Ireland, valuable insights have been gained into their profound impact on the collective consciousness of the Irish people. Dogs have served as potent symbols of the Irish as the colonised Other, as well as contributing to gender constructions on the island. Thus, the multifaceted role of dogs in Irish culture, literature, and societal

constructs presents a rich avenue for examining the intricate interplay between humans and animals, as well as the negotiation of identity, power, and social norms.

Drawing upon the theoretical framework that establishes the interconnections between animals, culture, and power dynamics, the subsequent analysis embarks on an exploration of specific animals within Irish society and literature. To facilitate a comprehensive exploration of these themes, Part II of this thesis is structured into three chapters. The first chapter scrutinises the presence of equines in Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987), followed by an in-depth analysis of a ewe in Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* (1997) in the second chapter. The final chapter delves into the significance of dogs in Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015). Through this focused analysis of specific animal representations, we aim to unveil the knotty dynamics at play and illuminate the broader implications for humanimal bonds in Irish culture and literature.

PART II
CORPUS ANALYSIS

2. Horse-Crazy Girls in Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady* (1987)[10]

> I have nothing to fear, and here my story ends. My troubles are
> over, and I am home. (Sewell 245)

2.1. Introduction

Humans have historically evolved with many other animal species. Among them, the horse stands out as a significant contributor to the expansion of human presence across the globe. According to Miranda Green, horses played a vital role in human warfare and long-distance transportation as early as 1600 BC in Europe (20). Their indispensable nature in these domains highlights their profound influence on human history and the perception of mobility. In the context of Irish history, the presence of horses is also notable, with equid remains dating back to the Early Bronze Age, as explained by McCormick ("Early Ireland" 86). The prominence of horses in Irish folklore and cultural narratives can be attributed to their pervasive presence in the region. An iconic figure of Irish mythology, Cú Chulainn from the Ulster Cycle is frequently depicted alongside his two foals, Liath Macha and Dub Sainglend. Once tamed, these horses become fiercely loyal to the hero and serve as his charioteers. Their significance is exemplified in their participation in Cú Chulainn's final battle, where Liath Macha initially hesitates but eventually complies, shedding tears of blood as a foreshadowing of the hero's impending demise (Woodfield 38).

The horse's role in Irish mythology is further exemplified by the popularity of the goddess Epona, a Celtic deity who holds significant influence in present-day Ireland (Green 204). The figure of the horse is central to the representation of the goddess, as she is often depicted riding side-saddle on a mare — a form of riding highly criticised for being too dangerous and focused on "preserving" women's virginity and "ladiness" while riding (Kilgallon) and, at the same time, as a way in which women "had the freedom to ride across the country, jumping over ditches and stone walls" (O'Riordan, "'We … Galloped Hard and Straight over Some Big Stone Gaps'" 21) — or between two ponies or horses. Green underscores the importance of this mythological figure by noting that

---

[10] *The Lady: A Novel* was also published under the title *The Carradyne Touch* by the McDonald editorial in 1988.

the worship of Epona was widespread in Roman-Celtic society and remains a prominent aspect of contemporary Irish mythology (204). Hence, the horse has been a fruitful source of stories in Irish culture.

The horse motif continues to feature prominently in more recent literary works, including both canonical and contemporary texts. In Jonathan Swift *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), horses are highly rational and virtuous creatures in the fourth part of the novel. The horses in Samuel Beckett's *The Expelled* (1985) provide transportation and are integral components of the city's environment. Additionally, in more recent literature, R.A. MacAvoy's magical grey stallion who also has a human form in *The Grey Horse* (1987), Juanita Casey's *The Horse of Selene* (1985), which explores the taming of wild horses by the traveller Selene, or Eillís Dillon's *The Island of Horses* (2004), featuring an adventurous journey of two boys into the homonymous island, continue, among others, to delve into the multifaceted role of horses in storytelling. These examples represent a mere sampling of the diverse literary works that demonstrate the enduring presence of horses in Irish literature.

Horses also continue to hold relevance in contemporary Ireland. While there was a tendency during the Celtic Tiger era to view horses as remnants of an agrarian past and cultural nationalism (Pramaggiore, "The Celtic Tiger's" 226), Maria Pramaggiore argues that horses have "served as a metaphor for validating and renegotiating Irish identities from the middle ages […] to the Enlightenment […] to late twentieth-century popular culture" ("The Celtic Tiger's" 214). As Pramaggiore points out, horses have been "potent, and lucrative, symbols of Irish cultural identity" and their presence has resisted erasure, making them vehicles for the continuous renegotiation of Irish identities ("The Celtic Tiger's" 215). Consequently, the enduring symbol of the horse continues to shape and reshape Irish identities in an ongoing and perpetual process.

The significance of equines in the negotiation of Irish ontologies became particularly noteworthy during the Troubles, a period of political violence in Northern Ireland that spanned from the 1960s to the 1990s, ultimately concluding with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 (Storey 2). It is within this tumultuous context that Anne Inez McCaffrey's novel is situated. In her comprehensive authorised biography, *A Life with Dragons,* Robin Roberts grants Anne Inez McCaffrey (1926-2011), a Catholic Irish-American author renowned for her acclaimed fantasy series, *Dragonriders of Pern,* an exceptional standing as one of the most cherished writers of the twentieth century, in addition to her numerous accolades. Notably, McCaffrey holds the distinction of being

the first woman to receive both the Hugo and Nebula awards in 1968, and she achieved the remarkable feat of having a science fiction work featured on the *New York Times* best-seller list in 1978 (Roberts 7). It is worth noting that McCaffrey's recognition extends beyond her early career triumphs. She was honoured with the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Literary Achievement by the American Library Association in 1999 (Roberts 193), and in 2005, she received the esteemed Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the genre (Roberts 214). Interestingly, despite McCaffrey's extensive bibliography and notable accolades, she has not received recognition in Ireland, the place where she relocated after divorcing her abusive husband in 1970.

McCaffrey's marriage was fraught with verbal and occasional physical abuse, which led her husband to attempt to deter her writing pursuits, particularly following the success of her publication *The Ship Who Sang* (1966). McCaffrey recounts to biographer Robin Roberts that her husband's response consisted of harshly criticising her work, a control mechanism aimed at curtailing her creative expression, which she regarded as her last refuge. In response, McCaffrey firmly asserted against her husband that "[t]hat's not the story I wanted to tell" (Roberts 93). This reaction is not surprising considering that she had already embraced feminism in the 1960s, as documented by Roberts (101). It is worth noting that McCaffrey's struggle against patriarchal oppression was primarily confined to her husband, and upon finalising her divorce in 1970, she sought solace in Ireland alongside her three children. However, she encountered a distinct form of patriarchal oppression prevalent in 1970s rural Ireland, where she faced discrimination as a divorced woman without a male partner (Roberts 121). Despite these challenges, McCaffrey persevered in her writing endeavours, producing an array of works during the 1970s and 1980s, encompassing not only science fiction but also gothic and romance novels. Her determination eventually led to the realisation of her dream — to own a rural estate in Wicklow, aptly named Dragonhold-Underhill.[11]

If McCaffrey's divorce marks a pivotal moment in her career, her return to her grandparents' homeland in 1970 is equally significant. Roberts emphasises McCaffrey's connection to her Irish heritage, devoting a section of the biography to explore her "Irishness." Her grandparents, particularly her McCaffrey grandfather and McElroy

---

[11] McCaffrey's choice to name her estate Dragonhold-Underhill pays homage to her renowned series, *Dragonriders of Pern*. It served as her residence until her passing in 2011 (Roberts 2).

grandmother, were instrumental in instilling a sense of Irish-American heritage in her. They lived through the discriminatory era symbolised by the N.I.N.A. sentiment,[12] with only one grandparent being an English immigrant rather than Irish, namely Selina,[13] who passed away before Anne's birth (Roberts 17). Consequently, McCaffrey's Irish ancestry is a significant aspect of her life and writing, giving rise to the potential complexities of hybrid identities. Tellingly, she consistently felt like an outsider, both in the United States (Roberts 25) and in Ireland (Roberts 18). This sense of anxiety may explain the nostalgic undertone that pervades most of her writing. In the case of *The Lady*, set in 1970s Ireland, the novel seems to reflect the author's yearning for a "lost" Ireland, evoking a form of homesickness that Aileen Dillane suggests many Irish immigrants in the USA experience (23), rather than striving for historical accuracy. Thus, tension arises between the actual rural Ireland of the 1970s and McCaffrey's imaginative reinterpretation, underscoring her national instability as an Irish-American woman.

Her ontological anxiety does not mean that she has never been regarded as an Irish writer, as she was included in the seminal work *Unveiling Treasures: The Attic Guide to the Published Works of Irish Women Literary Writers: Drama, Fiction, Poetry* (Weekes 203). And yet, she has received limited academic analysis within the field of Irish studies. One possible reason for this is her preference for seclusion in her estate in Ireland, resulting in minimal interaction with the local community. While McCaffrey did receive visits from American relatives and friends, her social circle lacked significant Irish connections. As noted by Roberts, "her speech is characteristically American, with only a few words or inflections to remind you that she has lived in Ireland now for over thirty years" (4). Actually, McCaffrey's efforts to integrate into Irish society were met with resistance, as her neighbours perceived her more as an eccentric American woman than an Irish citizen, despite having obtained her official citizenship in 1984 (177). This perception likely influenced her decision to publish her works primarily in American

---

[12] In the United States, discriminatory practices against the Irish were prevalent, particularly during the nineteenth century. One such practice involved including the discriminatory phrase "No Irish Need Apply" (N.I.N.A.) in employment advertisements, highlighting the discrimination endured by the Irish in America (Morgan 159).

[13] McCaffrey's tribute to her grandmother is evident in her naming a character in *The Lady* after her. Selina Healey, the woman admired by the protagonist, shares the same name as McCaffrey's grandmother. This choice can be seen as a form of homage and a demonstration of the familial connection and the profound influence her grandmother had on her life and work.

editorial outlets rather than Irish ones. Despite these circumstances, McCaffrey remained attuned to events and issues in Ireland. For instance, her niece Karin, who frequently visited her and stayed with her in the estate, became deeply involved with the IRA after relocating to Ireland (Roberts 167). Residing in Ireland as an immigrant, McCaffrey's writing inevitably reflects the strong influence of her surroundings and her somewhat liminal position within Irish society. Her experiences as a foreigner, as well as her deep engagement with the Irish landscape, find expression in her literary work. Hence, her liminal status plays a pivotal role in shaping the complexity and unique perspectives found in her fiction.

McCaffrey's literary journey began in the 1950s, a couple of decades prior to her relocation to Ireland. Her initial published work, the short story "Freedom of the Race" (1953), already showcases her exploration of alien entities employing women as reproductive surrogates, thus highlighting her strong feminist stance. Similarly, her debut novel, *Restoree* (1967)*,* which was also published in the United States, delves into the narrative of a young woman who survives an alien abduction and discovers a new life on an extraterrestrial planet. Mary T. Brizzi asserts that *Restoree* functions as a feminist parody, subverting the prevalent representations of women in American science fiction during the 1960s (42). McCaffrey's literary journey demonstrates her strong feminist stance.

As noted by Roberts, McCaffrey's creative output has consistently been influenced by her profound connection with nonhuman animals, including fantastic dragons, cats, and, notably, horses (38). While the *Dragonriders of Pern* series revolves around these imaginary creatures, her gothic and romance novels centre on factual species, particularly horses. McCaffrey's deep-rooted fascination with horses and ponies can be traced back to her formative years, commencing at the age of nine , when she wrote a Western titled *Flame, Chief of Herd and Track,* featuring a horse as the eponymous character. This early interest in equines continued to evolve as she embarked on a journey of horseback riding lessons, ultimately becoming a lifelong passion (Roberts 41–42).

McCaffrey's publication of her early works did not mark an abandonment of horses as prominent figures within her fiction. Throughout her career, she authored numerous books in which they played significant roles. Examples of these include *Ring of Fear*

(1971),[14] *The Lady* (1987), *Black Horses for the King* (1998), and *If Wishes Were Horses* (1998)*,* among others. Roberts elucidates that McCaffrey's portrayal of animals can be characterised as ecofeminist, drawing upon the notion that women and nature "share a subordinate and instrumental relationship to men; both are subject to patterns, attitudes, and institutions of male domination and control; both are gendered as 'feminine' as one means of control" (139). Given Roberts' perspective on McCaffrey's potentially ecofeminist texts and the writer's evident fascination with both real and fictional horses, an exploration of how she employs the horse motif in *The Lady* becomes a compelling endeavour.

Although the narrative of *The Lady* predominantly overlooks the Troubles in Northern Ireland, being set in the Republic of Ireland during its onset, they inevitably infiltrate the story. The protagonist's family, the Carradynes, represents a hybrid national identity, specifically Anglo-Irish rather than Irish-American like the author, which adds complexity and challenges within the Troubles context. As former supporters of the Crown, the family's ownership of the Cornanagh land[15] and their centuries-long involvement in horse breeding and training contribute to the intricate nature of their identity. The narrator observes how the protagonist embodies the complicated national ontology of her family, being the youngest member, while simultaneously navigating her profound connection with her cherished ponies and horses and resisting patriarchal oppression from various sources. Additionally, the text delves into themes of domestic abuse and the inadequacy of Irish law in protecting women, as well as the detrimental effects of excessive religious fervour on Irish women.

Due to McCaffrey's profound affection for horses, evident in her construction of stables for her horses and ponies prior to building her own residence on her Wicklow estate (Roberts 2) she consistently emphasised the dynamic between humans, particularly women, and nonhuman animals. It is therefore unsurprising that *The Lady* explores the bond between thirteen-year-old Anglo-Irish protagonist Catriona Carradyne and a series of horses and ponies. The novel traces Catriona's journey, from experiencing the loss of

---

[14] In this novel, McCaffrey draws parallelisms between the violation experienced by the protagonist and the exploitation endured by horses (Roberts 140).

[15] McCaffrey's depiction of the fictional setting Cornanagh is inspired by her attempt to acquire Spring Hill Farm, although her endeavour ultimately proved unsuccessful (Roberts 172).

her first pony to becoming an accomplished rider in the fictional rural Ireland of 1970, all presented through an omniscient third-person narrator.

The Lady unfolds in the picturesque Irish countryside. The narrative revolves around the Carradyne family, esteemed breeders and trainers of exceptional horses in the locale of Cornanagh, where their equestrian legacy spans over two centuries. Against the backdrop of a relatively tranquil period in the early 1970s, the Carradynes diligently adhere to their seasonal routines, immersing themselves in the timeless rhythms of their equestrian profession. Despite the conflict that simmers in the Northern regions, their unwavering commitment remains steadfast as they engage in the meticulous care of their prized ponies and horses, encompassing foaling, racing, training, and the manifold responsibilities required to ensure their equine companions' optimal fitness and swiftness. Rooted in a sense of nostalgia, the family's endeavours are imbued with dedication and reverence for their equestrian pursuits, symbolising their enduring connection to the land and the irreplaceable bond they share with their magnificent steeds.

However, harmony is disrupted by internal strife within the Carradyne household. At the heart of this discord lies Catriona, the family's youngest daughter, who harbours an ardent desire to ride the magnificent jumpers and show horses cherished by her kin. Her father, Michael, keenly recognises her prodigious talent and encourages her pursuit, yet his support becomes entangled in a bitter conflict with his piously sanctimonious and controlling wife, Isabel, who vehemently despises equines and resents their influence on Catriona. Isabel endeavours to impose stringent expectations upon her daughter, encompassing rigid attire, constricting footwear, and an unwavering commitment to decorum. Isabel's efforts intensify following an unfortunate incident where Catriona experiences a fall while riding her first pony, Blister. Tragically, Blister sustains a broken leg, compelling Michael to make the difficult decision to euthanise the animal. This event serves as a catalyst for Isabel's determination to distance Catriona from the equestrian world, perhaps fuelled by her concerns for safety and a desire to protect her daughter from potential harm.

This impasse of pride and passion endures until the arrival of Lady Selina Healy, a figure of elegance, beauty, and warmth. Lady Selina, also trapped in a loveless marriage, shares Catriona's adoration for fine horses and finds enchantment in the Cornanagh estate. A profound connection forms between Selina and the Carradyne family, with Michael capturing her affection and Catriona embodying the daughter Selina never had. Selina nurtures Catriona's equestrian pursuits, which exacerbates the conflicts between Catriona

and Isabel, who hold divergent views regarding the equine realm. The resolution to this conflict arrives with Isabel's dramatic demise, which initially burdens Catriona with guilt. However, she ultimately finds solace and liberation from this guilt, rediscovering her passion for riding and achieving notable success in her inaugural official pony show, signifying her growth, maturation, and transition away from girlish tendencies, embracing the path toward becoming a "lady" and leaving her childhood behind amidst the Troubles.

Catriona might be said to embody the conventional stereotype found in equine literature, wherein the storyline revolves around a female protagonist often referred to as a "horse-crazy girl," and her interactions with horses and ponies. The significance of the equine genre is emphasised in the text through references to Catriona's most cherished possession, a copy of *National Velvet* (1935), which follows the story of a fourteen-year-old girl who longs for a horse to be able to compete (*The Lady* 120). According to Jean O'Malley Halley, the equine genre provides a means for girls to transcend normative feminine conventions and "girliness" through their engagement with "riding and being with horses" (9), enabling them to become "something more with horses […] More powerful" (10). This perspective aligns with Maeve Kelly's "Orange Horses" (1990), a short story featured in a collection of the same title. In "Orange Horses," Kelly skilfully portrays the challenges faced by women in Ireland, highlighting the potentially empowering impact of horse-riding. Through the portrayal of horse-riding as an empowering endeavour, the story emphasises the potential for women to assert their strength and agency within a restrictive societal context. In this context, riding becomes a transformative experience that empowers the protagonists of equine romances, enabling them to resist patriarchal oppression. However, Ellen Singleton offers a counterargument, suggesting that the "empowerment" derived from girls riding is often temporary, as these girls frequently prioritise their male partners over their equestrian pursuits, eventually conforming to the traditional roles of wife and mother (92). In this regard, *The Lady* introduces a female protagonist who may, or may not, challenge patriarchal practices in the rural Ireland of the 1970s. It is important to note that during this period, divorce and abortion were illegal, and sex education for girls was virtually non-existent. By riding horses, Catriona explores the potential to challenge the oppressive norms that constrain her.

It is then my contention that the central theme of *The Lady* revolves around the conflict between Catriona's desire to ride and the patriarchal context in which the story unfolds. This conflict is also used to explore a broader tension between the idealised

notion of pure Irish identity and the reality of the Carradynes' hybrid nature, a tension that has been addressed by both Irish-American writers, like McCaffrey, who often depict "dream-images of an idealized pastoral landscape peopled with stereotyped characters" (F. Charles 313), and Anglo-Irish women writers, perhaps best exemplified by Maria Edgeworth (Weiss; Wohlgemut; Maurer). The equine genre employed in the novel offers an excellent platform to explore the dynamic between the human protagonist and the horses she has nurtured and ridden throughout her life. This close interaction between humans and equines also serves as a vehicle to question anthropocentric perspectives of national identity and potentially embrace a posthumanist ethical framework, elevating the status of nonhuman animals and fostering ethical responsibility among humans.

Since this chapter critically examines the construction of human and nonhuman subjectivities in McCaffrey's novel, *The Lady,* the primary objective is to analyse the implications of these subjectivities for both humans and equines. Firstly, the investigation begins by exploring the social symbolism of the equines, particularly in the context of naturalised animal exploitation in McCaffrey's rural Ireland, and their significance in negotiating the Carradyne family's Anglo-Irish identity. Secondly, the analysis delves into the symbolic representation of nonhuman animals and their role in shaping human characters based on gender terms, considering the potential presence of patriarchal biases and their impact on the equines themselves. Lastly, the chapter investigates possible forms of resistance within the text against the identified anthropocentric and androcentric tendencies, assessing the effectiveness and implications of such resistance.

2.2. The Role of Horses in Defining the "Human"

According to Rosi Braidotti, humanism, focusing as it does on the category of the "human," is evidently anthropocentric in its assumption of human exceptionalism and the Self/Other binary which locates nonhuman entities in an inferior position ("A Theoretical Framework" 35). This dualistic hierarchy is not neutral, instead, one term governs the other (Derrida, *Positions* 41). In this regard, Judith Butler suggests that anthropocentrism is heavily linked to dualisms because of the shared material vulnerability of all living beings, which is paradoxically denied by anthropocentric hierarchies (*Frames of War* 2). Hence, anthropocentrism discursively creates the Other to protect the Self, providing an illusion of ontological protection. This chapter's first section examines whether and to what extent anthropocentrism informs the construction of human and equine characters

in *The Lady*. I first analyse the discursive human/nonhuman difference and the resulting horse/pony difference. Then, I investigate the equines' use as a source of income and social status, followed by an examination of the role of horses in negotiating national identities in McCaffrey's rural Ireland in the 1970s.

2.2.1. Animal Exploitation in Rural Ireland

While the focus of the novel is on the interactions between thirteen-year-old Catriona and equines, it is important to consider the underlying economic framework that enables her lifestyle. The Carradynes' business is centred around equines, bred, trained, and sold for profit, or used to train those owned by others. In the pursuit of economic gain, the issue of avoiding unnecessary expenses becomes paramount. This is evident in the novel in the way equines that are no longer profitable are disposed of. For instance, the elderly pony Blister, who the protagonist first rides, is almost thirty years old and, according to the narrator, "too old to be sold on." Because of his advanced age, the pony will soon be sent to the "knackers" (*The Lady* 22). Notably, despite Catriona's affection for Blister, she does not resist his fate or try to prevent him from being sent to the knackers, as she knows that this is the fate of all unwanted equines in the business. The acceptance of this practice by the characters in the novel highlights the underlying economic motivations that drive the exploitation of equines as well as her inability to change it.

However, that is not to say that the human characters totally disregard the wellbeing of their equines. When Catriona is informed of the coming of her cousin Patricia Carradyne for the summer season, she likewise learns that Patricia will ride Blister. The immediate consequence is that Carradynes will have to postpone the pony's death until after the summer (*The Lady* 43). However, although Patricia delays the pony's demise, she does not prevent it, emphasising the importance of the business over personal attachments. It also exposes that the reason why the pony was going to be euthanised was not because he was sick, but because he was no longer useful. Despite this, it is clear that Catriona cares for Blister, demonstrating that the economic profit and exploitation of the equines do not necessarily reflect the characters' feelings towards them, further complicating the bond between humans and other species in the novel.

The centrality of these animals and their role as a source of revenue for the Carradynes prompts a discussion regarding their legal status. Towards the end of the

book, Michael stresses the importance of registering equines, arguing that such an act could aid in population control and would hold owners accountable if animals get lost or abandoned. However, he also emphasises the economic benefits of equine registration, stating that "[n]ot all horses are bought through dealers. And foreign buyers want to know the sire and dam of animals we want them to pay top money for. It also proves a horse has been vetted [and] inoculated" (*The Lady* 347). Michael's words suggest that the equines' legal update is primarily aimed at maximising economic gain, with the welfare of these animals taking a back seat.

In contrast to Michael's focus on the economic benefits of equine registration, Catriona seems to prioritise the ethical treatment of these animals. She is critical of her cousin Owen's violent treatment of horses and considers him to be neither a good person nor an excellent horseman. Her opinion is motivated by the way Owen beats a horse named Harp, "one of Tulip's more promising geldings" (*The Lady* 39). Because of this, one could argue that the main character rejects unnecessarily harming horses and ponies. However, Catriona's concern is more about the economic consequences of Owen's actions than the well-being of the horse. The protagonist complains that "the worst of [Owen's riding style] had been that there'd been a German buyer about to shake on a deal for the gelding" (*The Lady* 39). Despite her disapproval of horse bashing, Catriona, like other human characters in the novel, defends the economic exploitation of nonhuman animals.

Perhaps precisely because of the central role of the equines in the Carradynes' life, one notable aspect of *The Lady* is its ambiguity in defining the boundaries between humans and other animals. It can be first observed in the vocabulary used to describe some human characters. For instance, after the protagonist, Catriona, falls off her pony and is hospitalised, she spends some time recovering from her fairly serious injuries. Despite the doctor's advice to rest due to the severity of her fall, she is eager to leave the hospital and ride again. Upon returning home, she asks her father for permission to ride the pony that Selina has given her as a gift, leading to the following conversation:

> "All right, now, Catriona, take him in and let Artie give him a rubdown. Mrs.
> Healey's right. We must remember you're not completely sound."
> "Sound? Your daughter's not a horse, Michael."
> Michael looked down at her. "The term works as well for a human." (*The Lady* 100)

The text suggests a profound similarity between the human protagonist and the horse, blurring the boundaries between the species. This porosity of boundaries is not limited to the protagonist but is also exemplified by the treatment of Selina's injury. When Selina sustains a minor injury, Michael opts to apply honey instead of standard "human" medicine. Perhaps precisely Michael and Selina had discussed that honey is a perfect healing product for horses mere lines before, its use as a healing product for both horses and humans emphasises their material likeness. This blurring of the difference is not welcome by everyone, as we can read Eithne's strong reaction to Michael's decision, with the female character exclaiming "'As if Selina were a horse!'" (*The Lady* 238), revealing the character's awareness of the discursively blurred boundary here. The application of "animal-like" vocabulary and medicine to humans may evoke ontological anxieties, highlighting the potential messiness of the relating[16] between humans and equines in McCaffrey's text.

McCaffrey's novel not only presents a hierarchy between humans and horses but also explores a hierarchy within the equine world, specifically between horses and ponies. One of the main ponies in the novel, Conker, serves as an example of this distinction. Conker used to be Selina's pony when she was Catriona's age and her legs were not long enough to ride a horse. While ponies are often the ideal choice for riders with shorter legs, the novel complicates this practical reasoning. When Selina recalls the time she spent riding Conker, she recalls that after receiving Conker as a gift from her father, she soon "graduated […] to a proper ladies' hunter" (*The Lady* 83). This postulation of Conker, and by extension, his fellow species, suggests that horses are considered more appropriate for adults, specifically "ladies," while ponies are seen as quasi-playthings for children.

Moreover, in addition to the human/horse hierarchy, the novel also explores the potential creation of a discursive hierarchy within the equine world based on the distinction between horses and ponies that goes beyond the above-mentioned pragmatic reasons. Upon arriving on the island, the protagonist's Irish-American cousin, Patricia Carradyne, encounters a number of ponies and horses. Interestingly, the cousin quickly dismisses the Carradynes' ponies, as evidenced by her interaction with Annie, a recent

---

[16] Haraway and her defence of "relating" cannot help but be strongly related to the notion of ethical encounters. She argues that in postcolonial worlds, which would include Ireland, "significant otherness" stems from vulnerable, "on-the-ground work" that joins different agencies looking for joint futures (*The Companion* 8).

acquisition. Despite acknowledging that Annie is "lovely, even if she is the smallest horse you've got," Patricia mistakes her for a horse and is only informed that she is a pony after making this assumption. Embarrassed, Patricia complains that "[w]ell, she looks like a horse" (*The Lady* 239). Likewise, when Patricia rides Conker, a pony praised by Catriona, she expresses her disappointment when she falls off and is hurt. She wines that "I've never ridden a *pony*"—her tone was slightly derogatory—[…] I was mortified!" (*The Lady* 241; emphasis in original). These instances illustrate the fact that Patricia regards ponies as inferior to horses.

The novel further emphasises the hierarchical difference between horses and ponies through Patricia's experience riding Annie, the sole pony who garners her consistent praise throughout the narrative. In stark contrast to her earlier ride on Conker, Patricia approaches Annie with "kindness in her hands and voice" (*The Lady* 297). What renders this portrayal especially interesting is Patricia's unwavering insistence that Annie is more akin to a horse. As she defends, "[Annie is] made like a horse, not like a pony, and she acts like a horse, too" (*The Lady* 278). In this light, the text shows the endurance of Patricia's perception as well as the discursive hierarchy she creates between horses and ponies despite the abundant factual evidence against her viewpoint.

However, that the text exposes the artificiality of boundaries between species does not imply that the equines in the novel are not used for human purposes or that their agency is not limited by the Carradynes. In their collection of essays on material feminisms, Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman argue that the agency of nature is often filtered through humanism and its anthropocentric lens. Drawing from Karen Barad's concept of intra-action,[17] they propose a more nuanced understanding of agency as an intra-active process between material, discursive, human, more-than-human, corporeal, and technological phenomena (5). Nevertheless, nonhuman animals have historically been denied agency, understood here as the capacity to act with some degree of subjectivity and behave with specific, often innerly motivated, intentions (Steward 226). Val Plumwood contends that colonialism — an ideology and social practice that stems from humanism (W. M. Adams 23) — denies the agency of nonhuman animals and positions humans as the only agents, relegating nonhuman animals to mere contextual

---

[17] Barad's "intra-action" refers to a view of the world as dynamic, dynamism that constitutes agency: "[a]gency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the worlds. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming" (141).

elements ("Decolonizing Relationships with Nature" 66). Similarly, equines have also had their agency discursively denied or controlled. According to Shelley R. Scott, horses, especially those used for shows or races, are anthropomorphised and their agency is sometimes acknowledged to construct the agency of their human riders, rather than recognising their ethical relevance. Furthermore, riders can give and take this discursive agency from the equines without any consequences to the equines themselves (46). Thus, agency is commonly constrained by an anthropocentric understanding of reality, which contradicts Barad's notion of intra-action.

In McCaffrey's novel, horses are initially deprived of agency through the discussion of equine intelligence. In the novel, when readers learn about the process of horse-breaking,[18] the narrator explains that "[i]t was relatively simple to get a willing, intelligent horse to do what you wanted: horses generally had an innate desire to please. But to school a stupid, unresponsive horse took considerably more skill and a firm determination to make it submit" (*The Lady* 215). While the text acknowledges that equines have "desires," these are presented as innate and machinelike, indicating a discourse of biodeterminism where animals lack rational thought and simply follow instructions. This presentation of equine intelligence as different and inferior to that of humans is not new. Margo DeMello for instance points out that "[t]actics such as objectification and ridicule have been and continue to be used to control and exploit women and animals" (*Animals and Society* 279). Thus, the novel reveals that equine agency is constrained by anthropocentrism, which not only justifies human superiority but also quickly masks any form of nonhuman agency or intelligence as irrational and so their agency is discursively devalued.

Moreover, the text takes the stance that equine intelligence is often defined by the animal's docility, rather than their cognitive abilities. The narrator emphasises the importance of the human's "firm determination" in horse training, reinforcing the master/slave dynamic, as Plumwood denounces ("The Concept" 119). This highlights the human's position as the dominant figure over other animals, in this case, horses. The novel also depicts how the schooling that nonhuman animals receive shapes their intelligence and rationality. For example, Catriona expresses frustration at the fact that Sean, an Irish character who is not a skilled rider, is the owner of Prince. The narrator explains that:

---

[18] A horse breaker is "one employed in subduing or training horses for use" ("Horse Breaking").

> She comforted herself with the knowledge that at least she had the chance to ride
> Ballymore Prince, and that it was *her* schooling that made the pony perform as well
> as he did […] up until the moment the Prince realized that Sean, not Catriona, was
> on his back. (*The Lady* 22; emphasis added)

The excerpt reveals that equines possess a type of intelligence that enables them to recognise their rider, albeit not immediately. However, it is important to note that Catriona places more value on the schooling of the horses than their cognitive abilities. This emphasis on equine training perpetuates the master/slave dichotomy, as criticised by Lambert's analysis of horse training (620) and reinforces hierarchical dichotomies. Thus, the novel establishes an ontological distinction between humans and equines based on their respective understanding of intelligence. This distinction, in turn, serves to justify the ethical acceptability of breaking and schooling horses.

The denial of agency among equines is further illustrated through the character of Prince, a central pony in the novel. In the text, ponies are denied agency in two distinct ways. For instance, when Catriona schools Prince, the pony attempts to choose its own path without human command. The protagonist's response is to "press[…] her left leg in, and he obediently yielded away from temptation" (*The Lady* 60). The nonhuman is physically punished and corrected with the rider's legs for daring to choose a different path instead of obeying.

Additionally, the pony's decision to challenge the human's authority is framed by the narrator in moral terms reminiscent of Christian theology. We read that the rider yields the pony "away from *temptation*" (*The Lady* 60; emphasis added), a notion closely tied to that of the Original Sin within Catholicism. By presenting Prince as almost falling into *temptation* and verging on moral transgression, the nonhuman animal is depicted as a, morally compromised Other, which rationalises the subjugation of the equines and their subsequent exploitation.

It is noteworthy that the equines are only allowed to move freely when human owners observe that they need to relieve their back muscles from riding and schooling them (*The Lady* 60). This reveals an anthropocentric perception of the nonhuman animal as the passive counterpart in the rider/horse relationship. Although the equines undergo undeniable physical exercise, the narrator's use of language reinforces this active/passive dichotomy, stating that "the light was waning as they finished the third lap, and the pony knew *he'd been worked*" (*The Lady* 62; emphasis added) even in moments of relatively

free movement. This not only highlights the constant control exerted by the human rider over the equine's movement but also reinforces the idea of the equine as a passive and obedient Other.

Furthermore, as the family's livelihood revolves around breeding and training horses, this requires breaking and "educating" them for various purposes, such as hunting or shows, of which the novel provides several instances. Catriona reminisces about standing by her grandfather, recalling that "[t]he process of breaking and backing a young horse had always fascinated Catriona. She remembered standing quietly by her grandfather in this same spot during other introductory sessions" (*The Lady* 134). However, these descriptions of horse training are heavily imbued with nostalgia and a lack of empathy for the equines, whose will is broken until they become obedient to their Irish riders. By presenting the breaking and beating of horses as a natural and positive experience, *The Lady* neutralises any ethical concerns, thereby justifying the exploitation of the horse species in the text.

The act of breaking a horse can reinforce the anthropocentric hierarchy and assuage the anxiety of the human characters who are reminded of their dialectical superiority as the Self. I argue that Catriona's dominion over her nonhuman companions[19] effectively suppresses their agency, already denied in the text, echoing the master/slave dichotomy common in colonial discourses. Therefore, the colonial discourse that once othered the Irish humans is used in the text to otherise the Irish nonhuman animal. In other words, the novel reduces the more-than-human to a mere motif to explain human experiences, as warned by Kathryn Kirkpatrick, who states that this practice reinforces the idea that nonhuman animals exist "solely to confirm human meanings and identities" ("Introduction" 3).

Lastly, the pedigree of the equines can also be linked to their otherisation within anthropocentrism in the novel. For instance, the birth of Tulip's Son, one of the central horses in the story, is one of the most significant events in the whole novel. His birth is described as follows:

---

[19] The dominion of a female protagonist over a nonhuman species might echo other female protagonists written by McCaffrey. For instance, in the first novel of the *Dragonriders of Pern*, Lessa must control her dragon's appetite in order to ride her (*Dragonflight* 120).

Some foals arrived in less than perfect condition, despite all the care Cornanagh lavished on their gravid mares. On others there was an indefinable aura of promise. The strong look and uncompromising attitude of this fellow augured well: his conformation couldn't be faulted, and by the length of the leg on him, he'd make over sixteen hands of height. A well-shaped little head, slightly dishy, a good shoulder on his little frame, and a deep chest. Newborn hooves are silly, soft affairs, but his were hardening quickly as he strutted about, his longish ears wigwagging, his dark stump of tail twitching with impatience. He was Tulip's son indeed. (*The Lady* 12)

The pedigree of Tulip's Son, often referred to as Son rather than son in the novel as if to reinforce his heritage, is grounded both in his father's heritage and in his own exceptional birth, which is described in almost mythical terms as he arrived in "perfect condition" with an "aura of promise." In other words, the justification for the intelligence and riding ability of the soon-to-be new stallion is based on his genetics and on his almost supernatural birth.

It is however important to note that, as Michael states, horse breeding "was never a profitable occupation" (*The Lady* 144). In this sense, the Carradynes' equine business may not be driven primarily by economic gain. Instead, in McCaffrey's novel, the instrumentalisation of equines may stem from the social status they can provide to the Carradynes. This would be in line with Katherine Dashper's explanation of how keeping, training, and riding horses are "practices that are often associated with social elites." Furthermore, Dashper contends that in recent decades, horses have transitioned from being primarily used for war or industry to being predominantly associated with leisure, becoming symbols of social class ("Strong, Active Women" 351).

One of the most popular activities among horse riders is hunting. Fox-hunting in particular has been a popular activity among riders in the United Kingdom since the Renaissance and it became a popular hobby among the Irish, especially men, probably because of the influence of London in its colonies (Munkwitz, "Vixens of Venery" 75). In this context, the presence of hunting as an important activity on the island is not unexpected. However, contemporary hunting practices have shifted their focus from the actual capture of prey to the pursuit itself, rendering it difficult to justify as a means of pest control. Kirkpatrick argues that hunting transforms the nonhuman animals involved, such as horses, hounds, and foxes, into instruments that confirm human meanings and

identities ("Introduction" 3). Moreover, William Adams criticises hunting in contemporary Ireland as an idealised and ritualised practice performed by the white elite (37). Tellingly, Chen contends that both the activity and the nonhuman animals involved become vehicles for establishing boundaries between humans and nonhumans, as well as Irish and English identities (40). Consequently, hunting in Ireland serves as a complex social and cultural practice that intertwines human-nonhuman relationships, power dynamics, and national identities. In *The Lady*, the relationship between social status and equines is exemplified through Sean, an Irish teenager forced to ride by his family. According to the narrator:

> [Sean's family] lived in a large and magnificently overfurnished house in Foxrock, and their children were given all the advantages, which naturally, as Isabel had said acidly, included the Pony Club and an expensive and otherwise useless show pony for the one son, to bring glory to his parents with his prowess in the show ring (*The Lady* 22)

In this excerpt, it is revealed that certain families in *The Lady* emphasise their socio-economic position by compelling their sons to engage in the equine world, where equines are symbols of social status.[20] Equines and shows are then used to represent the relationships between human characters. Similarly, hunting, whether on horseback or not, remains a central activity in many rural areas of Ireland even in the twenty-first century (David and Maurstad 73). The Carradynes in McCaffrey's novel participate in hunts, particularly fox-hunting, with enthusiasm. These activities demonstrate the continued significance of hunting and the equine industry in Ireland, where they serve as both a leisure activity and a social marker. The narrator states the morning of the main hunt of the year as follows:

> it was a Saturday hunt and likely all the Grafton Street Harriers—as the locals contemptuously styled businessmen who hunted on the Saturday—would be out. There'd only be the St. Patrick's Day hunt on Tuesday left of this year's season.

---

[20] There is a clear tendency in McCaffrey's writing to use nonhuman animals as symbols of the social status of their humans. In McCaffrey's prized series *Dragonriders of Pern*, each kind of dragon provides a specific social status to their rider (*Dragonflight* 122).

Then a few weeks' break, and the spring show-jumping season would get into swing.

(*The Lady* 63)

Fox-hunting holds such a crucial place in the community that every member is eager to participate in it. The novel features a world in which the "contemptuously styled businessmen" engage in fox-hunting because of its importance in the re-affirmation of their high social status. Although the actual act of hunting the fox is not the primary aim, as "[i]ndeed, they hadn't started a fox in years" (*The Lady* 63), the hunt remains important precisely because it is a symbolic activity that brings people together, creating strong bonds through horse — and pony — riding. During one of the hunts, Catriona is injured and hospitalised. Although she is anxious about riding again, a worry common among riders, her fear is not of falling again but of being unable to participate in the Spring Show, which she keenly anticipates (*The Lady* 76). This excitement is shared by the entire community, as evidenced by Michael allowing his daughter to miss three days of school for the show without objection (*The Lady* 146). Hunt-riding is therefore normalised and eagerly awaited in the village, revealing its importance in the creation of an elite group in the novel.

In McCaffrey's Ireland, equine shows constitute another significant activity that serves as a perfect opportunity to compare the animals owned by different families and, by extension, the families themselves. The first show described in the novel highlights the comparison of two ponies, Sean's Prince and Catriona's Blister. The narrator emphasises Blister's superior education, stating that "Blister had very good stable manners, not like Sean Doherty's bay show pony in the next box. Blister knew which hoof to lift and he'd the most courteous habit of tilting the hind ones for you" (*The Lady* 21). The novel portrays Blister, the pony owned by the Carradynes, as clearly better than the other pony. Interestingly, the distinction in performance between Blister and Prince does not solely stem from their different breeding but also from the rider's ability. When Catriona observes Sean's poor riding skills on the Prince, she voices her dissatisfaction, stating, "'[b]ut I ride the Prince much better than Sean does'" (*The Lady* 21), a comparison that serves to establish the superiority of Catriona and her family over Sean. In other words, the text strongly suggests that the equines are employed as figures through which the social hierarchy in McCaffrey's fictional Ireland is negotiated.

In McCaffrey's novel, horses are also used as mediators to address social transgressions. One of the male Carradynes is accused by a neighbour of impregnating

his unmarried daughter. Although the Carradynes deny the accusation, the antagonising neighbour cuts off the tails of their horses (*The Lady* 330). Given that the cutting is clearly related to the pregnancy of the teenager, it can be seen as a metaphorical castration of the male Carradynes. The equines become a means to transfer punishment from humans to animals, who lack legal protection. Therefore, although it is true that McCaffrey has been described as an ecofeminist author (Roberts 139), the horses in *The Lady* are reduced to their symbolic value to help human characters navigate social positions and conflicts.

I contend that the significant issue of Irish identity is tellingly explored in *The Lady*. In the next section, I will look into the different ways in which horses and ponies facilitate the intricate negotiation of national identities among characters with diverse backgrounds, encompassing the Irish, English, American, and notably, the complex Anglo-Irish identity.

2.2.2. (Un)Stable National Identities

The contested nature of Irish national identity has been a frequent topic of discussion. Given the history of the British Empire's influence, perhaps the most influential example of imperialism ever constructed, Irish national identity can be especially challenging to navigate. In this regard, Vandana Shiva explains that the British Empire "transformed political relations, economies, ethnicities, and social relations [. . .] It also transformed nature, creating new landscapes, new ecologies and new relations between humans and nonhuman nature; in the process, it created new ideologies of those relationships" (23). As a former colony, Ireland's national identity is inevitably shaped by British colonial ideology, with individuals either accepting or rejecting the British interpretation of Irishness.

In addition, according to Mary Kelly, the impacts of colonialism on Ireland are evident in its landscapes, people, culture, and identity, as well as how the Irish perceive and approach their history. This may be due to the Anglo-Irish community, who were often seen as "a class of alien Others who lived parasitically off Irish land and labour and were out-of-place in the Irish landscape during colonialism and after it" (137). Consequently, the Irish context is particularly complex due to its colonial history and the existential uncertainties it may provoke.

Nonhuman animals have played a core role in shaping national identities across the world, regardless of whether they were influenced by the British Empire or not. According to Steve Baker, nations frequently use animal metaphors or identify with animals to define themselves (72). In the case of Ireland, both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, horses are often mentioned in discussions of national identity alongside other nonhuman animals. According to Maria Pramaggiore:

> The horse has served as a metaphor for validating and renegotiating Irish identities from the middle ages (in the *Book of Kells*) to the Enlightenment (in Jonathan Swift's Houyhnhnms), and from Irish literary and visual modernisms (W. B. Yeats, Joyce, O'Brien; Jack Yeats and Mainie Jellett) to late twentieth-century popular culture. ("The Celtic Tiger's" 214)

Pramaggiore expands this idea with further examples in her chapter titled "Animal Afterlives: Equine Legacies in Irish Visual Culture." Here, she explains that the horse is not solely a compelling symbol within Irish culture but also a vehicle that permits the Irish to navigate between past and present culture ("Animal Afterlives" 141). Perhaps precisely because of this, the horse continues to be used to negotiate contemporary Irish identities, particularly in the midst of the notable changes observed in Ireland during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

According to Jack Black et al., sport played a key role in the British colonial project and remains an important means through which Englishness is constructed, contested, and resisted (2205). One of the most important blood sports during the colonial period of Ireland was hunting (W. M. Adams 34), which is also a core activity in McCaffrey's novel. The narrator explains that no one wants to miss the hunt, whether they ride or not. Because of this, the entire village gathers together (*The Lady* 68). Accordingly, the text analysed in this chapter presents a number of fox-hunts in which there are always "pure" Irish men — and, more exceptionally women, arguably reminiscent of Edith Somerville and Violet Florence Martin's texts. Bi-Ling Chen explains that in their writings, the sympathy for Irish culture and claim to Irishness are revealed precisely by their treatment of fox-hunting (40). However, perhaps precisely because of the colonial background of hunts, David Lambert criticises that equestrian hunting is heavily loaded with racist and imperialist undertones (2015). Thus, the text might seek to explore the renegotiation of contemporary national identities by introducing the trope of fox-hunting alongside horses.

The vulnerable nature of national identities in the postcolonial context of the novel prompts an exploration of who can be considered Irish, a theme that is closely tied to equestrian riding in McCaffrey's text. The novel uses horses and ponies to deal with the national identity of the Carradynes and other human characters throughout the narrative. One of the most significant moments in the novel that foregrounds Irishness is when Captain Michael discusses the Troubles[21] that took place in the 1970s, precisely the setting of the novel, with another Irish character and reflects on the difficulty of achieving a common goal. As he reflects, "[t]he problem with us Irish, he thought, is we're all chiefs with no Indians. Can't work together toward a single goal like the Horse Bill, because everyone defines the goal differently and fights over the definition till Kingdom Come" (*The Lady* 144). This short conversation between Michael and his Irish worker highlights the "troublesome" period while lamenting its effects. David Healey's complaints about the constant problems due to the fighting and bank closures in the North also underscore the challenges faced by Irish national identity during this period (*The Lady* 174–75).

Despite the various mentions of the Troubles in the novel, this turbulent period is treated rather superficially, almost as an anecdotical theme rather than the profound matter it represented concerning national identities and anxieties in 1970s Ireland, the setting of the novel. One plausible explanation for this can be found in Aileen Dillane's observations, as discussed in McCaffrey's introduction, where she criticises a phenomenon common among Irish immigrants in the USA. These Irish-Americans often experience a form of homesickness, yearning for an idealised, lost Ireland that never truly existed (23). Essentially, Irish immigrants, distanced from what they may consider their "roots," often conjure a romanticised Ireland that is, in reality, a fabrication.

In this context, *The Lady*'s avoidance of a deep exploration of the Troubles, with their profound social divisions and conflicts, could stem from the author's inclination to evade the stark reality of 1970s rural Ireland. The novel appears to portray an Ireland that exists primarily in the imagination of some Irish-American immigrants, who might have been unwilling or unable to confront the harsh reality of the Troubles. In essence, while

---

[21] The Troubles is an Irish euphemism used for the politically violent events that took place between 1916 and 1923 as well as 1922–1923. The Troubles also makes reference to the hostilities that erupted in Northern Ireland between 1960s and 1990s, which ended with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 (Storey 2). In the case of this dissertation, I use "the Troubles" to refer to the latter.

the novel briefly alludes to the Troubles, it does so in such a restrained manner, despite the ample evidence of national anxieties as we will see in later paragraphs.

This simplification of 1970s Ireland's reality into that of a "lost" Ireland might be a more comfortable narrative choice for the author, an Irish-American immigrant who relocated to Ireland at the age of forty-four. Perhaps precisely because the discussion of national identities during the Troubles became an especially problematic issue, the text refrains from delving deeply into the historical period. Instead, it explores Irish identity through the lens of equines, focusing on their utilisation to negotiate and alleviate national anxieties. In light of this, to examine how Irishness is constructed and renegotiated in the novel, this section analyses the interactions between several human characters and equines in order to discern how the latter are crucial in determining the humans' national ontology.

The national identity that takes centre stage is the Anglo-Irish, which proves to be a challenging one, especially for the protagonist and her family. There is a persistent ambiguity surrounding whether the Carradyne family were Royalists, those loyal to the British crown, or Rebels, those fighting for Irish independence, during the period of Irish history that led to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921. This political uncertainty is particularly significant in the context of the Troubles, a time of intense conflict in Ireland. At the outset of the novel, the Carradynes' uncertain identity is introduced as follows:

> Cornanagh means "hill of the beast" in the Irish, though many wonder that the Carradynes, Anglo-Irish and for generations loyal to the Crown, have retained the name. Except that the Carradynes insist that the "beast" is a horse and they have always been notable horsemen and -women and breed some of the finest hunters and hurdlers in the country. In that they have become more Irish than English and, even during the lean years and bad harvests of the previous century, made profit from the production of colts and fillies. (*The Lady* 8)

The novel explores the complex and contested Irish identity of the protagonist and her family through the lens of their relationship with the land they own, Cornanagh.[22] As

---

[22] The physical setting the family inhabits could be an extratextual reference to Cornanagh Townland ("Cornanagh Townland").

Anglo-Irish, the Carradynes represent a challenging identity in Ireland, particularly in the context of the Troubles. Their identity is closely linked to the land, which highlights their colonial heritage. This tension around Anglo-Irish identities is not unique to McCaffrey's text, as Sara L. Maurer's analysis of Maria Edgeworth's work shows. Maurer argues that the Irish land "cannot be owned by its Anglo-Irish holders, since they illegitimately seized it from the Irish children to whom it was owed. On the other hand, Ireland cannot be given up by its Anglo-Irish holders, who already owe the land to their children" (367). Similar to Edgeworth's fiction, McCaffrey's text exposes the colonial anxieties around land ownership and the identity attached to it, revealing the problematic Irishness of the Carradynes. It is not only that they became richer during centuries in which the Irish suffered — the infamous Irish Potato Famine (1845–1850) (Fraser 9) and the emigration of seven million Irish from the early seventeenth century to the establishment of the Irish Free State (Miller 3) may exemplify this — but also that this family, as most Anglo-Irish families, has been loyal to the Crown "for generations." While they are introduced as having become more Irish than English and Michael identifies himself as Irish (*The Lady* 144), the Carradynes' past continues to shape their identity. When Michael and Selina discuss the Carradyne family's traditional occupations:

> "Another Michael Carradyne," he replied, taking the cup she offered him. "One of the military ones." He addressed Selina. "Carradynes have three professions open to them: horses, army, and Church. There's rarely been a generation of Carradynes without sons in all three."
> "That's more English than Irish, Michael," Selina teased. (*The Lady* 216)

The exchange between Irish and English characters in the novel highlights the Carradynes' hybrid identity, positioning them as not very Irish and potentially more English. It is notable that the protagonist's father is a war veteran (*The Lady* 210), yet the novel remains deliberately vague about which war or side he fought for, suggesting that Michael may be a loyalist like his ancestors had been "for centuries." Despite attempts to downplay the military theme, it remains present throughout the novel, possibly because of the Carradyne family's history of fighting for the British. Towards the end of the novel, Michael and Selina are once again speaking about where the Carradynes' loyalty resides. Here, Michael reveals the existence of secret rooms in the Carradyne house built during past wars. When Selina inspects a small hidden room, we read the following:

> "This couldn't have been a priest's hole," she said softly, glancing about her.
>
> "No, it sheltered rebellious Irishmen, and -women, or so the family history suggests."
>
> "But I thought the Carradynes were Royalists."
>
> "Not all." He winked at her. (*The Lady* 392)

This conversation that takes place towards the end of the novel reveals a surprising twist in the Carradyne family's history, contradicting the earlier suggestion that they were Royalist and adding to the earlier description of the family in which the narrator explains that they "were Anglo-Irish, not Republicans, but they *were* Catholic" (*The Lady* 29) (emphasis in the original). However, the use of horses in the text to renegotiate their Irishness suggests that their identity remains unstable, despite their potential participation with the Irish in the Anglo-Irish War for Independence.[23] In one scene, a pony is hurt due to broken glasses thrown on the riding area. Even though the glasses were thrown by some human, Michael blames the equines for their inability to participate in the next show. Frustrated, he exclaims that "'[y]ou work and school, and do your damnedest, and what happens? The bloody horse goes lame just when he has to be sound! I don't know why I stick to horses! I really don't'" (*The Lady* 125). By blaming the horses, Michael is ironically exonerating the actual perpetrator of this situation, who is the same human who cut their tails. Catriona does not remain silent about her dad's reaction and reminds him that "'[t]here'll be other shows, Dad. August isn't that far away, and the pony classes at the Horse Show are much better than the spring ones. Anyway, a true Carradyne can't stay away from horses. That's what Grandfather always said'" (*The Lady* 125). In this excerpt, the notions of national and family identities become strongly intermingled, highlighting the Carradynes' complex position in Irish history.

This is not the only occasion in which the Carradynes are unable to separate their family identity from the equines. In one of the first intimate conversations between Michael and Selina, he attributes his incessant talk about horses to "a Carradyne failing" (*The Lady* 151). This strong connection with these animals is also evident in Catriona's relationship with Blister, a Connemara pony, which is perhaps the quintessential Irish

---

[23] The Irish War of Independence (January 1919- July 1921) was a guerrilla war against the British government in Ireland by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which resulted in the Irish Free State ("Origins").

pony (Pramaggiore, "The Celtic Tiger's" 215). The choice of this breed is significant, given that the novel takes place in the context of the Troubles, and the pony represents a way for Catriona to access a "pure" Irishness that is otherwise elusive. However, even with this connection to horses, the Carradynes' Irish identity remains unavoidably unstable, as exemplified by Catriona's name[24] and her family's hybrid Anglo-Irish Catholic identity.

Perhaps precisely because of the instability of the family's identity, they try to rewrite the colonial discourse attached to Cornanagh by replacing the notion of the "beast" with that of "horses." This act in itself can also echo what William M. Adams argues to be the "colonial mind," which homogenised the diversity both of space and time, inventing a unique discourse denying geography or history (18). Moreover, as Pramaggiore contends, Irish horses — just like those bred and trained by the Carradynes — are common symbols of Irishness ("The Celtic Tiger's" 215). Therefore, the family uses the equines to soothe the anxieties raised by their hybrid identity during the 1970s Troubles.

The examination of national identities in the novel extends beyond the Carradynes' identity. While the equines are used to explore the differences between the Carradynes and the Healeys, the American nationality is most notoriously distinguished from the Irish. Lawrence J. McCaffrey explains in his seminal work *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (1999) the importance of the relations between Ireland and the United States. In L. J. McCaffrey's words, "[f]rom 1820 to 1920, about five million people born in Ireland entered the United States" (1). In the text, there are two characters born and raised in the United States, Barney Camwell and Patricia Carradyne. During the first hunt, Barney is criticised for his American accent before he even rides, despite participating on an Irish horse. The proximity of the American character to his Irish political relative, Jack Garden, seems to heighten the latter's anxieties about his own Irishness. Tellingly, the Irishman insists on the lack of Irishness of his American relative:

---

[24] Her name, Catriona, is a Gaelic version, popular in Ireland and Scotland of the name Catherine ("Catriona"), coming from the Greek "Aikaterine" ("Catherine"). It is quite interesting however that, in Irish, the equivalent name is Caitríona ("Caitríona"). That her name is an Anglicised variety might point to the hybrid identity of the protagonist, implying that she can be seen as more English than Irish. In this sense, the pony Blister might be the vehicle to soothe her national identity not only as a Carradyne but as a "Catriona."

> "He's done the entire bit, checking out his genealogy, to be sure he's Irish enough
> for his political aspirations." Jack rolled his eyes extravagantly and was rewarded
> with chuckles. "The lengths these Yanks'll go to prove an Irish connection!" (*The
> Lady* 47)

The use of the term "Yanks" in the novel is not accidental, but rather it is used intentionally to convey negative connotations, which can be seen as an example of the Irish characters' rejection of their American relative because of his "Americanness." The American character is portrayed as a stereotype and ridiculed by the Irish characters in the pub. However, the phrase "Irish enough" is also noteworthy, as it emphasises the idea that the Irish characters view Irishness as a gradient scale, which the American fails to meet. This criticism of Barney may also reflect the Irish characters' self-awareness regarding the tendency of some Americans, including Irish-Americans like the author, to idealise Ireland as a pastoral pseudo-Eden (F. Charles 313) that, as Mary Beth Keane notes, never truly existed (2). Therefore, the novel seems to suggest that the American characters' lack of Irishness is a source of tension and unease for the Irish characters, who view themselves as the guardians of a more authentic Irish identity.

In McCaffrey's 1970s Ireland, fox-hunting played a key role in negotiating Americanness. The text highlights the importance of this kind of hunt in relation to Irish identities and distinguishing them from Americans, which may stem from the author's own experience as a descendant of Irish emigrants to the United States who returned to Ireland precisely in 1970. The horses in the Carradynes' business have been thoroughbred Irish horses for two centuries, unlike the Carradynes themselves. This underscores the significance of Irishness in the horses, with the protagonist continuously emphasising her love towards her Connemara pony (*The Lady* 81), who is precisely the quintessential Irish pony (Pramaggiore, "The Celtic Tiger's" 215). The Anglo-Irish hybridity of the Carradynes is thus negotiated through their Irish horses and their riding skills, with the text stressing that only "good" Irishmen can ride these equines properly. The American character, Mr Camwell, fails to ride as an "Irishman" in the hunting scene, resulting in the death of an Irish pony and the hospitalisation of an Anglo-Irish human character (*The Lady* 102). Despite both the American human and the Irish horse falling together and causing subsequent falls, the horse is declared innocent. After the accident, one of the Irish working for the Carradynes visits Catriona, and she feels guilty. To this, the worker tells her:

> Well, you had the right to way over the ditch because that stupid Mr. Camwell was
> only circling. But all of a sudden, he gives Jack an unmerciful crack with his stick
> and jabs him with his spurs. I mean, the horse could do nothing except take off, with
> your man swinging out of his mouth. (*The Lady* 78)

Echoing Somerville and Ross' portrayal of fox-hunting in which the English are
incompetent while the Irish are skilled (Chen 41), McCaffrey's novel presents the
American character as an unqualified rider who fails to classify himself as an Irishman,
turning the Irish horse into a victim of the human's lack of hunting skill and associated
Irishness. Moreover, the Irishness of the horse and the Americanness of the human are
both emphasised, when Jack Garden describes his American relative to Michael
Carradyne: "'Sure the man was all wind and piss as far as horses. Hadn't a bog's notion
about riding and didn't have the sense to know it. These Yanks. Full of shit most of the
time'" (*The Lady* 92). This forcefully rejects the American relative for his lack of riding
skills and underlines the contrast between the non-Irish human and the Irish nonhuman,
which otherises the American character as inferior to the horse. Given the anthropocentric
hierarchies found in the novel, this difference is especially insulting, further otherising
and expelling him from the community as an American. However, it is not to say that all
American characters are terrible riders. In the case of Patricia, who visits the family in
Ireland for the Summer Show, we find a fairly capable rider, even if her riding abilities
are questioned when another Carradyne relative suggests her participation in the show:

> "Why not?" he said. "The Pony Show's mid-August, and if we can make any sort of
> rider out of her, Eamonn can boast about her Irish successes. You know how keen
> the Americans are to be international."
> "The pony show?" Owen scoffed. "International? You must be joking, Uncle
> Mihall."
> "If she's American," Philip chimed in with a glint of devilment in his eyes, "and
> we're across the ocean, it's international to America, isn't it?" (*The Lady* 36)

Prior to her formal introduction, Patricia is initially identified as an American, in spite of
her father's Irish heritage. Similarly, she is, much like the other American character,
criticised for her inclination to be "international." As Keane decries the perception of
Ireland as an "exotic" place among Irish-Americans (2), the same seems to be the case in

McCaffrey's text. In other words, Patricia is ridiculed by her Irish kin early in the novel. The main reason why she is further ridiculed is her riding style. When the family learns that she has learnt to ride in the American way, they remark they will have to check "if we can make any sort of rider out of her." Hence, her American horseback riding is deemed inferior to the Irish style, even though they have never witnessed her in action, exposing their bias. Essentially, Catriona's immediate family is quick to judge her cousin based on stereotypes rather than actual knowledge. This prejudice may be the reason why Patricia's father feels embarrassed by her riding style:

> "She's got a couple of thirds and fourths," her uncle confided, "and I don't mean to poor-mouth her, but"—he sighed deeply—"well, I know Americans ride differently, but it's not the way your grandfather taught me to ride. So, you and your daddy are to make a proper rider out of her, and then maybe she can get firsts. But she's all Carradyne—horse crazy." (*The Lady* 188)

Eamonn's defence of Patricia's riding abilities is weak at best, as it emphasises her American education as the cause of her different riding style, and so he continues the view in the novel that the Irish are the best riders.[25] This reinforces a dichotomy between Irish "good" riding, represented by the Carradyne family, and American "bad" riding. It is only after receiving training from Michael and successfully classifying her pony for the show (*The Lady* 406) that Patricia is finally accepted by Catriona and her family. This suggests that, despite the clear bias of the Irish characters, the problem of Cornwell is not that he is American but rather that he is not good at horse-riding. Equines are thus used to negotiate not only Anglo-Irish hybridity but also American and Irish-American identities.

    The equine world in McCaffrey's novel serves as a platform to negotiate national identities, as seen through the contrasting perspectives of the Irish, the Anglo-Irish, and the American characters. The novel's representation of the English identity, particularly problematic during the Troubles, is explored through the character of Selina, the only

---

[25] The distinction between the Irish and English identities portrayed in the novel extends to the way they ride horses. While the Irish tend to ride with an upright position similar to the English style, they differ from American riders in that they do not have a horn (Denise).

born and raised English character. Her maiden name, Selina Worthyn[26] quickly categorises her as a "purely" English character, unlike the Carradynes or the American characters above analysed. Furthermore, Selina is the only character in the novel who belongs to the nobility and is often referred to as a "lady," perhaps echoing the title of the novel. Despite her Englishness and aristocratic background, Selina is admired and accepted within the fictional community. The reason is precisely because of her riding skills, which are admired by Catriona and her father (*The Lady* 66). Therefore, the ability of a character as a horse rider, regardless of their national ontology, can set the basis for their acceptance, highlighting how equines are turned into symbols to negotiate acceptance into the community.

At the beginning of the novel, Selina is married to David Healey, a banker who was born and raised in Northern Ireland. Given that the story takes place during the Troubles, it is perhaps unsurprising that this character is critical of the conflict. The instability brought on by the Troubles often takes David away from his home and wife, as he works in the North to mitigate the negative impacts on the financial sector. When David is bidding farewell to Selina and Michael, he states:

> "Well, now, Selina, Carradyne, I've an appointment." David Healey glanced at the very expensive gold watch on his wrist as if to prove that he had to leave. "This damned bank strike! Hope you prepared for it, Carradyne? […] Calm heads are needed, sensible compromises. Could go on for months. Obstinate bastards. Ruin the country. Well, I must be off. (*The Lady* 174–75)

This excerpt suggests that the Northern character in the novel is more invested in financial gain than in social harmony, as evidenced by his criticism of the rebels as "obstinate bastards." His lack of concern for the well-being of those affected by the Troubles may indicate sympathies with the UK, suggesting that he is a British character. Furthermore, the fact that his surname is "Healey," which has English origins from a town in Manchester (Hanks and Hodges), and that his first name is not the Irish form "Daibhéid"

---

[26] It might refer to Worthing, a seaside town in West Sussex. Likewise, the name of the town finds its origin in the Old English word Worth/Worō, which means "valiant one, one that is noble" and the "-ingas," which means "people of" (*Oxford Reference*).

(Woulfe) but "David," further reinforces his Anglo-Irish identity, potentially similar to the Carradynes.

However, the comparison between the Northerner character and the Carradynes in the text is not one of equivalence, but rather of opposition. David is frequently absent, spending most of his time in the North away from his lands and wife. This absenteeism is significant given the strong colonial context of the novel, as it positions David as an "absent" English landowner, similar to the absentee of Maria Edgeworth's eponymous novel *The Absentee* (1812). As Haruko Takakuwa notes, in Edgeworth's text, "Ireland is fundamentally a happy place if only landowners would commit themselves to their land; if the Irish countryside is in a deteriorated and troublesome situation, it is because the ruling class have absconded from their duties" (110). In *The Lady*, David is used to criticise these absent English landowners, while emphasising the Irishness of the Carradynes who have remained on the land for two centuries, breeding Irish horses and taking part in the community that surrounds them. In other words, in addition to his absenteeism, David's disdain for horses sets him apart from the horse-breeding and pretty much "present" Carradynes. David's disdain towards these equines is likewise exposed when, during one dinner, Selina expresses her love for horse-riding, and he responds that:

> "I'm sure that everything you say is true, Selina," David said, and put his napkin to his lips, "but although I'm delighted you've found a suitable hobby, I regret that I cannot share your interest in horses."
>
> Selina regarded her husband with a smile of spurious courtesy. Damn the man! she thought. If she had the grace to feign interest in all his financial and political observations, he could at least return the compliment. (*The Lady* 247)

Selina's cursing at her husband for the first time in the novel may be attributed to his frequent absence from home. More notably, this is also the first time she discloses her love for horseback riding, and David's reaction is to reveal his contempt for equines. This sets him apart from the Carradynes, who have a deep affinity for horses. By using equines as a tool for differentiation, the novel creates a national distinction between the Carradynes and the Healeys. Given that equines are clearly instrumentalised as symbols of national identity, the following section seeks to discern whether they also operate as symbols of masculinity and femininity and in which sense.

2.3. Androcentric Ontologies

When examining the ways in which other animals are used to uphold androcentric systems of thought, horses often come to mind. This is because they are powerful symbols of human control and dominion. According to Natália Pikli, an analysis of the horse in Europe shows that the able rider "came to symbolise potent rule, reason's mastery over beastly passion, often with a gender bias: [..] narratives associated unruly horses with unruly women throughout Europe" (3). In other words, horses are often used as symbols to negotiate gender roles. Katherine Dashper argues that the equine world is heavily characterised by "relatively traditional, normative gender regimes in which men and women, masculinity and femininity, are clearly differentiated and hierarchically positioned" ("Strong, Active Women" 352). Bruce Boehrer similarly argues that the dualistic opposition between sexualised female and rational male was constructed around the rider/horse opposition (25), creating an artificial hierarchical boundary that emphasises and results in a "hypermasculinity." Maureen O'Connor criticises that the "hypermasculinity" of the newly independent national struggled to distance itself from colonial representations of the "savage" Irish, including the feminising and zootolising of the native, but did so by assuming the role of custodial patriarchal once occupied by their English masters (*The Female and the Species* 135). O'Connor contends that masculinity is at the core of the Irish Free State, being strongly related to the colonial history of the island and consequently to the ontological anxieties Irish men may have experienced. Therefore, due to the androcentrism of the island, there is a large number of stories in which women are reduced to myths, such as the Celtic goddess Epona, explicitly identified by the use of horse symbolism. Epona's cult was practised by a wide range of people in Romano-Celtic society and remains one of the most popular myths in Ireland (Green 204). To better understand how gender is strongly intermingled with the animal as a symbol, this section will analyse first how masculinity is constructed in *The Lady* as well as whether the equines play any role in it. This section finishes with an analysis of the female protagonist, Catriona, and the two role models she is offered: her mother, Isabel, and her father's romantic interest, Selina.

2.3.1. Patriarchs and their Stallions

According to Alicia Puleo, nonhuman animals are frequently employed as symbols to construct virile identities and mitigate anxieties surrounding masculinities (118). Consequently, in anthropocentric societies, these animals are often used to uphold patriarchal androcentrism and its idealised concept of "Man." In Ireland, one kind of horse that commonly serves as a symbol of masculinity is the stallion (Ging, "Family Guys" 80). In this regard, Maureen O'Connor posits that the association of horses with Irish masculinities stems from the belief that horses are "domesticated" and "tamed" creatures requiring a male master, leading to the usage of "a particularly demeaning choice of gendered animal imagery (135). Thus, horses are frequently used to (re)negotiate and reinforce gendered dichotomies and constructions of masculinity. One space in which this can be examined is in *The Lady.*

The protagonist's deceased grandfather, Tyler, is a central character in the novel. He is portrayed as the patriarch of the Carradyne family and a skilled horseman, introduced in the text as "Colonel Tyler Carradyne [,who] had had as good an eye for a man as a horse" (*The Lady* 12), thus firmly connecting him to the equestrian world. His expertise with horses is further demonstrated when the narrator explains that it was his keen eye that selected Tulip as the stallion and breeding horse of the business, securing the economic prosperity of the Carradynes for the duration of the stallion's life (*The Lady* 12).

Throughout the novel, the characters of the Colonel and Tulip are closely linked due to the Colonel's role in breeding Tulip. Michael, reflecting on his father's business, notes that "[t]he Tulip was my father's horse, I think from the moment he was foaled. A case of eyes locking and a rapport developing all in an instant. Tulip always went to my dad first. Even before he tried to suckle his dam, he had nibbled my father's fingers" (*The Lady* 267). The strong association between the Colonel and Tulip is accepted as an undeniable truth in the novel. Given that the novel presents a separation of gender spheres and roles in which women are expected to stay within the house helping with domestic chores whereas men are expected to work with the horses, the strong relation between the two characters might also point to the masculinity of the human character as the patriarch of the Carradyne family, despite the apparent parenting relationship between man and stallion. The narrator describes Tulip as exceptionally large and strong, instilling fear in all other horses and ponies, who must be kept under control when walking near him. Irish

character Mick jokes about Tulip's strength, boasting that he "could eat the Prince in two bites" and "that'd learn the little sod!" (*The Lady* 59). This glorification of Tulip's discursive hypermasculinity by male characters in the novel highlights the cultural and symbolic significance of horses as masculine symbols in the novel that permeate the narrative.

Notably, Tyler's influence as the patriarch of the Carradyne family appears to persist even after his passing, as demonstrated through the character of his granddaughter, Catriona. At the outset of the novel, Catriona recalls her first memory, which is of the horse race that Tyler took her to (*The Lady* 17). Her grandfather is then the foundation for her love for equines. Similarly, her connection with horses continues throughout the book, as she learns to ride on a Connemara pony named Blister, personally chosen by the Colonel because he exemplifies the ideal qualities of his breed. As we read, Blister is the "perfect example of his breed [sic] a genuine animal, go until he drops, never let you down." (*The Lady* 20). Thus, her attachment to the ponies and her interactions with them are largely motivated by her grandfather's approval.

Upon the death of the stallion Tulip, the Carradyne family appears hesitant to accept the loss both literally and symbolically. During a conversation between Michael and Selina, she comforts him by defending that "[h]e's still there, in a way, isn't he, in his foals, in Tulip's Son?" (*The Lady* 268). This statement highlights that Tulip represents the grandfather's patriarchal values, and Michael mourns the societal shifts that accompany the loss of those values. The fact that the stallion's son serves as a substitute for the father, alleviating some of Michael's anxiety, reinforces the symbolic importance of Tulip. Catriona, similar to her father, refuses to accept the potential consequences of Tulip's death, and even paints a portrait of the animal that she easily convinces her father to display (*The Lady* 432). This act illustrates the family's reluctance to relinquish the last remaining vestige of their ancestral traditions.

Moreover, the protagonist also celebrates the masculine presence of the deceased stallion, Tulip, who was a symbol of masculinity and perhaps patriarchal power during his lifetime. After Tulip's death, Catriona draws him to ensure that he is not forgotten, and she carefully chooses the colours for the drawing, opting against pastels because they "would just not do for the Tulip" (*The Lady* 270). Indeed, Tulip's central role in the Carradyne family creates a sense of patriarchal continuity, as the Colonel's association with the stallion persists even after his death. In this way, Tyler's legacy is felt not only through Catriona's interactions with horses but also through the enduring presence of

Tulip and the Colonel's association with him. Unsurprisingly then, the novel ends with the words: "[l]adies and gentlemen, a toast: To the Tulip, alive forever in Cornanagh!" (*The Lady* 433) indicating the importance of the stallion and his offspring in preserving the Carradyne's family heritage, despite any changes that may occur. The sentimental final words of the novel suggest that, even if the family must confront societal changes, they remain committed to preserving the ideology that they have defended for generations; in this case, that of patriarchy.

Following the death of Tulip, the Carradynes try to assuage their grief by focusing on the next stallion, Tulip's Son. However, this proves insufficient for Michael, who expresses dissatisfaction with the horse as a substitute for his father. While the narrator depicts Tulip's Son as "a crown prince surveying his realm" (*The Lady* 291), Michael bemoans that "[h]e's only a half-bred" (*The Lady* 268). Despite the genetic lineage of Tulip's Son, which only considers Tulip's DNA and disregards the mare's contribution, it is apparent that the symbolic value of Tulip cannot be replaced. Consequently, social changes, including gendered divisions, become similarly inevitable. It is not accidental that only after Tulip passes Catriona finally competes and triumphs, securing a second prize (*The Lady* 262). This event marks a significant shift in gender-based roles, which are further undermined by the death of Tulip, who, albeit very dear to the protagonist, remains a potent symbol of male oppression.

Similar to Tulip's Son being the stallion's legacy, Michael is that of the Colonel. Described as a "very manly sort of man" (*The Lady* 96), the emphasis on his manliness might be related to his role as the patriarch of the Carradynes after his father's death. The novel highlights Michael's daily routine of checking on the Cornanagh stallion "just as [Catriona Carradyne's] grandfather had always done before crippling arthritis had tied him to his bed. First thing in the morning and last thing at night, the man of the house checked the Cornanagh stallion" (*The Lady* 15). According to the text, "[s]ince old Tyler had died, he had become the stallion man, for the Tulip trusted him as much as he did the captain" (*The Lady* 12). In other words, with the death of the old patriarch, the stallion sanctions Michael's position as the new patriarch of the Carradynes. This symbolic approval is strengthened by Tulip's success in getting a mare pregnant under Michael supervision, linking his endorsement with notions of fertility and masculinity. This transfer of symbolic fertility and hypermasculinity from Tulip to Michael underscores the patriarchal control that Michael represents in the family. Although the Colonel previously

embodied these traits, they now reside in Michael, potentially marking a new era in which the hegemonic masculinity defended by the family is different.

If Michael assumes the role of the patriarch, in accordance with a male-controlled discourse that advocates for a "masculinist and rationalist demand for absence of emotional attachment" (Plumwood, "Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism" 133), it can be argued that he maintains control over his emotions and sexual urges. Although constructed as a "very masculine" character who has his sexual prowess suggested by Tulip, the patriarch limits his sexual appetite to his wife, Isabel, who has no sexual desire for him or any other character, even though she has given birth to six children and has been pregnant nine times. Therefore, Michael is presented as a reasonably rational man who has the ability to manage his emotions and sexual desires when they are not corresponded.

However, the narrator also indicates that there are instances when his rational grasp of his emotions and sexual desires becomes weakened. For example, when his wife becomes ill from her intense praying and fasting in her attempts to stop Catriona from riding, the patriarch spends increasing amounts of time with Selina. During one of their rides together, he notices how physically attractive she is to him. Adopting the perspective of the male character, the narrator notes that he can see "the curve of her smiling mouth begged to be kissed. How he *wanted* to" (*The Lady* 143; emphasis added). It is noteworthy that in this scene, the patriarch is riding a gelding instead of a stallion (*The Lady* 140). Since the man is married and remains faithful until his wife's death, the choice of the gelding and the emphasis on its castrated status may indicate how humans, like geldings, are emasculated and unable to satisfy penetrative sexual encounters. It is noteworthy, however, that Michael rides the gelding only once throughout the whole novel. Even this temporary suspension of his hypermasculinity is portrayed merely as a means to depict him as a man able to control himself and resist sexual temptation while remaining faithful within his unhappy marriage, paradoxically featuring him as a "very manly sort of man" (*The Lady* 96). As a result, horses, whether stallions or geldings, are consistently employed to construct human characters, specifically male characters, in terms of their sexuality and masculinity.

Finally, Michael's masculinity is notably contrasted with that of David Healey, probably the most negative character in the book, who is compared to Michael in terms of their relationships with the equine world and Selina. Unlike Michael, David is never described as riding or even touching a horse, which is in line with his active dismissal of

them. Selina's reflections on her lack of offspring highlight the significance of David's aversion to horses. According to Selina, she had not been blessed with children because of "how seldom David had time for connubial bliss" (*The Lady* 83). Although David is hardly present in the narrative, whenever he is, there are no horses nearby or mentioned, and he rejects these equines and his wife's love for them. In contrast, Michael, portrayed as a "manly" man, willingly rides a gelding, symbolically emasculating himself temporarily. Although this may be a coincidence, he only rides the gelding once and it is because he rides with Selina as a married man. In this sense, the male character is constructed as a kind of ideal husband who remains faithful despite his clear desire for another woman. The text portrays David as deficient compared to Michael in various aspects. Unlike the self-controlled character of Michael, David commits the heinous act of raping his wife (*The Lady* 360), which highlights his lack of self-restraint and harmful behaviour towards Selina. In contrast, Michael is depicted as sexually virile and able to control his desires, exemplifying a more admirable and morally upright character in the narrative.

Additionally, it is also important to consider that horses, especially the stallion Tulip, are used to uphold patriarchal ideology in McCaffrey's novel. In this context, David's rejection of these horses, along with the historical baggage they represent alongside their Anglo-Irish landlords, could be seen as a rejection of such a cultural paradigm. However, the text complicates this matter. David continuously disregards his wife's feelings and interests, reducing her to a sexual object and a maid who only needs to see to his "physical comfort" (*The Lady* 248). David's perception of women as mere objects is finally exposed when he beats and rapes Selina[27] (*The Lady* 360). Furthermore, Selina's afternoon riding sessions with Michael are the reason why she is late one day, and according to David, the reason why he has to punish her. Thus, in *The Lady*, horses are used as vehicles to determine whether male characters pose a threat to female characters, as David does, or not, as in the case of Michael. The novel thus employs other-than-human animals to construct male human characters, both through their presence and absence in the text.

---

[27] The theme of rape is fairly common in McCaffrey's writing (Roberts 140), perhaps precisely because of the years she spent with her abusive husband.

2.3.2. How to Be a Horse-Crazy Lady

Val Plumwood explains that in androcentric cultures, "woman" is defined in opposition to "man" in a typical self/other dichotomy in which women are not only simplified to a singular woman but as inferior to the male Self ("Decolonizing Relationships with Nature" 57). To conceive a male/female dichotomy would entail a likewise dichotomic reason/emotion logic. Accordingly, Puleo explains that, within patriarchal logic, women are endowed with typically "feminine" attributes, which include emotions and justify their inferiority. Accordingly, Puleo denounces that, in patriarchy, "feminine" attributes must be avoided at all costs (119). In other words, women have been negatively defined in opposition to men.

In the case of Ireland, women are central in the construction, not only of the nation but of Irishness as an identity. Anne McClintock explains that women are often used by nationalist discourses and that "[b]ecause for male nationalists, women serve as markers of national homogeneity, they become subjected to especially vigilant and violent discipline" (97). Women, like horses, are therefore often turned into symbols of national identity to be exploited by the male subject.

On the other hand, Jean O'Malley Halley contends that horse-riding can provide girls with an alternative to heteronormative relations and the equines with an important role in their lives, perhaps becoming what Donna Haraway regards as "significant other" (*The Companion* 11). In this regard, McCaffrey's novel arguably constructs female characters who are in a strong relationship with the equines, whether based on their acceptance or rejection, and form "significant others" or "companions."[28] This subsection examines the female protagonist, Catriona, and the two role models she is offered: her mother, Isabel, and her father's romantic interest, Selina.

McCaffrey's novel appears to revolve around a distinct gender divide between the domestic realm and the equine dimension. Michael Carradyne consistently emphasises his role outside the house, amidst the horses, rejecting any involvement in domestic responsibilities which he deems inferior to horse breeding and training. When confronted with his wife's deteriorating health, he dismisses it, stating that he "wasn't to be bothered

---

[28] McCaffrey's texts often explore these interspecies connections; for instance, in *Dragonflight*, the first novel of *the Dragonriders of Pern* series, we find a female protagonist, Lessa, who is constantly in symbiosis with her dragon, whom she takes care of and regards as an equal (*Dragonflight* 122).

with domestic problems" (*The Lady* 63). Furthermore, men are rarely found inside the house, except during family dinners prepared by female characters, whereas women are within the household most of the time (*The Lady* 298).

Gender dichotomies are further accentuated through a prominent activity in the novel: hunt-riding. The master of the hunt is Mr O'Brien (*The Lady* 68), in accordance with the conventional perception of men as masters. In line with this, the master's daughters are responsible for collecting the cap money and engaging in conversation with notable members (*The Lady* 68). In other words, the equine world reinforces the gendered division of labour in the novel, perpetuating a clear separation of the spheres and aligning with patriarchal values.

The role of gender during mealtimes is a crucial aspect of the novel. Firstly, it is noteworthy that only women, namely the cook and the mother Isabel, are responsible for cooking in the Carradynes' household (*The Lady* 298). Notably, the person serving the meals varies between the father, mother, or cook. Significantly, meat-based dishes are consistently served by the family's patriarch, Michael, whereas meals featuring other ingredients or lacking meat are served by either the mother or the cook (*The Lady* 35). On one occasion, the mother serves a casserole and a vegetable dish, expressing her dissatisfaction through a sniff "as she usually did when she served inferior dishes" (*The Lady* 34).

Additionally, meat appears to be reserved for special occasions, such as the protagonist's birthday, when they enjoy a roast chicken (*The Lady* 122). The narrator emphasises the association between meat and patriarchal power by highlighting that "Isabel always served the less important entrées" (*The Lady* 63), which typically consist of vegetables or fish. This portrayal of food brings to mind Carol Adams' critique on the politics of meat, considering it a (re)affirmation of virility (18). Therefore, in McCaffrey's novel, meat and meal preparation serve as symbols of a gender-based political system, where meat reinforces virility. On the other hand, dishes without meat are explicitly deemed inferior, associated with femininity. In other words, the novel establishes a patriarchal framework that positions women as the non-male Other, facilitating their symbolic and material oppression.

Within the narrative, gender plays a significant role, particularly in the experiences of the female protagonist, Catriona, as she grapples with the limitations imposed by gender norms. Despite societal expectations, Catriona feels more at ease in the company of horses and ponies outside the confines of the house (*The Lady* 38). In fact, following

her mother's death, horse-riding becomes the sole source of vitality that brings colour to her cheeks (*The Lady* 164). Consequently, the protagonist embodies the tension between traditional Irish patriarchal values and the evolving values where the boundaries between the public and domestic spheres are less distinct. Catriona becomes an ideal conduit for examining the interactions between humans and nonhuman entities. As Catriona charts her journey as a woman, she stands at a crossroads, faced with a pivotal choice between two influential models to guide her: Isabel Carradyne or Selina Healey.

One of the most outstanding features in the construction of Isabel is her sexuality, a central aspect that profoundly influences her character and, perhaps, Catriona's. Despite being a mother to six children, she is so repulsed by the idea of sex that she cannot bear to see her husband undressed, even during the daily act of changing clothes (*The Lady* 28). Reflecting on her wedding day, she blames her mother for her anguish, realising that her "wifely duties" entail engaging in sexual intercourse, a topic her mother had never explained to her, as was fairly common in sexually oppressed communities. Her aversion to sex is so intense that she only engages in it with her husband for the strict purpose of procreation, in adherence to Catholic beliefs (*The Lady* 29).

Furthermore, her rejection of sex is extended to her aversion towards equines and their sexual activities. During a scene where the stallion inseminates a mare, Isabel, unable to witness the act, describes her profound repulsion as she hears the stallion. As she states, she is deeply disturbed because "[t]hat stallion of Michael's made the most terrible noises when he was doing *that"* and resorts to taking a Valium pill to calm her nerves (*The Lady* 27) (emphasis in original). The mere notion of sex repulses Isabel to the extent that she cannot even bring herself to utter its name, treating it as a taboo subject. This attitude aligns with the puritanical ideology that persisted in more conservative groups in 1970s Ireland, heavily influenced by Catholicism.

Strongly associated with the sexual oppression of women under Catholicism we can find the figure of the Virgin Mary, central to Catholic thought. The text does not only make a reference to this figure in its title, *The Lady,* but also introduces it as a problematic model for Catriona. When the protagonist discusses that she is far from fond of her priest, she explains that "[h]e got very annoyed if you couldn't confess anything, for he wouldn't even allow that the Virgin Mary had been totally without sin, her being a woman and all" (*The Lady* 42). The Virgin Mary is therefore introduced as a symbol that exemplifies the ongoing patriarchal sexism in the Republic in which women continue to be regarded as sinful and so in need of oppression.

Throughout the narrative, the Virgin Mary intermittently becomes a focal point. Isabel Carradyne, in her persistent efforts to discourage Catriona from riding, turns to prayer, seeking intervention from the Virgin Mary. In a dramatic scene, Isabel abruptly and almost violently leaves the house, venturing into the fields where she seldom walks, to confront Catriona and fervently claim that the Virgin Mary had communicated to her during prayer that she must give up pony-riding (*The Lady* 96). Although the truth behind Isabel's proclamation remains ambiguous, the figure of the Virgin Mary is employed to oppose equine activities. One reason why Isabel is so obsessed with Catriona leaving this practice may be that horses can be associated with sex (Wintle 69). This way, the text engages in a dialogue that challenges Catholic beliefs and depicts pony-riding as an almost pagan fertility tradition, while Isabel personifies the cold, orthodox Catholic motherhood. Consequently, the novel explores the complex portrayal of the Virgin Mary, highlighting her problematic nature within the context of Irish Catholicism and its impact on women. The narrative juxtaposes Catholic beliefs with the common association of riding and female sexuality, positioning them in opposition and suggesting a clash between traditional Catholic values and alternative forms of liberation.

The association of Isabel's death with the Gothic and the irrational is a noteworthy aspect of the novel. This connection between Isabel's Catholicism and the Gothic tradition in Irish literature may reflect the way in which Irish fiction often serves as a platform for exploring the political and cultural complexities of a colonised Ireland, as argued by Jim Hansen (8). Works like James Joyce's "The Dead" are seen as gothic visions of colonial history, where the ghosts of the suppressed Irish Catholic past continue to haunt the present, embodying the "irrational" and the "feminine" (Hansen 12). In the context of *The Lady,* Isabel can be seen as embodying the archetype of the hysterical woman prevalent in the Gothic tradition. One particular moment that highlights this observation is when the narrator discloses Isabel's disdain for Catriona's initial memory, which occurs when she witnesses her daughter riding a horse for the first time. Determined to keep Catriona away from horses, Isabel attempts to forcibly remove her from the pony while Catriona clings to the reins, obeying her grandfather's instructions. As we read, "her mother had tried to snatch her off the pony while she had held onto the reins, obeying one of her grandfather's many injunctions. Her mother had hurt her that day, slapping at her hands and her face to make her let go" (*The Lady* 42). This violent reaction of Isabel is reprimanded by Tyler Carradyne:

"She's well able, Isabel"—Catriona remembered the tone of contempt with which Tyler Carradyne had addressed his daughter-in-law—"and you will kindly not go into hysterics when the child is quite competent. As if she were on her own. I was right there beside her all the time. Now stop your carry-on, woman. I'll not have you prejudicing a good rider by your vapors. She's a rider, that one." (*The Lady* 42)

By employing a condescending tone towards Isabel, the Colonel effectively infantilises her and dismisses her emotions as mere "hysterics." This dynamic in the text establishes a dichotomy between rationality and irrationality, with Tyler, the former patriarch, embodying the rational self, while Isabel represents the irrational other. Their contrasting relationships with the equines serve as a defining factor in highlighting this distinction, especially as Isabel's devout Catholicism appears to be in direct opposition to the equine world. This binary mindset becomes evident when Catriona writes about her first memory for school, which consists of the first time she rode, as explained above. In response to Catriona's choice of writing, Isabel, scandalised, states "[w]ell, I should think you could find something more significant to write about than horses. Your brother Jack's ordination, for instance" (*The Lady* 17). In this instance, Isabel attempts to persuade her daughter to reject horses and instead focus on Catholicism, but her efforts prove futile.

Isabel's rejection of equines extends to her perspective on riders' physical appearance. As the narrator explains, she "had once been a very pretty girl, and remnants of that beauty were still apparent in her fine features, but years of frustration and disappointment had etched lines from a thin, high-bridged nose to a now tight mouth" (*The Lady* 15). This initial description reduces the character to her physical appearance and emphasises her ageing and negative experiences.

It is perhaps because Isabel's own physical appearance has changed that she becomes fixated on Catriona's appearance. One source of Isabel's frustration stems from her daughter's refusal to give up her involvement in the equine world. Following Catriona's accident, Isabel resolves to compel her daughter to quit riding altogether. Her strategy involves pressuring Catriona to engage in activities such as shopping in Dublin and mingling with high-class women, with the aim of transforming her into what Isabel perceives as a proper "lady." Isabel believes that Catriona, at the age of thirteen, should display "some interest in [her] appearance" (*The Lady* 87) and thus insists that her daughter acquire clothing that is deemed "suitable" for her age. Since Catriona is more interested in her ponies than in looking like a lady, Isabel tries to assert control over her

wardrobe, allowing only those clothes that she approves of. Isabel desires her daughter to wear dresses and skirts, which are conventionally feminine, while Catriona prefers trousers and riding attire, garments that are considered more "masculine" and useful for riding, but which are clearly disapproved of by her mother and grandmother (*The Lady* 88).

The conflict over clothing choices between Catriona and Isabel holds particular significance due to the longstanding historical and ideological debates concerning women's attire, particularly among riders. Gina M. Dorré's analysis of Victorian riders, focusing on *Black Beauty*, highlights the body and clothing as "historical and ideological sites that both shape and are shaped by their cultural contexts" (97). Dorré also draws parallels between restrictive clothing practices, exemplified by the corset, and the horse's "bearing-rein"[29] as both impose constraints and can be used as "disciplinary tactics" (111). In McCaffrey's text, while Catriona is not compelled to wear a corset, which would be incongruous given the story's setting in 1970, I argue that she is coerced into wearing shoes akin to corsets. After a tiring day of shopping and trying on dresses, Catriona is "so annoyed by all the changing into and out" that she "she did not pay proper attention to the salesman and failed to get the right fitting" (*The Lady* 88). Consequently, albeit unintentionally, the protagonist finds herself burdened with uncomfortable shoes, symbolising her forced conformity to the womanhood her mother demands.

Furthermore, Catriona wears these shoes only twice. The first occasion is when Isabel compels her to accompany her to social gatherings. As we can read, they go to "morning coffee with [Isabel's] Irish Countrywomen's Association friends and afternoon teas with elderly relatives who didn't remember Catriona any better than she did them" (*The Lady* 89). It is at this point that the text suggests that these unfitting shoes function as a metaphorical corset of 1970s Ireland, emphasising Isabel's role in imposing a specific model of womanhood, detached from the stables and the equine world, upon her unwilling daughter. The second and last time the protagonist wears these shoes is at her mother's funeral, when Catriona walks behind her coffin:

---

[29] Dorré explains that the bearing-rein is "a strap running from the bit (or bits) in the horse's mouth to the harness across its back, and sometimes on to a crupper that encircled the tail. When tightened, the trappings prevented the horse from lowering its head, while a molded and sometimes cutting gag-bit applied additional pressure to the horse's sensitive mouth area" (100–01).

Catriona walked beside her grandmother Marshall behind her mother's coffin from the house to the church. Her father was on her other side. Her grandmother took her hand and held it in a grip that seemed to tighten with every step nearer the church. Catriona did not dare complain, especially after she saw her grandmother's face. Tears streamed down an otherwise expressionless countenance and dripped unregarded onto the black silk front. Catriona looked down, at the tarmacadam road, at her feet, at the tight toes of her Easter shoes. They had already raised raw blisters. She let the pain of her feet overcome the pain of her clasped hand. It wasn't a long way to walk. (*The Lady* 166)

Similar to the potential blisters caused by corsets, the protagonist's feet display this kind of injury, thus reinforcing the parallelism through her wounds. It is then not only that Catriona bleeds after being forced to walk in those shoes she bought on one of those forced shopping days with her mother but also that she accepts the pain and continues walking. In this sense, the protagonist seems to accept the pain as some kind of punishment because of her mother's death. This guilt is further elaborated in Catriona's last memory of her mother before her death. Right before Isabel falls to the floor as a consequence of the severe desnutrition that results from her weeks of fasting, Catriona is locked in her room, angry at her mother because she does not allow her to ride. As we read, "'[o]pen this door, Catriona Mary. Open this door to your mother so that I may pray for your immortal soul," the protagonist screams "'[n]o, no, no. Never!'" (*The Lady* 129). Right after this, Isabel falls unconscious and is sent to the hospital, where she dies. Tellingly, during the bleeding walk, Catriona firmly believes that her mother's death is a result of her denial to open the door, and it is only when one of Catriona's aunts asserts her innocence and she rides again (*The Lady* 164) that Catriona finally drops the shoes and symbolically relinquishes the burden of her mother's oppressive model of womanhood. If this is the case, she may decide to follow Selina's role as a "lady."

Selina is initially depicted as the "elegant, pretty Mrs. Healey" (*The Lady* 24), a character who, most remarkably, exhibits a strong affinity for riding, unlike Isabel. The text reveals her proficiency in this activity, as she had participated in and won several competitions prior to her marriage. With her husband often absent due to his work with Northern Ireland's banks, Selina becomes bored and offers to train the Carradyne family's latest gelding, Chou Chin Cow (*The Lady* 108). When the narrator describes Selina riding the gelding, particular attention is given to the elegant curve of the horse's neck, which

interestingly is mentioned only after Selina begins training him (*The Lady* 354), as if she could symbolically impart some of her femininity to the equine. Additionally, the text highlights that Selina's first pony, Conker, is well-bred and possesses "excellent stable manners" (*The Lady* 87), once again implying a connection between the pony and Selina's own ladylike qualities. Thus, the text portrays the transfer of certain traits from Selina to the horses she rides, reinforcing her strong connection with these equines.

Similar to Michael's rational, albeit cold, attitude towards Isabel, the text suggests that Selina can be seen as a rational woman in contrast to Isabel. One explicit attempt by Isabel to persuade Catriona to follow her example is tied to her religious convictions. Unaware of Selina's presence, Isabel rushes from the house to the stables where Catriona and her father are tending to the horses. She passionately declares that the Virgin Mary has answered her prayers and forbids Catriona from riding any longer. Selina's reaction, as described by the narrator, tactfully avoids reprimanding Isabel or revealing that she overheard the conversation, as doing so would have further humiliated Isabel. The narrator explains Selina's reaction as follows: "[d]uring that one afternoon call, Selina had been somewhat annoyed by Isabel's arch manners, but there'd been no indication then that she was unbalanced. Now Selina took a deep breath and opened the car door" (*The Lady* 96). Although Selina had previously sensed a clash with Isabel, particularly in terms of her "arch manners," it is only at this moment that she begins to question Isabel's sanity. In this context, Selina is portrayed as rational, aligning more with Michael, while Isabel is depicted as irrational.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that the initial conflict between Selina and Isabel arises when Selina presents Conker as a gift to Catriona. Despite having no social justification to reject the gift, Isabel attempts to dissuade her daughter from riding Conker. Expressing her frustration, Isabel asserts that the pony is wretched, stating, "[y]es, wretched, even if it had been offered by someone as socially prominent as Selina Healey" (*The Lady* 91). Although Isabel fixates on high-class women, her disdain for horses outweighs the opportunity for her daughter to associate with a noble Englishwoman, perhaps because Selina embodies a form of femininity that challenges conservative Catholicism. Therefore, the text presents Selina as the rational counterpart to Isabel's irrationality in order to reinforce Selina as not only a rational figure but also as a more potentially empowered role model for Catriona.

The novel delves into Selina's role as a rider, shedding light on various aspects of her character. One notable detail is that, following her marriage, she ceased competitive

riding but continued hunt-riding. However, due to her age, she no longer rides her pony Conker and instead opts for a mare named Flirty Lady. The mare's name carries significant connotations. The term "Lady" potentially alludes to Selina herself, who was formerly a member of the English aristocracy prior to her marriage (*The Lady* 66). The descriptor "Flirty" is further explored throughout the narrative, particularly in the interactions between Selina and Michael, as they engage in flirtatious behaviour midway through the novel. Notably, the flirtatiousness associated with the name does not originate from the mare herself, but rather from her human owner. The female character eventually engages in a flirtation with the protagonist's father (*The Lady* 143) and they engage in a sexual relationship (*The Lady* 196). The mare serves as a vehicle to construct the character within the novel, offering limited insights into the horse itself. Through the symbolic utilisation of the mare, Selina's character is imbued with sexual empowerment, albeit at the expense of the nonhuman entity.

Selina and Isabel differ in their approach to their unhappy marriages, with Selina ultimately choosing to file for divorce. This decision carries significant feminist implications, as divorce is still illegal in McCaffrey's fictional Ireland, mirroring the legal situation in 1970 Ireland, while being permissible in the United States and the United Kingdom, Selina's country of origin. As the novel progresses, Selina's flirtation with Michael intensifies, culminating in her infidelity and sexual encounter at her own home (*The Lady* 196). Throughout this time, David, her husband, becomes more present but remains indifferent to Selina's desires and interests. However, it is only after he rapes and physically assaults her, described in Selina's own words as behaving like a "savage" (*The Lady* 358), that she decides to pursue divorce.

Moreover, Dorré contends that "the cultural practice of horsebreaking, which was popularized during the late 1850s and early 1860s, provides another site where the problems brought by the Woman Question and domestic ideology are communicated and negotiated" (65). Considering Selina's experience of rape as a possible form of "discipline," her choice to seek divorce instead of accepting such "punishment" can be interpreted as an act of feminist rebellion. By rejecting not only her dehumanisation but also the patriarchal oppression it represents, Selina emerges as a defiant woman who refuses to conform to traditional constructions of womanhood. This portrayal positions her as an alternative role model for Catriona, further challenging and subverting societal expectations.

In the initial portrayal of Catriona in the novel, the narrator highlights her deep appreciation for the distinctive aromas of Cornanagh, as she "took a deep breath of the combined scents that meant Cornanagh to her and exhaled with pleasure" (*The Lady* 20). Her fondness extends to all aspects of Cornanagh, encompassing the equines and the fragrant ambience of the stables. The character exhibits a genuine love for the family business, investing herself in the tasks of tending to and training ponies. When prompted to reflect on her earliest memory, a realm of contention between Catriona and her mother, she contemplates the vividness of her recollection:

> I think that the reason my first memory is so vivid is because it was about horses. Horses were my first memory because the business of my family is breeding and training horses. When I grow up, I hope to continue in this exciting work. I love horses and anything to do with them, even mucking out. That is why my first memory is about horses. (*The Lady* 40)

Throughout the novel, Catriona's deep affection for the family business remains unwavering. She adamantly expresses her desire never to depart from Cornanagh, citing her inseparable connection to the equines and their training, stating, "[i]t's my life!" (*The Lady* 289). Hence, the protagonist's identity is strongly related to the equine world. The narrator attributes Catriona's profound attachment to the equines to her grandfather, Colonel Tyler Carradyne, and so to her childhood. Early on, the narrator depicts her first memory, which involves the colonel teaching her how to ride the pony Blister (*The Lady* 41). Furthermore, the colonel serves as the conduit for introducing Catriona's "exceptionality" in the novel. Notably, although described as stern and serious, the narrator reveals that he "had not, in fact, so snap-tempered with her." This is attributed to Tyler's recognition of Catriona's profound connection with the equines, rendering her deserving of his patience (*The Lady* 41). Similarly, unlike her siblings, Catriona is granted the privilege of riding Tulip, the stallion, as "she'd never been afraid of the Tulip" (*The Lady* 81). Thus, Tyler Carradyne honours her bond with the equines in a truly exceptional manner. Riding the stallion is considered one of the highest distinctions bestowed by the grandfather and former patriarch of the family.

Catriona's father, Michael, also recognises her as an extraordinary equestrian, entrusting her with the training of ponies under his guidance. There is a moment when he looks at her in a way that "to a nervous rider, or an erring groom […] could be unnerving"

(*The Lady* 58), but not to Catriona, despite her young age of thirteen. Perhaps suggesting a certain "innate" ability to ride equines, she is set apart from others who may find her father's gaze disconcerting. The narrator further underscores her natural riding skills, noting that "around horses, her comprehension verged on the instinctive. She knew the wheres, whys, and whens of stable management" (*The Lady* 62). Hence, Catriona is presented as an exceptional young woman precisely because of her riding abilities, contrasting her against her mother and more in line with Selina.

The exploration of Catriona's exceptional qualities extends to her comparison with Selina, the only other adult female rider in the novel. Selina, an Englishwoman, possesses a unique ability to persuade Michael Carradyne to purchase a horse when he is initially hesitant (*The Lady* 108). This already suggests that Mrs Healey deviates from the norm, both in terms of her gender and her non-Irish background, due to her profound connection with the equines. Selina reflects on her past involvement in showing horses before her marriage, noting her competence in the field: "I was quite good. I even had an assistant instructorship, though I think that the British Horse Society must have lowered their standards that year" (*The Lady* 109). Despite Selina's expertise in British shows, she is captivated by the thirteen-year-old Catriona: "[w]atching Catriona put Conker through the suppling exercise was for Selina Healey like stepping backward in time to her own girlhood. Except for the fact that Catriona Carradyne was twice the rider she had been and had the dedication she had lacked" (*The Lady* 99). In other words, the protagonist emerges as an extraordinary horsewoman, even at her young age, leaving a lasting impression on all the adult riders in the novel. As a result, Catriona's femininity is negotiated through her relationship with the equines, which not only stems from her direct and ongoing connection with them but also from the opportunities that arise for her. These opportunities highlight the contrasting female roles of Isabel and Selina, which are both shaped by either their involvement in the equine world or the lack of it.

Catriona's divergence from her mother's model of womanhood is further illustrated by her association with the equines, which positions her as a re-enactment of the mythical goddess Epona. In contemporary Ireland, Epona is widely recognised as one of the most prominent myths, often portrayed riding a mare or positioned between two ponies or horses. Similarly, Catriona predominantly rides two ponies, Blister and Conker, symbolically placing herself between them. Additionally, she expresses concern over the slaughter of ponies that are deemed no longer useful to humans (*The Lady* 22) and

consistently condemns human mistreatment of equines. In this manner, Catriona assumes the role of a guardian or protector of the equines, paralleling the attributes of Epona.

Moreover, Epona, a myth associated with fertility, becomes particularly relevant as Catriona experiences her first menstruation at the age of thirteen. Initially, the protagonist feels fearful due to her lack of sexual education (*The Lady* 112), likely influenced by her mother's strong Catholic beliefs and sexual taboos. With the help of her cousin, she manages to accept her new reality as a menstruating woman, and so she symbolically rejects some of her mother's beliefs related to female sexuality. Instead of following her mother's wishes, Catriona frees herself from her mother's painful discourse and decides to follow Selina's role as a woman rider. This decision potentially empowers her against the patriarchal discourse of 1970s Ireland, where women were gradually, and with great resistance, gaining access to equestrian roles.[30] However, it remains unclear to what extent Catriona's bond with the equines empowers both the animals and humans involved. Therefore, the subsequent section scrutinises whether the nonhuman beings Catriona associates with are regarded as valuable lives and evaluates the extent to which Catriona and Selina find empowerment through their choices as riders.

2.4. Resistances

As discussed in the two previous sections, McCaffrey's novel presents an anthropocentric and androcentric pre-Celtic Tiger Ireland. However, that is not to say that the novel lacks moments of resistance. Because of this, I explore whether equine riding is here a feminist instrument of empowerment and whether the human/nonhuman interactions found in the novel result in a post-anthropocentric "relating" as proposed by Haraway between Catriona and her ponies. In order to do so, I first scrutinise the activity of riding through a close reading of the effects of riding on some female characters. Then, I explore whether the more-than-human is interpreted as ethically relevant and to what extent, as well as whether the human characters become ethically accountable. Here, I intend to discuss whether posthumanist ethics might provide a framework through which more-than-human animals can become ethically relevant, and human animals, accountable subjects.

---

[30] Dashper explains that women are usually allowed to take caring roles, and more rarely as jockeys ("Strong, Active Women" 362).

2.4.1. Grievable Species

In her influential work *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2009), Judith Butler argues that life is precarious precisely because it "relies fundamentally on social and political conditions, and not only on a postulated internal drive of life" (21). Butler emphasises the materiality of the body, which exists in a constant interconnection with others. This interconnectedness exposes the Self to the influence of "people we know, or barely know, or know not at all" (*Frames of War* 14). Consequently, precariousness implies that one's life is always, to some extent, in the hands of others, spanning the human and nonhuman realms. Paradoxically, the absence of clear-cut boundaries and shared vulnerability can give rise to the creation of artificial hierarchical dichotomies, such as human/nonhuman, bios/zoe, and man/woman. These dichotomies do not foster peaceful coexistenc, but rather establish violent hierarchies where one term dominates the other in terms of value, logic, or power, as highlighted by Derrida (*Positions* 41).

Instances of othering discourse and vulnerability are evident in Irish history, such as the Great Famine or the Troubles.[31] It is therefore not surprising to find discussions on death prevalent in Irish literature.[32] McCaffrey's text seems to follow this tendency by exploring death through the perspective of the teenager Catriona. Within this context of death, ethical encounters can arise, wherein vulnerability and openness enable connections with the Other. Whether these encounters effectively transform ethical attitudes or not, they provide opportunities for engagement (Calarco 32). The challenge lies in transcending hierarchical binaries to establish ethical connections among vulnerable bodies (Butler, *Frames of War* 44).

The Lady presents a unique opportunity to explore these aspects as the protagonist is confronted with the death of her first pony, Blister, following their fall together. This forced ethical encounter between the human protagonist and the pony potentially compels Catriona to confront her own vulnerability, acknowledging that she can be perceived as "a piece of meat" in Gilles Deleuze's terms (25), highlighting her shared animal nature

---

[31] Fraser explains that the Irish Potato Famine is a clear example of the historical vulnerability experimented by the Irish (9). The Troubles and their impact on the vulnerability experienced by Irish society have been extensively analysed (Borsuk; Coulter and Mullin) and literature (Barros-Del Río; Fitzpatrick).

[32] Bridget English explores the role of death in the works of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Kate O'Brien, John McGahern, and Anne Enright (2017).

and vulnerability with the deceased pony. The novel depicts the incident of Catriona and Blister falling together, resulting in severe damage to the pony's front legs, rendering him unable to stand. Interestingly, the human character cannot stand either despite having unbroken legs. This parallel scene exposes the precariousness inherent in the interconnectedness between species and the recognition that one's life is, in some sense, dependent on the Other. The text presents the fall of both characters as inseparable, suggesting an interdependence between rider and pony, albeit problematic as the failed jump has not been decided by the equine, who can only follow Catriona's orders.[33]

Following the fall, the physical connection between the human and the equine becomes an even more complex matter, as the human protagonist struggles to move and reach the distressed pony. Upon finding Blister, Catriona found that he "was trying to stand and couldn't. He was trapped in the ditch, trapped with both front legs broken. Someone began to scream, and it wasn't until much later that Catriona realized it was herself" (*The Lady* 71). Understanding the position of precarity of the nonhuman, whose life is in danger, and her inability to prevent the impending outcome, evokes a strong emotional response in the human protagonist, leading to her dissociation. Her direct encounter with the vulnerability of the pony is deepened when her father speaks:

> "Hold his head steady, Catriona," she heard a voice order, and she turned her head away so that she would not see the pistol. The bullet might have thudded into her own skull, for she felt the impact through the pony's neck. Then Blister slumped, and she screamed again. (*The Lady* 71)

In this poignant scene, the readers are confronted with a human protagonist who is compelled to confront the death of a nonhuman character, a death directly caused by another human character. As a riding pony, the nonhuman character is "loved, but also used up, cast off," and, once he falls, subjected to euthanasia, as critics like Mary Eberstadt et al. explain (6). Despite the female protagonist's attempts to distance herself from the event by dissociating and averting her gaze, she cannot escape the visceral experience of the nonhuman's death. It resonates within her body, highlighting the shared

---

[33] This theme is consistent with other works by McCaffrey, such as her renowned *Dragonriders of Pern* series. In this series, dragons and their riders exist in a symbiotic relationship, wherein the death of one leads to the prolonged suffering of the other until their eventual demise (*Dragonflight* 122).

vulnerability she had with the pony until his demise. This scene forces the human character to intimately feel and acknowledge the pony's death, bringing her own mortality into stark proximity. Such experiences are not unusual in McCaffrey's narratives, where her protagonists often confront pain and suffering caused by violent conflicts, rising to meet the ensuing challenges (Roberts 58). Catriona's close encounter with the pony's death prompts her to scream once again, driven by the shock it elicits. Her participation in this ethical encounter with the nonhuman Other is not a matter of choice; it is an imperative acknowledgement of their shared precariousness.

Drawing from Stacy Alaimo's perspective on the transformative potential of "the literal contact zone between human corporeality and more-than-human nature" (2), the ethical encounter depicted in the text offers an opportunity to reevaluate the ethical treatment of other-than-human animals. Alaimo argues that recognising shared vulnerability can lead to ethical considerations and practices that acknowledge the active and unpredictable nature of the material world, in which human subjects are always embedded (17). McCaffrey's narrative aligns with this notion. The fall of the human protagonist and the pony blurs the anthropocentric hierarchy and disrupts the discursive comfort of ontological distinctions. Consequently, the main character confronts death and her own vulnerability.

Death and vulnerability, explored within the realm of corporeal existence, reveal the interconnectedness shared by human and nonhuman animals. Gilles Deleuze posits that becoming-animal blurs the boundaries between human and nonhuman, primarily due to their shared vulnerability in material reality. This leads us to realise that "every man who suffers is a piece of meat. Meat's the common zone of man and the beast" (23). Interestingly, within anthropocentric hierarchies, the acknowledgement of our own material dimension as well as its potential turn to "meat" is often dismissed (Calarco 58). However, in the text, the human/nonhuman boundary is compromised, intensifying the shock and trauma endured by the protagonist. Temporarily inhabiting this blurred zone of boundaries offers an unexpected and profound connection with animals. As a result, the protagonist is compelled to recognise that the world, flesh, and dirt are no longer discrete elements easily categorised as separate entities (Alaimo 14). This further destabilises her ontology and potentially lays the groundwork for a posthumanist respect for the material lives of nonhuman beings.

Burial serves as one avenue through which a posthumanist perspective can manifest in showing respect for the lives, including their deaths, of other species. It signifies some

basic degree of ethical recognition given to the deceased. In the novel, the pony is buried, which is noteworthy as this is an exception rather than the rule. As the father explains, this is the first time the Carradyne family buries one of their equines, whose "carcasses" went to the Hunt pack instead (*The Lady* 80). Thus, the text demonstrates an effort to honour Blister's death by affording him a burial.

Similarly, the ethical encounter in *The Lady* holds the potential to influence Catriona's perception of who is deserving of grief. It is important to recognise that human emotions are partly shaped by their understanding of the world, and thus, it is unsurprising that the human character's emotions are influenced by her social context, which I have argued to be anthropocentric in section 2.2. of this chapter. In the critical moment of the accident, the protagonist keenly senses the physical impact of the bullet piercing the pony's flesh and extinguishing his life. However, the ethical encounter does not conclude there. McCaffrey's novel demonstrates that the protagonist experiences a profound sense of heartbreak and mourns deeply for the deceased pony even during her hospitalisation:

> She began to weep then, silently so as not to disturb the other women, and suddenly was so weak that she couldn't reach up to brush the tears away. Blister had been so marvelous: an honest pony, sturdy, reliable, genuine. She pictured his heavy pony head over the door of his stable, the neat Connemara ears pricked forward, the pink-and-dark-gray splotches on his muzzle, his velvety lips laid back so he could nibble at the palm of her outstretched hand. (*The Lady* 75–76)

Catriona consciously avoids expressing her grief for the pony to other women, fellow Irish individuals, or even her own father, perhaps because he is responsible for the pony's demise. This attitude suggests that she is transgressing an ethical taboo, aware that mourning a nonhuman being is socially unacceptable as it challenges the clear distinction between humans and nonhumans. By blurring these boundaries, humans, including her father and herself, become ethically accountable for their treatment of nonhuman life, exemplified by the death of the pony. Moreover, the text undermines the human/nonhuman boundaries, intensifying the shock and trauma experienced by the protagonist. Temporarily inhabiting this realm of blurred dichotomies exposes her to a profound and unexpected relationship with the more-than-human. Consequently, the protagonist's deep shock is not surprising, as she is forced to acknowledge that the world,

flesh, and dirt are no longer discrete entities that can be easily categorised. This further destabilises her existing ontology, disrupting her understanding of the world.

During her mourning for the pony at the hospital, another Irish character named Mick pays Catriona a visit and, upon noticing her tears, acknowledges, "[a]nd I was right. You are grieving for the pony" (*The Lady* 76). While one could argue that her weeping stems from her sorrow for the nonhuman, it follows her contemplation of her father's anger towards her for the fall and the "forced" act of killing the pony. As we read:

> "Mother won't let me ride again, Mick."
> Mick's eyes took on a challenging sparkle. "You didn't ever believe her, didja, Cat?
> […]
> "But now Father doesn't have anything for my cousin . . . ."
> Mick cocked his head, grinning. "Don't worry about her, Cat. And don't worry that you'll not be mounted. You'll see." (*The Lady* 77)

While some may argue that Catriona's weeping is a manifestation of her deep connection to the nonhuman, it is clear that her tears are primarily triggered by her concerns about no longer being able to ride and her cousin being left without a pony. In this context, the significance of Blister as a living being is overshadowed. Additionally, the dialogue highlights how Catriona is explicitly absolved of ethical responsibility for the fate of Blister. Consequently, Catriona's mourning is tainted by self-centred motives that do not involve a genuine grief for Blister as an individual, but rather view him as a mere tool for riding.

Furthermore, upon her release from the hospital and return to Cornanagh, the protagonist is prohibited from riding temporarily to ensure her full recovery, confirming her fears. Despite the previous tragedy, where the pony she rode met his demise due to a failure to meet expectations, she eagerly anticipates riding again. To fulfil her desire, Selina presents Catriona with her own pony, Conker, who "couldn't be more than eighteen. He'd been bought for her at just three years old on her thirteenth birthday, a beautiful bright sorrel chestnut, exceedingly well-bred" (*The Lady* 83). Consequently, the recent loss of the pony, which was duly buried with reverence, appears to hold little long-term significance. Instead, it is easily replaced, disregarding its intrinsic worth as a living being and reducing it to a mere tool, in this case, a means of transportation, whose value is transient in the narrative.

Although this shift in attitude may be attributed to the protagonist's capacity to "move on," a recurring theme in the author's works,[34] it is noteworthy that the deceased pony is scarcely mentioned thereafter. By relegating the pony to the background, both the pony itself and the ethical encounter become obscured, muted, and consequently easily forgotten by the protagonist. She is now ready to ride a new pony without any ethical confrontation. As a result, the main character has the option to disregard the potential for embodying a non-anthropocentric subjectivity that embraces shared vulnerability and relinquishes dominance. Catriona however chooses to reject the uncertainty of non-anthropocentrism and instead returns to her original anthropocentric hierarchical subjectivity as an Irish woman.

The novel also portrays the significant death of Tulip, the stallion, whose demise is attributed to a heart attack resulting from old age, as he is twenty-four[35] (*The Lady* 267). This event resonates with the deaths of Tyler, the previous family patriarch, and Isabel, who similarly succumbed to heart attacks (*The Lady* 42, 153). By drawing parallels between the equine's death and those of the human family, the narrative opens up a discussion on the shared vulnerability between human and nonhuman animals. The implicit recognition of their shared materiality shows that mortality and finitude are universal, transcending species boundaries. Although Tulip's former caretaker has long passed away by the time of the stallion's demise, readers are privy to the reactions of the surviving human characters, particularly Michael and Catriona.

When Michael discloses that the stallion succumbed to "heart failure" due to old age, it is evident that he is struggling to maintain composure and conceal his inner turmoil. His profound emotional shock is further illustrated when he embraces Selina, seeking solace in her presence: "[t]hey stood that way a long moment. Michael was not sobbing, but the tremors that ran through his body betrayed the self-control he was exerting" (*The Lady* 267). Significantly, this is the sole instance where his emotional facade crumbles, underscoring the profound impact of the horse's death on the human character. Such a poignant emotional reaction from Michael implies that Tulip is indeed regarded as a subject worthy of grief. However, when he reflects on the reason behind his emotional instability following the horse's demise, he offers the following explanation:

---

[34] According to Roberts, accepting and coping with death and loss is a recurring theme in McCaffrey's writing, spanning various genres such as equine fiction, science fiction and fantasy (112).

[35] Domestic horses typically have a life expectancy of 25 to 33 (Deep Hollow Ranch).

"I just never imagined Cornanagh without the Tulip." He sighed heavily and then began to speak in a quiet voice, so altered from his rather crisp tones that she turned her head to catch other changes. "The Tulip was my father's horse, I think from the moment he was foaled. A case of eyes locking and a rapport developing all in an instant." […]

Michael's eyes were wide now with cherished memories. "Every morning Father would go to the back door—Tulip was always in the coach house stallion box—and roar good morning to him. And the Tulip would bugle right back." An infinitely tender smile curved Michael's lip. "On the one or two days my father might oversleep, the commotion from the Tulip was enough to rouse the dead." A tear trickled from the corner of Michael's eye, but his smile widened. "There are few true partnerships between man and mount. They are to be treasured. And now he's gone." (*The Lady* 267–68)

The significant focus on Tyler implies that Michael's mourning extends beyond the stallion and encompasses his role as a symbolic connection to Michael's deceased father. In essence, Tulip's death rekindles Michael's grief for his father. Furthermore, the treatment of Tulip's corpse aligns with the customary handling of equine remains in the novel. Following the autopsy, the patriarch temporarily vacates the premises, while "Mick had got the knacker to remove the Tulip before Michael got back to Cornanagh" (*The Lady* 270). Upon Michael's return, the worker informs him, "'Captain, it's done,' he said, ducking his head down to his chest" (*The Lady* 270). The ambiguous statement, "it's done," obscures the precise fate of the corpse. Unlike Blister, who is buried, Tulip has been sold to a knacker, individuals who typically purchase equine carcasses for meat resale. The narrator does not convey any indication of distress regarding the stallion's outcome. This absence may stem from the fact that selling the corpse is a customary fate for equines after death. In contrast, the decision to bury Blister instead of selling him as meat highlights Michael's potential choice to do the same for Tulip, which would deviate from the tradition of selling equine corpses. Yet, probably due to the economic impact of Tulip's death on the Carradyne family business, Michael is compelled to sell the horse's corpse, revealing the systematic treatment of nonhuman death. In other words, the patriarch, constrained by his prevailing reality, perpetuates the customary anthropocentric practice of selling rather than burying equines, signifying that despite their "true partnership," they remain entwined with business interests.

Moreover, Michael's deliberate absence during the sale of the stallion's corpse to the knacker carries significant meaning. As previously explored in this chapter, there are instances where the boundary between humans and nonhumans becomes blurred. In this context, witnessing the transaction of Tulip's meat would have compelled Michael to confront not only the horse's "meatibility" and mortality but also his own because of the effects of death to expose the shared materiality of all living beings. Perhaps due to the internal conflict experienced by the human character, who struggles to reconcile his rational and emotional faculties as he feels deeply attached to the deceased stallion, he finds it necessary to remind himself that "[y]ou could regret the death of a useful animal, he told himself, but you shouldn't grieve for it, and it certainly wasn't on to mourn your stallion" (*The Lady* 271). By reinforcing the concept of "useful," which implies the exploitative nature of nonhuman beings, there appears to be a resistance to acknowledging the shared materiality of human and nonhuman life. In other words, Tulip's death and his corpse spark Michael's anxieties about his own vulnerability and mortality, and so he must remain absent from the removal of Tulip's corpse to avoid Michael being triggered by the blurring of the species boundaries.

The other human character who mourns the loss of Tulip is the protagonist, Catriona. Following her father's return to Cornanagh and the removal of the stallion's body from the stables, Catriona is depicted as "lying in bed, still tearful over the Tulip's death; when she heard her father's soft curses, she wept anew — for him, for the Tulip, for Cornanagh" (*The Lady* 271). In this scene, it is evident that the protagonist grieves for the stallion. However, it is important to note that her memories of Tulip are deeply intertwined with her grandfather and the land. A part of Catriona's grieving process after Tulip's demise involves drawing him, as "[s]he felt she had to get it down before the Tulip faded from her memory as Blister had" (*The Lady* 271). The protagonist experiences anxieties about forgetting the deceased, which could suggest a greater mourning for the stallion. However, in her drawing of Tulip, she includes her father. Once again, the other-than-human character is not regarded as an independent entity but is utilised as a tool to construct human characters even after his death. Thus, her mourning extends beyond the animal's death and encompasses everything she associates with him, suggesting that Tulip functions more as a motif rather than a fully developed character.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the interspecies communication in *The Lady* deviates from McCaffrey's typical narrative approach. In contrast to other protagonists in McCaffrey's works who possess telepathic communication abilities with their nonhuman

companions (Roberts 36), Catriona lacks the capacity to engage in telepathic or verbal communication with Blister or any other equine, resulting in a linguistic barrier that hinders the establishment of genuine interspecies friendships. Perhaps for this reason, Catriona frequently tends to the equines at the stables, engaging in activities such as feeding and grooming. It is within this context that Gala Argent's analysis of human/horses interaction argues that "mutual grooming [is] a sign of 'belonging' within a community; in this case, in an inter-species community" (24), thereby suggesting Catriona's potential to form an interspecies familial bond with the equines. Catriona's efforts to establish communication with the equines are evident throughout the novel, as she seeks to interpret their emotions. For example, while caring for Tulip, the stallion, Catriona perceives a sense of loneliness in his vocalisation, despite the presence of five other horses in the coach house: "she thought he sounded lonely, though there were five other horses in the coach house to keep him company" (*The Lady* 81). Tellingly, this scene takes place right after Blister's death. This observation aligns with Argent's argument that equines grieve their deceased counterparts (26). Although the horse character lacks the ability to articulate thoughts and emotions in human terms, the protagonist engages in sympathetic imagination, attempting to grasp the equine's emotional state. In this particular scene, the human character deduces the stallion's sense of isolation, despite being surrounded by other equine animals, underscoring the consequences of his status as the Carradyne family's stallion. While Catriona imagines the stallion's loneliness, she does not prolong her presence or endeavour to foster camaraderie between the stallion and the other equines, exposing that the stallion's feelings may not be her top priority.

However, the limitations imposed by the novel's genre constrain the main character's agency, preventing the inclusion of elements commonly found in the author's works of science fantasy. Additionally, Catriona's ethical choices are influenced by her father, who himself is shaped by the legacy of his own father. This lack of true autonomy, coupled with the linguistic barrier, provides a possible explanation for Catriona's need to "move on." Young and unable to communicate with her nonhuman companions in human terms, she struggles against the prevailing anthropocentrism within her environment. Eventually, she is compelled to prioritise her human family over the equines. As a result, the main character's resistance is circumscribed to the boundaries of her anthropocentric realm, exhibiting minimal transformative influence, potentially attributable to her lack of agency. In essence, the nonhuman characters in the novel are reduced to mere appendixes

to the experiences and attributes of human characters, their individuality often disregarded due to the prevalent anthropocentrism and the limitations imposed by the equine genre. Thus, the following subsection will examine whether the protagonist and other female characters are empowered through the instrumentalisation of these equines, and to what extent, in order to determine the "feminist" implications of such instrumentalisation.

2.4.2. But a Girl?

Sarah Wintle argues that horse-riding and mastery of horses have traditionally been associated with "power, status and masculinity," making it an appealing pursuit for feminists in the twentieth century (66). Despite the male dominance in the equestrian world, the genre of equine literature gained immense popularity among girls during the twentieth century. Jean O'Malley Halley explains that one reason for this popularity is that equine novels offer girls an opportunity to challenge and transcend conventional notions of femininity and "girliness" through their engagement with "riding and being with horses" (9). In Halley's words, riding enables girls to become "something more with horses […] More powerful" (10). Building on this notion, Katherine Dashper explores the evolution of horse-riding, from its utilitarian roots to its transformation into a leisure activity associated with femininity. Dashper contends that:

> Although men still perform disproportionately well at the elite levels of these sports, and in the lucrative and high profile equestrian sport of horse racing, at lower levels and among leisure riders, horse-riding is a predominantly female activity [...] The feminization of horse-riding offers women many opportunities to demonstrate their physical capabilities, skills and prowess in what was once a strongly male-dominated milieu. ("Strong, Active Women" 351)

In other words, despite the male-dominated nature of the equestrian elite, women are increasingly entering it, challenging conventional notions of femininity and opening up new forms of expression. Hence, by engaging in horse-riding, the protagonists of equine romances have the potential to resist the patriarchal values they encounter, allowing them to embody alternative versions of femininity.

However, Ellen Singleton offers a contrasting view, suggesting that the empowerment derived from riding is often short-lived as girls eventually prioritise their relationships with men over their affinity for horses, thereby reverting back to traditional roles as wives and mothers (92). Wintle further argues that women riders are often only granted the opportunity to ride within a patriarchal framework but "at the cost either of regression or a kind of pre-sexual state or of difficult male-female relations" (78). These contrasting views on riding highlight the capacity of the equine genre to explore complex gender issues, which have been the subject of recent debates in the Republic of Ireland. In McCaffrey's equine romance, *The Lady,* the potential of girls to navigate the equestrian world in a fictional yet patriarchal 1970s Ireland is thoroughly examined.

The Lady presents a nostalgic depiction of rural Ireland, where equestrian riding is cherished by the majority of characters. The only female character who holds a strong disdain for horses is Isabel, whose primary focus lies in enforcing a patriarchal form of femininity onto Catriona rather than anything else. This portrayal serves to draw a direct parallel between the rejection of horses and the oppressive nature of patriarchy towards women, ultimately resulting in Isabel's literal and gothic-like demise. Another female character who does not partake in riding is Sybil, Isabel's eldest daughter. However, Sybil does not reject horse-riding and, in fact, encourages her sister to ride and participate in competitions. During a discussion about Catriona's potential involvement in competition, Sybil insists that her father ensures that Catriona excels as a rider: "you're going to see to it that she makes a mark as a horsewoman" (*The Lady* 228). Additionally, Sybil actively supports divorce and advocates against spousal abuse in Ireland, representing two prominent feminist demands during the 1970s and 1980s.[36] On the one hand, divorce became legal in 1997 (Fahey 244). On the other hand, the issue of spousal abuse began to receive increased attention in the 1970s. This decade witnessed a surge in articles and interviews featuring battered wives in Irish newspapers, the establishment of the Council for the Status of Women (Diver 163), and the inauguration of the first women's shelter in 1974 (Diver 168). These transformative changes culminated in the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in 1996 (Diver 214). As a result, the implicit message in the text suggests that horse-riding can serve as a means to challenge patriarchal structures, much like feminism and the pursuit of female empowerment. Therefore, the novel suggests that only those who defend the equestrian world, riders or otherwise, can be feminist allies.

---

[36] Divorce was legalised in Ireland in 1997 (Fahey 244).

As already mentioned, Catriona demonstrates both passion and exceptional skill as a rider. Her great ability is showcased in two equine shows. The first instance occurs spontaneously and unofficially when she takes the place of Sean, who becomes too anxious to perform, riding Prince in a pony show. Mick, responsible for the ill teenager and the pony, instructs Catriona to impersonate Sean and ride (*The Lady* 172). This episode provides one of the opportunities within the equestrian realm to "redefine normative gender roles and feminine identities" (Dashper, "Strong, Active Women" 365). Despite her lack of prior show experience, Catriona surprisingly secures a second prize, which is wrongly attributed to Sean (*The Lady* 183). Not only does the teenager fail to acknowledge Catriona's contribution, but he also displays a sense of superiority and boasts to anyone who will listen, behaving as a "prick" (*The Lady* 245). This aligns with Dashper's criticism of the tendency within equestrian sports to perpetuate the belief that "men are more physically capable, more interesting, and more worthy of attention and reward than are women" ("Beyond the Binary" 37). Significantly, the act of assuming another's identity is concealed by both male characters and even Catriona herself, who experiences feelings of guilt and sin for concealing the truth (*The Lady* 186). Rather than seeking recognition for her accomplishments while impersonating a male character, she internalises guilt despite being coerced into riding and keeping the secret (*The Lady* 186). Consequently, the text appears to criticise how patriarchy conceals female achievements in the equestrian world and asserts male control over it.

During her second show appearance, Catriona is acknowledged as a young woman, eliminating the need for secrecy and the violation of gender norms through her attire. This time, she rides the pony Conker. The narrative highlights that the initial round of the show involves trotting and navigating the practice fence, which "[Catriona] and Conker flew over […], but the next rider crashed into, and it wasn't put up as high again" (*The Lady* 261). The protagonist's exceptional riding skills on Conker are emphasised in contrast to the other riders'. In alignment with this, the text references a conversation between Michael and Selina discussing Catriona's achievements:

> "Yes, it was a very good round, Catriona," her father said, "considering this is [her] first real competition against the clock."
> "Her first?" Selina was astonished and looked at Catriona with wide eyes. "But I thought she'd been show jumping for ages." (*The Lady* 260–61)

In other words, the remarkable abilities of the protagonist leave a strong impression on Selina, an experienced rider who is deeply familiar with the equine realm. Through her involvement in equestrian riding, the protagonist is afforded the opportunity to explore alternative paths that have the potential to empower her and free her from the confines of patriarchy. It is worth noting that Conker, the pony, is a gift from Selina Healey. The narrator elaborates on Selina's past participation in various equine competitions with Conker prior to her marriage. Witnessing Catriona's participation and her subsequent achievement of a second prize prompts Mrs Healey to reflect on how she discontinued competing after marrying Mr Healey. The narrator reveals that Selina's father had encouraged her to continue competing, but she:

> had answered that learning to ride properly was socially acceptable for a woman, but competition was not. Of late, Selina had regretted not only that remark, but also the orientation that had made a good marriage and social prominence more important than any other achievement in her life. (*The Lady* 99)

Selina's character serves as a compelling illustration of the link between horse competitions and female empowerment, demonstrating a direct cause-and-effect relationship. It also sheds light on her previous complete assimilation of patriarchal discourse and gender roles. Additionally, Selina's regret over ceasing to compete with Conker, coupled with her decision to gift him to Catriona, suggests her desire for Catriona to carry on her legacy and avoid her mistakes. This portrayal positions equestrian competitions as spaces that have been masculinised, with Selina anticipating Catriona's entry into this domain as a means to challenge and resist the androcentric discourses that marginalise female riders.

Catriona's cousin, Patricia, is the other teenage girl who actively participates in equine riding. It is interesting to note that, although the cousin's father states that she is sent to Ireland for the summer in order to allow her to ride the Carradynes' horses (*The Lady* 36), we learn soon enough that the actual reason is that the cousin's parents are getting a divorce (*The Lady* 201). Moreover, at some point, while tending to the horses, Patricia breaks down and explains to Catriona that she is fully aware of the divorce process and that she is happy for it because her mother is "a disgusting, sniveling alcoholic" (*The Lady* 336). In this context, horses serve as mediators through which we can spot the legal differences between Ireland and the States. In addition, Patricia initiates

a conversation about sex with her sexually hesitant cousin, Catriona. While relaxing in Catriona's bedroom and discussing the ponies and horses in the family, Patricia nonchalantly expresses her anticipation of engaging in sexual activity "[w]hen I'm a little older, of course. I don't approve of promiscuity at fourteen" (*The Lady* 250). This casual mention of sex hints at a sense of sexual liberation, intertwined with the equines, that Catriona has yet to discover.

Furthermore, when Catriona experiences her first menstruation, Patricia takes the opportunity to caution her about the possibility of getting pregnant after engaging in sexual activity. Interestingly, Catriona responds by saying, "'[b]ut you're supposed to be chaste'—Catriona could not quite manage to use the term 'virgin' as easily as her uninhibited cousin—'when you get married.'" (*The Lady* 251–52). These words align with Tom Inglis' criticism of Ireland as a particularly prudish society (15). Patricia, who is only a year older than Catriona, and her superior performance in competitions, exemplified by her receiving a first prize while Catriona secures second place (*The Lady* 261), can be then seen as another feminist role model for Catriona to emulate, once again through their shared passion for horse-riding.

Although riding is often portrayed as a symbol of social and sexual liberation, it is important to recognise the problematic aspects of the empowerment narrative associated with equestrian riding. Selina, for instance, can be seen as an empowered woman due to her decision to divorce an abusive husband, drawing parallels to the legendary figure Lady Godiva. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the criticism put forth by Kaitlynn Hanna Hirst regarding the sexualisation of the myth surrounding Lady Godiva in English folklore, specifically in relation to women riding horses, as Godiva is:

> a figure symbolizing the very connection between a woman's sexualized appearance and her ability to exert power and control over individuals participating in a patriarchal society. According to the 11th century Anglo-Saxon legend, Lady Godiva rode through English streets, naked, in protest of her husband's unfair taxation of his tenants. […] Horseback riding motivates and frequently inspires romantic relationships between men and women in works of cultural production which in turn lead to traditional marriages that perpetuate the status quo. (13)

There are notable similarities between Selina and Lady Godiva, particularly in their shared English heritage, which signifies their privileged positions, especially within the

context of 1970s Ireland. Furthermore, a striking parallel can be observed in the construction of Selina and Lady Godiva regarding their marriages. The myth of Godiva attributes her horseback riding to her husband's unjust taxation policies. Similarly, Selina is married to a banker named David, who is consumed by his obsession to preserve the economy of the bank he works at amid the Irish Troubles, and who pays scant attention to anything else, including his own wife and her interests when she attempts to discuss them. Moreover, although Selina does not ride naked like Lady Godiva, she frequently rides and chooses to defy societal expectations by riding in the Carradynes' fields and committing adultery in her house with Michael. In this sense, the Englishwoman can be interpreted as a symbol of female resistance against her husband's unjust treatment, mirroring Lady Godiva's act of defiance through riding.

Importantly, both female figures are intricately linked to horses, emphasising the role of these animals in symbolising power and sexuality. The absence of her mare, Lady Flirty, would make it challenging for the female character to evoke the English figure of Godiva. As a result, the incorporation of nonhuman animals, including ponies and horses, serves to empower Selina by nurturing sexual liberation and establishing associations with important female figures. And yet, upon closer inspection, one can identify certain cracks in the perception of this figure as empowering. Lady Godiva's riding naked is not a voluntary choice but the result of her husband's coercion. He imposes this condition on her as a requirement for him to lower the heavy tax burden borne by the suffering peasants. Consequently, if Selina is indeed embodying Lady Godiva, her empowerment appears, at best, ambiguous.

Furthermore, David perpetrates the heinous act of raping Selina in response to her frequent visits to the Carradynes, rather than passively awaiting his return from the North. Raping his wife appears as a calculated effort to dominate and exert control, mirroring the brutal process of taming. The novel's rich context, replete with scenes of horse breaking, compellingly draws a parallel between Selina's harrowing ordeal and the subjugation of these other-than-human creatures. Most notably, instead of capitulating to submission and resigning herself to the assault, Selina boldly shatters the shackles of her domestic confinement to pursue divorce — a decisive and resolute act emblematic of a unique form of empowerment. This parallelism, drawn from the world of "broken" horses, underscores her refusal to become a "broken" woman, reaffirming her status as an empowered individual who defied her abuser and escaped his clutches.

Subsequent to Selina's decision to file for divorce, she not only endures rape but also ongoing physical abuse at the hands of her soon-to-be ex-husband. In her determined effort to escape his relentless torment, she flees their shared residence and seeks sanctuary in Michael's protective embrace. While there is an improvement in her situation from her abusive husband, her reliance on another man for protection hints at an enduring need for male figures in her life. The novel portrays her divorce as a consequence of her refusal to relinquish her passion for riding, but it does not depict her as a fully independent woman. In fact, she isn't even legally divorced when she takes refuge with Michael, who ultimately becomes her romantic partner by the end of the novel (*The Lady* 413). In other words, the tendency observed by Singleton, where female protagonists and characters in equestrian fiction prioritise male romantic partners, is evident here. If Selina's rape motivates her divorce and her rejection of submission mirrored in the novel's horse imagery, her decision to find refuge with Michael prompts questions about Selina's ability to hold her own "reigns." Thus, Selina's sense of empowerment is fundamentally heteronormative and inherently precarious, as her dependence on men persists.

In exploring Catriona's potential future as a rider, the novel expostulates her remarkable competence in handling horses and ponies, surpassing both male and female individuals in various tasks. This recognition of her riding abilities can be seen as a form of empowerment, even within the predominantly male-dominated equestrian world. However, during a conversation with Mick, an Irish stable worker, the protagonist discusses her ease in riding the challenging horse named Temper, a name that already implies difficulty. In response, Mick comments, "[s]ome horses do better for girls, I gotta say that" (*The Lady* 24). This statement suggests that the protagonist's success in handling Temper is attributed solely to her gender, rather than acknowledging her inherent skills and developed abilities. By resorting to essentialist notions of "femininity," the text undermines the protagonist's true potential and diminishes her exceptional capability to handle difficult horses. Consequently, the empowering aspect of riding is diminished in this context due to the protagonist's gender, highlighting the restrictive nature of societal expectations.

The struggle to navigate the male-dominated equestrian world is further explored in Selina and Michael's discussion about the protagonist's future. While Michael may envision his daughter riding ponies as a leisurely pursuit, he hesitates when it comes to her managing horses in competitive settings. Selina, however, urges him to consider the latter possibility. The narrator reveals that "Michael allowed himself to be persuaded to

accept the idea. Trina was, he admitted privately, a superb young rider, with a great deal of sympathy and feel for her mount. Lacking a bit still in strength, but skilled beyond the standard of most adults. And she loved horses and Cornanagh as much as he did. *But a girl?*" (*The Lady* 346; emphasis added).

In contrast to Michael's reservations, Selina responds optimistically, suggesting that "[t]here are changes in the wind, Michael, changes in the wind" (*The Lady* 346). She acknowledges Catriona's potential to challenge traditional notions of womanhood and forge new paths. However, the text portrays Catriona as an exception, a unique case among her female peers. Unlike "other girls," she possesses exceptional qualities that enable her to defy patriarchal norms that confine women to the home, alongside their mothers and aunts. The core issue lies precisely here: the novel does not focus on empowering all women, riders or otherwise, but rather on empowering exceptional individuals, thus failing to change the status quo. Therefore, the empowering effect of equestrian riding in McCaffrey's novel is inherently limited. In essence, despite the explicit use of horses as instruments, the novel's "feminist" reconfiguration of Catriona's female identity is, at best, ambiguous, rendering the symbolic sacrifice of the equines "not worth it." Thus, the alleged feminist empowerment the protagonist may benefit from is rather unsatisfactory, limited by the constraints of the genre and the reality of 1970 Ireland.

Moreover, as previously discussed, the nonhuman characters in the novel serve primarily as extensions of the human character's experiences and traits. In the case of the female characters, the equines are instrumentalised to impart a sense of resistance against patriarchy. Yet, this approach has obvious limitations, revealing the fragility of such empowerment when it relies on the disempowerment of another group. In short, as our analysis of *The Lady* suggests, this dynamic is insufficient for both women and animals to resist oppression under androcentric and anthropocentric systems of thought.

While the analysis of Catriona's (dis)empowerment within the equestrian context sheds light on the limitations of McCaffrey's novel, the subsequent chapter delves into Anne Haverty's work, which offers a contrasting perspective. By exploring a different text, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding female empowerment and the role of literature in challenging societal norms. Through a comparative analysis, we can examine how another author approaches the theme of women's agency and the potential for broader social transformation. By transitioning to the next chapter, we embark on a fresh exploration that expands our understanding of the

multifaceted dynamics between literature, feminism, and social change in the context of contemporary Ireland.

3. Ewe and Tigers in Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* (1997)

> It is extremely problematic to examine colonialism from the point of view of sheep. But it is also problematic not to. (Franklin 18)

3.1. Introduction

As explained in the theoretical framework, sheep have played a significant role throughout Irish history, including during its period as a British colony. One reason may be, as Lucy Neave argues, that the colonisers viewed sheep as a symbol of progress in their colony, in addition to their function as a source of wool and capital (128–29). Despite the changes since Ireland achieved its independence at the beginning of the twentieth century, the sheep's importance persists. For instance, during the Celtic Tiger, sheep farms faced a deep crisis that resulted in many Irish leaving small farms to seek employment in cities (Dillon et al. 29). The sheep, therefore, not only witnessed Ireland's colonial past but also the socio-economic transformations of the 1990s.

Gerry Smyth explains that the Celtic Tiger is a period that spanned from 1994 to 2008, ending with the 2008 economic crisis. Although the circumstances are varied, experts in economics have pointed out two main characteristics of the period: foreign investment and attractively low corporation tax rates. Precisely huge foreign investment in Ireland — which accounted for over 90% of Ireland's exports — undermined domestic entrepreneurship (132). Notably, this "Celtic Tiger" nickname is not ideologically neutral. Dermot McAleese notes that the name blends "Celtic," in relation to a pre-Christian Ireland, and "Tiger," in a clear reference to the economic booms that took place in several Asian countries in previous decades. Tellingly, McAleese also explains that "the Tiger analogy can be misleading. For one thing the Asian Tigers started from a much lower income base than Ireland" (49). Given also the importance of colonial "orientalist" discourse of Asia, perhaps most exemplarily China in relation to the United Kingdom (Cheang 364), the use of this nickname to describe the Irish economic boom of the 1990s evokes Ireland's postcolonial status. Thus, the Tiger is not simply an economic boom but also a period in which Irish society underwent huge changes, affecting not only humans but members of other species, sheep, without totally erasing its colonial history.

This chapter focuses on the novel *One Day as a Tiger* (1997)[37] by Anne Haverty, an accomplished Irish novelist and poet born in 1959 in Holycross, County Tipperary. She received her education at Trinity College Dublin and the Sorbonne in Paris, earning a scholarship to the European Film School at Ebeltoft in Denmark in 1992. *ODT,* Haverty's first novel, won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature in 1997 and secured a spot on the shortlist for the Whitbread First Novel Award (Magan). Her literary repertoire includes other novels such as *The Far Side of a Kiss* (2000) — which explores themes of love, loss and the complexities of human relationships — and *The Free and Easy* (2006) — which examines the consequences of the Celtic Tiger in Dublin —, as well as two collections of poetry, *The Beauty of the Moon* (1999) and the more recent *A Break in the Journey* (2018). Beyond her literary pursuits, Haverty is also recognised for her biography of Constance Markievicz, a notable Anglo-Irish woman renowned for her commitment to socialism, feminism, and Irish nationalism. This biography, titled *Constance Markievicz: Irish Revolutionary,* was first published in 1988 and re-issued in 2016. Haverty's diverse career also includes journalism and scriptwriting, and she is an esteemed member of Aosdána ("Anne Haverty").

Martin Hawkins[38] is the first-person narrator of the novel, a man who leaves behind his academic career at Trinity College in Dublin to return to his family farm in County Tipperary after his parents die in a car accident. Upon his return, Martin finds himself in an uncertain and competitive relationship with his brother Pierce and becomes increasingly infatuated with Etti, his sister-in-law. Also, Martin buys a genetically modified sheep, Missy, and takes care of her as if she were his pet. Missy's modification contrasts with the setting of the novel, Fansha, a rural village in Ireland that is portrayed as being in decline. After abandoning his career in Dublin, the narrator seeks rural traditions and Irish "authenticity," but instead finds himself confronted with a world where most farms are full of sheep that have been genetically modified with human DNA. This introduces the speculative idea of genetic engineering, and the novel is built around the irony of the narrator's search, which ultimately leads him to a place that offers him no "authenticity" or "essence."

---

[37] Henceforth, *One Day as a Tiger* shall be referred to as *ODT*.

[38] It is worth noting that the protagonist is addressed as both Martin and Marty, depending on the character speaking to him. Nevertheless, the narrator initially introduces himself as Martin (*ODT* 2), so this thesis will consistently refer to him using this name.

As Martin's infatuation with Etti deepens throughout the novel, the two of them decide to travel to France with Missy in order to ensure her future at the Brigitte Bardot Foundation for the Welfare and Protection of Animals. However, they only make it as far as Deauville before their plans are derailed by Pierce's death in a car accident when driving to France to fetch them back. Moreover, Etti becomes pregnant on the trip, but the novel leaves readers with no information about the outcome of the pregnancy, leaving Etti vulnerable and uncertain about her future. Throughout the novel, Haverty explores themes of loss, identity, and belonging. Martin's return to the family farm is marked by a sense of loss and dislocation, as he struggles to come to terms with the deaths of his parents and find his place in a world that has changed since he left. This sense of dislocation is heightened by the presence of the genetically engineered sheep like Missy, who disrupts traditional notions of what it means to be human and animal. Ultimately, the novel is a meditation on the nature of identity and the ways in which we construct and define ourselves. In other words, Haverty's Celtic Tiger Fansha is a place where traditional notions of identity and belonging are being eroded, and where new forms of identity are emerging in their place.

Probably because of the very interesting themes the novel deals with, it has received certain academic attention. Anne Fogarty for instance argues that *ODT* contains elements of Gothic Irish fiction, including transgressive desires, exemplified by Martin's attraction to his sister-in-law, which "makes use of the perspective of the paranoiac outsider in order to broach taboo subjects" ("Uncanny Families" 70). The protagonist's obsessive and destructive behaviour can also be linked to the "uncanny," while the failed love affair between Martin and Etti as well as Pierce's death are explored (Fogarty, "Uncanny Families" 71). Moreover, the novel is not only influenced by the Gothic but also characterised by a strong sense of irony. Jason Matthew Buchanan's comparative analysis of Deidre Madden and Haverty's works contends that "[t]he literary response to speculation, found in analyses of Deidre Madden and Anne Haverty, frame speculation as a parody of communal life that eliminates any real interpersonal relationships in a wave of postmodern alienation" (273). Hence, the novel has garnered academic attention due to its exploration of gothic elements, transgressive desires, and themes of the uncanny, as well as its depiction of irony and postmodern alienation, making it a subject of scholarly analysis and discussion.

The significance of the Tiger in Haverty's novel has also garnered critical attention. Jason Matthew Buchanan notes that Martin and Etti's affair trip in the novel is financed

"[in] a very Tigerish style" by using Martin's "pristine and unused" credit cards. Buchanan argues that Martin believes that "both his material and familial transgressions will not have to be paid off in the future" (144). However, Martin pays a steep price for his actions with his brother's death in the car accident and Missy's death after Martin purposefully overdoses her. Similarly, Fogarty contends that Haverty's novel, along with the works of other authors such as Mary Morrissy, Jennifer Johnston, and Mary O'Donnell, "demonstrate that the dreams of unimpeded progress and triumphant innovation projected by a newly prosperous Celtic Tiger turn out to be nightmares when imaginatively restaged in their haunting fictions" ("Uncanny Families" 81). In this context, Jason Buchanan further criticises the dominant mode of capitalism in the novel's 1990s Ireland, highlighting that:

> [t]he motivations of their characters, and the larger critiques of their texts, form a critical reaction to an abstract universalism that seeks to equate everything to its value as a commodity. Essentially, they critique how the material conditions of Tiger Ireland, created to conform to a speculative economic program, produce physical and psychological damages that make creating a stable home a problematic endeavor. (145)

However, despite Buchanan's focus on the impact of the Celtic Tiger on human characters, the treatment of animals, particularly livestock, has been largely overlooked, resulting in a gap in understanding the significance of characters like Missy. Maureen O'Connor briefly mentions that Martin purchases Missy as a symbolic act of defiance against his brother Pierce ("Animals and Animality in Irish Fiction" 18), but this analysis provides only a superficial glimpse into the novel's exploration of animal themes. Therefore, a more comprehensive examination of the novel and the role of animals, particularly Missy, is necessary, especially considering that she is a genetically modified ewe infused with human DNA. It is noteworthy that the novel is set in the 1990s, a time when Dolly the sheep was cloned. Dolly

> not only embodies the legacies of embryology and reproductive biology but of selective breeding and the industrialization of livestock through pastoralism—a process central to the emergence of peoples, nations, colonies. and capital, and now—more evidently than before, but not for the first time, to the life sciences. Dolly also embodies the long history of animal domestication, as well as the more recent

histories of capital accumulation through selective breeding and enhanced national competitiveness through control of the germplasm—which can themselves be traced both to biblical themes (Jacob and his sheep) and to Neolithic innovations (companion animals). (Franklin 12)

Sarah Franklin's insights shed light on the complex interplay between science, history, and culture that underlies the representation of animals in literature, calling for a nuanced examination of their symbolic and metaphorical implications in Haverty's work. Therefore, the genetic modification of Missy, akin to Dolly's cloning, holds significant relevance within the novel and warrants further investigation.

Bearing all the above in mind, this chapter aims to investigate whether the physical proximity between Martin and Missy leads to a posthumanist form of ethics or if it rather reinforces hierarchical forms of oppression. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the role of anthropocentric necroeconomics in farmed animals and the potential for these nonhumans to escape oppression by escaping the categorisation of "farm animal." The second section delves into the intertwining of Irish colonial history with both human and ewe and explores how Missy's hybridity conflicts with the hyperseparation between the species. Finally, the third section centres on the rivalry in masculinity between Martin and his brother, examining the repercussions of this dynamic on the two primary female characters, Etti and Missy.

3.2. Anthropocentric Necroeconomics

The 1990s to 2008 economic boom in Ireland, known as the Celtic Tiger,[39] is a pivotal moment in recent Irish history that marked a dramatic shift. As Gerry Smyth notes, after being a "drastically underachieving state throughout much of the twentieth century, the Republic of Ireland experience[d] a miracle during the 1990s which saw it become one of the world's most successful economies, as well as one of Europe's wealthiest countries" (132). The economic change in Ireland was profound and far-reaching, impacting all aspects of Irish society. The Republic of Ireland was no longer subject to

---

[39] The Celtic Tiger was first coined by the American banker Kevin Gardiner in 1994 (Smyth 132), after which the term was popular enough to be widely used both by journalists and the media.

decades of austerity, and its success in the global economy solidified its place as a significant player on the world stage.

The rise of neoliberalism in Ireland during this period was a contributing factor to the country's prosperity. As Jason Matthew Buchanan notes, the Tiger "was born from a neoliberal emphasis on deregulated markets" that encouraged "an influx of foreign investment that refashioned the economic and cultural landscape of Ireland" (138). Moreover, the waning moral authority of the Catholic Church in Irish society during the 1980s and 1990s due to various corruption scandals further facilitated the rise of neoliberalism (Smyth 134).

Fatmir Haskaj links neoliberalism to necropolitics in his instance on the need to acknowledge the role of living dead subjects in neoliberal economies because "[o]nly by resituating death and killing as part of a neoliberal regime can we begin to unravel the ways in which death and dying have become profitable ventures tied to an entire economy and logic" (1152). Hence, this section analyses first farms as "war zones" within the necropolitics of 1990s Ireland and then turns to an analysis of the reconfiguration of Missy into a pet. Moreover, I seek to discern whether being a pet allows Missy to escape the fate of her peers and avoid being regarded as a precarious living dead.

3.2.1. Farms as War Zones

Amanda Sperry states that certain Irish myths like Táin Boo Cúailnge and the Táin Bó Flidhais — which are the cattle raid stories of the Ulster Cycle — centre around the role of cattle in defining wealth and social status in Ireland. These myths not only hold cattle in high regard but also depict them as a form of currency (Sperry 45). Nerys T. Patterson further highlights the importance of cattle in defining Ireland's social hierarchy. He points out that cattle played a critical role in determining the social status of kings (15) and also had a profound impact on the Irish landscape, which, Patterson explains, was once full "of heavy forest, natural grassland in some coastal areas, and (partly as a result of cultivation), extensive interior bog-lands. The biggest areas of cultivable land were scattered" (122). As Sperry notes, cattle often served as a symbol of economic wealth, a significance particularly pronounced in colonised contexts like Ireland (45). In other words, farm animals have often been exploited to gain social status.

Furthermore, farms can be seen as war zones, as they are crucial contributors to the institutionalisation of death of other species, given the fate that befalls the animals they

breed and subsequently supply to slaughterhouses. As Iñaki Robles Elong and María Ruiz Carreras contend, "[s]i Agamben entendió que los lugares de excepción eran aquellos donde se suspende la ley (2003), el matadero no queda lejos de ser entendido así porque convierte la vida de los animales no humanos en nuda vida donde los humanos se reservan el derecho de darles muerte y lo aplican" (6).[40] Robles Elong and Ruiz Carreras further contend that what distinguishes slaughterhouses from concentration camps like the Nazi regime's is that "los mataderos se encuentran normalizados hasta tal punto que lo que ocurre intramuros hace plausible una institucionalización de las formas de la excepción de dar muerte" (6).[41] As Chloë Tylor explains, farms can be seen as war zones that can be compared to "the death camps of intrahuman wars" (540). Consequently, farms found in most countries today, including Ireland, are sites required for the functioning of anthropocentric necropolitics. As a result, animals bred in these farms are often reduced to the status of "living dead," inhabiting a liminal state that permits their owners to exploit them without any. This underscores how the humanimal relationship can be reduced to one of power and control, where animals are treated as disposable commodities. By exploiting and killing animals on farms and slaughterhouses, humans are complicit in a system of violence that not only harms animals but also perpetuates a culture of violence towards other human beings.

The farms depicted in the novel appear to be influenced by the socio-economic changes that arose during the economic boom of the 1990s. The text speculates about Missy's genetic modification as a potential source of profit. The modification of these ewes may remind readers of the cloned sheep Dolly, who "belongs to a familiar descent pattern of agricultural experimentation in pursuit of new forms of technological assistance to reproduction in order to generate products for new commercial markets" (Franklin 203). Thus, Missy and other modified ewes can be seen as mere commodities for new markets, in this case, for farmers seeking to survive the adverse effects of the economic boom on small farmers. The text therefore examines the use of high-tech sheep in the context of the economic boom.

---

[40] "If Agamben understood that places of exception were those where the law is suspended (2003), the slaughterhouse is not far from being understood in this way because it converts the life of nonhuman animals into bare life where humans reserve the right to kill them and apply it" (6) (my translation).

[41] "Slaughterhouses are standardised to such an extent that what happens inside the walls makes an institutionalisation of the forms of the exception of killing plausible" (6) (my translation).

In the novel's rural setting, the narrator's discussion of farms is inevitable, given that the story revolves around his return to his village after years of living in Dublin. One example of Martin's comment on farms is his mention of his brother Pierce's business when he reflects that "[t]he lambing was over for another year" (*ODT* 48). Although this may seem like an innocuous comment, it is highly symbolic. It is not only that the lambing underscores the commodification of animal life and that the text highlights how animals are viewed solely as products for new markets, rather than living beings deserving of respect and protection, but also how Pierce's ability to raise genetically modified sheep, a product of the economic boom of the 1990s, has enabled the narrator's brother to achieve economic success. Pierce's farm serves as a symbol of his economic growth and represents the period in which it occurred, which continued to be founded on the death of living animals. Pierce's economic success, as evidenced by his ability to afford extravagant dinners and support his stay-at-home wife and brother (*ODT* 195), is therefore representative of the economic changes in rural Ireland during the 1990s. However, the farm's success is also based on the slaughter of farmed animals, which are reduced to the status of living dead. The novel does not depict any character protesting against this situation, which highlights the normalisation of their slaughter and the perpetuation of anthropocentric practices that support such economic "success." The narrator's disconnection from the plight of the farmed animals in his village is a notable aspect of the novel. Martin justifies his position by explaining that these animals were not his responsibility, as he states, "[t]hese animals were not in my care. I had little feeling for them […]. Maybe I was distancing myself from the pitifulness of their destinies" (*ODT* 48). Martin's detachment from the animals is attributed to his lack of proximity and involvement with them. To evaluate the narrator's sentiment towards nonhuman entities, it is worth examining his relationship with Missy, especially given that "Marty's identity is admittedly re-evaluated through accessing an ethos fully conditioned by empathy" (Paraschiv 168).

The introduction of Missy in the novel takes place in the Institute, a location where genetically modified sheep are bred and sold. The portrayal of the place is as follows: "[t]his was Missy's birthplace. Progressive. Tidy, scientific, more attractive to humans than to animals. Devoted to life certainly, rather than death, in the short term at least, still it reminded me of a progressive concentration camp in some pastoral spot, like Poland" (*ODT* 22). This description portrays the Institute as a place that values life, which creates a stark contrast with the narrator's comparison of the place to a "concentration camp" and

Poland, possibly a reference to Auschwitz and the like. As such, the Institute plays an important role in the necropolitical system, given that the destiny of these genetically modified livestock, including Missy, is to serve human interests, with death as their obvious fate.

As mentioned above, the Institute, with its unseen scientists modifying sheep foetuses, bears an uncanny resemblance to concentration camps, evoking the Nazis' experiments with genetics.[42] In this regard, Arianna Ferrari's analysis of the connection between eugenics and genetic modification of animals and selective breeding reveals that "[t]he selection of animal properties in agriculture was conducted with the same methods as the selection of desirable traits in human beings; therefore, the agricultural context of this association played a crucial role in the development and promotion of eugenic research" (21). Nevertheless, the novel lacks a detailed explanation of the experiments on these sheep or their secondary effects. This lack of detail may stem from the narrator's reluctance to empathise with the modified farmed animals. According to Ferrari, "[g]enetic engineering of animals is connected with the suffering and use of many (other) animals in order to breed transgenic ones, and it still relies on imprecise techniques often associated with detrimental unpredictable effects on the phenotype" (17). Therefore, the narrator's emotional detachment from these sheep might result from his self-preservation instinct against sharing their fate or his overall lack of empathy for the modified animals. Either way, this detachment potentially shapes his interactions with other animals, including Missy.

The discussion of farms and farmed animals in *ODT* serves not only to present its rural setting but also to underscore the link between science, life, and death in the context of genetic modification. The Institute, an establishment dedicated to eugenic experimentation, can be construed as an exploration of the predicament endured by farmed animals who are reduced to a state of existence akin to living death, ultimately destined for slaughter without encountering any legal consequences. This highlights the notion that scientific progress does not invariably translate into the welfare of all individuals, particularly in the presence of oppressive hierarchies that facilitate sanctioned death. Thus, whether the narrator decides to distance himself from the suffering of these animals to protect himself or because of his lack of empathy, the text

---

[42] Patterson retrieves Walther Darré, member of the S.S. stating that "[o]ur nation's only true possession is its good blood. All eugenic progress can only begin by eliminating inferior blood" (107).

shows the intricate interplay among science, death, and entrenched oppressive hierarchies.

During the narrator's first visit to the Institute, the salesman extols the virtues of purchasing genetically modified sheep, claiming that their modification makes them highly resistant to common ovine diseases. In addition, he asserts that these sheep are "what you could nearly call a trouble-free sheep" (*ODT* 23) and that they are "impervious to sickness, escapes, or other mishaps" (*ODT* 23), thereby embodying the neoliberal ideal of maximum efficiency. This assertion resonates with Pierce's willingness to embrace change and his interest in learning about these sheep. Thus, it is unsurprising that Pierce and the salesman discuss the price of each ewe, with the salesman defending their worth and the narrator noting that he was "[t]he honest salesman" (*ODT* 24). Therefore, the portrayal of genetically modified sheep aligns with the neoliberal ideal of maximum productivity.

Moreover, upon closer observation, the narrator notes that the ewes used to perpetuate the Institute's business are forced to give birth at a young age and separated from their offspring[43] for economic gain. As the salesman acknowledges, "'[t]hat young, they're inclined to reject [their offspring]. Don't know what they're meant to be doing with them. Only young ones themselves'" (*ODT* 24). The Institute, therefore, becomes a high-tech site of necropolitics, where the oppressed Other is fated to die at the whim of the farmers who buy and systematically exploit them. In short, *ODT* exposes the ways in which humans instrumentalise and mistreat other species for their own convenience without considering the impact on these animals' lives. The treatment of Missy and other sheep in the novel underscores the need for greater ethical consideration in our treatment of nonhuman animals. It accentuates the significance of acknowledging their intrinsic value, worth and rights. In this light, the modified sheep do not necessarily disrupt the *status quo*, and so Martin's potential — and often contradictory — empathy for Missy becomes even more worthy of examination, which will be the focus of the next section.

---

[43] This moving the sheep from their mothers to humans may be a reference to the baby taken by Calepine from his animal parent to a human one in Edmund Spenser's "The Legend of Courtesie" (Stenner 174), further exposing the grotesque relation forced upon Missy by Martin.

3.2.2. Pet Sheep

The figure of the pet, as opposed to that of farmed animals, provides a means of examining the interaction between humans and other animals within the same household. In this regard, Margo DeMello provides an insightful analysis of pets and their relation to their owners. DeMello retrieves historian Keith Thomas' historical account of the pet in England between 1400 and 1800, providing a definition of the pet as "an animal that was named, allowed into the house, and never eaten," a definition that DeMello defends to fit most definitions of pets around the world (*Animals and Society* 165). Working from this basic definition, DeMello explains that pets serve two primary purposes: hunting and companionship (*Animals and Society* 168). However, the institution of the pet often involves human domination, which can be seen as a means of soothing ontological anxieties. Hence, the importance of examining Haverty's novel in order to discern whether Missy is a merely instrumental pet or rather a companion species who leads Martin to a posthumanist understanding of reality and, perhaps, liberates Missy from her status as a living dead. By examining Missy's treatment and Martin's attitudes towards her, we can gain insight into the humanimal relationship and its potential to challenge anthropocentric hierarchies.

Right from the outset, Missy is depicted as fragile and on the verge of death, which could echo her origin in a place that anticipates death. Despite the so-called "enhancements" bestowed upon the sheep, their destiny remains sealed — they are fated to be slaughtered and transformed into "meat" for human consumption — and so their lives are permeated with death for the benefit of humans. The narrator's initial concern for Missy's well-being is evident when he brings her inside the house to keep her warm as she is too weak to sleep outside with the other modified sheep on his brother's farm. Martin reflects that "she might have died in the night" had he not carried her into the house (*ODT* 45). Missy's physical weakness may not only serve as a representation of her status as a living dead but also underscores the disposability of farmed animals. However, the human-centric view of farmed animals is highlighted by Martin's least favourite neighbour, who suggests that the narrator should slaughter Missy, saying: "'[s]laughter her. That's my advice. Sure you'd get a dinner or two anyway out of her if the factory wouldn't have her'" (*ODT* 63). The neighbour's suggestion to slaughter Missy reveals a cruel — and naturalised — disregard for her individuality and her right to live, further underscoring the text's critique of the human-centric perspective towards animals.

In other words, the text presents a powerful commentary on the exploitation of animals in industrial agriculture, exposing how commonly farm animals, including sheep, are regarded as mere "meat." Moreover, by presenting a modified ewe who is far from the perfect ideal of neoliberal efficiency, the text exposes precisely the falsity of this model.

On the other hand, the narrator's decision to bring Missy into the house and treat her as a pet companion may be seen as a potential resistance to this extreme instrumentalisation of the modified sheep at the Institute. At the outset of Haverty's novel, the narrator resides alone in a small village house. He initially refrains from bringing Missy into the house, but, after this first encounter with the neighbouring farmer, he ultimately relents, providing her with food, shelter, and constant human companionship (*ODT* 70). Although Missy does not serve the traditional purpose of a hunting animal, she nonetheless fulfils the role of a human companion. The narrator assigns her a name, and he never mentions any desire to eat her, even after her death. He allows her to enter the house and insists that she sleeps inside. The sheep only leaves the house when the narrator decides to walk her around the village or on their final journey to France. Through this process, the narrator converts Missy into a pet companion, mitigating the loneliness he experiences as a result of living alone without other humans.

However, this relationship is not without its problems. It has been argued that pets can be perceived as substitutes for human children (Veevers 11), and this can also be spotted in the case of Missy. The narrator's treatment of this ewe reveals a close connection between her "petness" and "childness." The text explores this connection through instances in which the narrator sings nursery rhymes to her, such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb," which he titles "Marty Had a Little Lamb" (*ODT* 46). Moreover, the narrator describes his feelings for Missy as "affection, simple, tender, *paternal*" (*ODT* 98; emphasis added). This paternal love is demonstrated, in part, through the narrator's use of "an expensive shampoo" to bathe the ewe (*ODT* 101), investing significant resources to groom the ewe much like a beloved child or pet. Overall, such examples suggest that the narrator's treatment of Missy as a pet fulfils not only the role of human companionship but also satisfies the human need to assume a paternal role.

Although the way in which Martin treats the ewe may not necessarily indicate that she serves as an actual substitute for a human child, Missy shares a commonality with children in that they depend on their human caregivers for fundamental necessities such as sustenance, hydration, shelter, and medical attention. While it is accurate to say that the narrator employs Missy as a means to alleviate his solitude and seclusion, thus

establishing a mutual need, he emphasises that Missy is wholly reliant on him for her survival, marking a stark difference between the adult human and ewe. At the start of the novel, the narrator states that "[s]oon she learned to trust me, to depend on me" (*ODT* 46). While this type of dependency does not inevitably result in an anthropocentric hierarchy or the exploitation of Missy as a pet, it is revealing that the narrator emphasises this one-sided dependence. When he reflects on the interactions Missy has with other characters, he realises that he is the only character with whom the ewe interacts, apart from Etti, albeit in those rare moments he is always present. The narrator concludes that Missy would never be able to rebel against him if he did anything morally wrong as he eventually does because "[a]fter all, she had no one else, good or bad, to depend on, or to forgive" (*ODT* 71). The narrator's assertion that Missy would never rebel against him highlights a power dynamic in their relationship, which is particularly problematic when considering the fact that the narrator ultimately kills her.

The isolation of the ewe is also apparent when Etti first enters the house and tries to pet Missy, who is terrified because "[s]he was not accustomed to the presence of anyone but myself in the house, to anyone but me making an interest in her" (*ODT* 107). As per the narrator's account, Missy exclusively engages with humans who enter the house, with her interactions limited to Etti and Pierce during their sporadic visits. Through this casual comment, the text reveals the radical isolation of the ewe who, because of Martin's desire, interacts with no one, human or otherwise. Furthermore, the narrator muses on love and whether the ewe loves him or not, concluding that "[s]he had little choice, I admit, but to love me. Who has the prisoner to turn to in the end, only his keeper, or the prey to its hunter?" (*ODT* 99). This passage unveils the narrator's dominion over Missy, who is to him more a prisoner or prey than a genuine companion. The fact that Martin owns, isolates, and controls Missy reinforces anthropocentrism and longstanding dichotomies between humans and nonhumans as well as between owners and pets.

The relationship between Martin and Missy is heavily characterised by power dynamics, which can be observed in small details like the chocolate that the narrator gives her. Martin reinforces his role as a father figure to Missy by giving her chocolate, which he hides for her to find and eat, just as his parents did with him and his brother when they were children. However, it is important to note that the narrator's control over Missy's chocolate consumption highlights his domination over her. He enjoys controlling her movements and consumption (*ODT* 100), which may echo the way in which "slave

owners fettered their slaves for the same reason herders fettered animals — to limit their mobility" (C. Patterson 27). Although one might argue that this behaviour reflects the normal dependency of children on adults, the narrator's enjoyment of controlling Missy's movements and consumption reveals the danger beneath the apparent paternal and loving surface. Thus, the narrator's anthropocentric attitude is exposed as he turns Missy into a kind of slave, disempowering her and further constructing a hierarchical difference.

The dominance of the ewe is not limited to arguably innocent chocolate treats, however. The physical domination of Missy is established early on in the novel when the narrator and his brother force her into a car along with other purchased sheep to be transported to the farm. Here, Missy is so distressed that she looks at the seller for help in her despair, as she is "pinning to the point of despair for the fellow [sheepman] at the Institute" (*ODT* 45). After this beginning, Missy is repeatedly physically dominated and forced to act not for her own benefit, but for Martin's. For example, Martin locks Missy inside the house despite her desire to contemplate the flowers outside when he goes to the bar with his friends. In his own words, he would not let her "whimpering" stop him from following his "usual habits" (*ODT* 82). On one of the rare occasions in which the narrator takes Missy with him outside the house, he carries her in a basket despite her clear dislike of it:

> She struggled desperately to get out of the basket. "Off on a little spin, Missy," I wheedled. I clapped the lid shut and fastened it securely. Ignoring the fact that she was terrified of strange noises and especially of traffic, I wedged the basket into the small space behind my seat on the tractor. (*ODT* 148)

The human character acknowledges but disregards the ewe's terror. Although Irvine and Cilia contend that the dependency of nonhuman companions on their human counterparts entails obligations in the sense that "[p]ets shape the 'doing' of household routines by waking their human family members up in the morning or by demonstrating their desire for food, walks, or play" (4), this is not reflected in Haverty's novel. The narrator makes no attempt to soothe the sheep, leaving her in the dark with no possibility of escape as long as he is with her, as if she were a prisoner. Furthermore, although the basket was intended for her transport so that both human and sheep could visit a human neighbour, as soon as the possibility of being seen with the basket and the sheep arises, he decides to hide it "under the shade of the tree" (*ODT* 151). Similarly, even though this decision

makes him feel guilty, he does not shorten the visit to check on her (*ODT* 156). Moreover, when he returns with the basket, he finds that Missy is missing and blames her for escaping, wondering "[w]hat in God's name had been in her mind as she struggled in panic to be free?" (*ODT* 161). Therefore, it is evident that the ewe's plight goes beyond being forced into a basket despite her protests, and the protagonist's frustration with her attempted escape. He fails to recognise that the sheep's desperate attempt to flee is a direct result of his own actions, demonstrating a lack of awareness and accountability for the harm he has caused.

In a similar vein, the narrator is convinced by another male farmer in the village to administer Ivomec, a medicine for deworming nonhuman animals, to Missy, despite the lack of any evidence indicating her need for it. In fact, it is explicitly mentioned that her genetic modification makes her "impervious to sickness, escapes, or other mishaps" (*ODT* 23). Therefore, deworming a sheep who cannot fall ill and seldom leaves the house hardly qualifies as an urgent necessity. Moreover, the ewe is far from collaborative. Because of her resistance and angry glare, he feels "outrage" and forcefully "prised her mouth open, stuck the tube in, and *shot* the stuff into her. This is how you deal with a stupid sheep that won't take its medicine" (*ODT* 68; emphasis added). To make matters worse, after Missy vomits, the narrator insists on "teach[ing] her some lesson" for not complying with him as the dominant human and insists on administering the medicine. The use of violent language such as "prised," "stuck," and "shot" in describing this scene, along with the narrator's lack of sympathy towards Missy's terror, suggests that, even if she had actually needed the deworming medicine, he is more interested in asserting his dominance in the anthropocentric hierarchy that he contributes to. He treats the situation as a battle to win and Missy as the enemy to defeat, as he acknowledges in the novel (*ODT* 69). Thus, Missy is used by the narrator to reinforce his discursive superiority by otherising and dominating her as the nonhuman Other.

Martin also employs Missy as a symbol of innocence. As Sarah Franklin argues, the sheep is a widely recognised Christian symbol — and a sacrificial figure — that embodies "human innocence, Christian piety, and abject subordination" (35). This representation of the sheep as a figure of innocence is also present in early modern literature, where "sheep represent the purest form of innocent life, destined for service to humanity" (Stenner 171). In the case of Martin, he emphasises Missy's innocence throughout the novel, but especially when he is with Etti, probably because the ewe is the excuse to justify that the attraction between Martin and his sister-in-law is purely platonic.

If Missy is the symbol of innocence, it is logical to note that Martin sees her as the enemy once Martin and Etti's relationship becomes more physical. At this time of the novel, the narrator complains about Missy's interference. For instance, during one of Etti's visits, the narrator notes that Missy seeks Etti's attention. While it might seem like a perfectly natural behaviour for the sheep, the narrator suddenly becomes filled with resentment towards her. He is exasperated by her gaze and pitiful appearance, as he was "suddenly filled with resentment towards her. The blatantly importunate way she was gazing up at Etti, and her ragged and pathetic appearance [..] made me mad with exasperation" (*ODT* 132). Interestingly, once the human protagonists embrace each other, Missy becomes an adversary, an oppressor, and an unwelcome presence in the house. According to the narrator, "[a]t this time, I was seeing her as an oppressive, accusatory and needy presence in the house. Her predicament left me in a state of discomfort and resentment. It was a responsibility I wanted to evade" (*ODT* 136). Therefore, Missy is the embodiment of innocence, and her presence continuously reminds Martin of his wrongdoing as well as his ethical obligations towards his brother, whom he will betray by engaging in an affair with his sister-in-law.

Upon the second physical encounter between the two human characters in the novel, Missy is physically present, acting as a barrier between them, despite the fact that the touch is not explicitly sexual. Towards the end of the novel, the ewe is seen as a nuisance, as she seemingly prevents the relationship from becoming more intimate. This becomes apparent when Etti arrives at Martin's home looking white-faced, and "picked Missy up on to her lap and Missy lay in against her with a sigh of happiness" (*ODT* 217), a gesture that hinders any further intimate touch, at least temporarily. After Missy goes missing and the protagonist kisses Etti, he remarks that the possibility of Missy being lost is of little concern to him, as long as he can consummate his relationship with Etti. As he states, "the field might be Missy's grave was as nothing to me if it could be mine and Etti's bed" (*ODT* 169). The ewe's function as an obstacle to the relationship is further emphasised when the protagonist's kiss is interrupted by the re-appearance of Missy (*ODT* 166). Some time after this interruption, the protagonist acknowledges Missy's role in attracting Etti to him (*ODT* 183) but fails to consider the ethical and social implications of their relationship.

Martin's initial care for Missy is short-lived as he begins to disregard her life as a sheep when his love interest, Etti, starts visiting his house. During one of Etti's early visits, Missy flees and hides under the coach, but Etti approaches her even though she

"was retreating to press herself against the wainscot" (*ODT* 107). Despite being aware of the ewe's terror, the narrator does not stop Etti's actions, showing that he considers Missy to be less important than Etti not only because he is sexually attracted to the woman but also because Missy is a nonhuman animal. After this moment, the narrator progressively attends to Missy's needs less and less. When he realises that he "had neglected to bathe her" he shouts at her to get away so that her smell does not bother him. Her reaction is one of terror, and so she hides under the coach. The narrator's reaction is to acknowledge that he should console her: "I knew I should go to her and console her as best I could. But I did not […] I should go to Missy, my shame told me. But the sympathetic impulse was absent in me" (*ODT* 132). Similar to the seller at the Institute, who laughs uncomfortably after he explains the young age of the ewes, seemingly to acknowledge the cruelty in exploiting these animals, the narrator is also conscious of his unethical treatment of the sheep. Despite his attempts to distance himself from Missy's situation, he cannot help but feel guilty for his behaviour. For instance, on one of the rare occasions when he decides to spend some time with Missy after Etti and he are already in a closer relationship, he states that: "Missy was sitting up on the rug, with an expression of passing harsh judgement on me from a safe distance" (*ODT* 145). Likewise, he states that he started to leave Missy alone at home, where she would "stew in her chosen juice of moroseness and accusing hostility" (*ODT* 137). Thus, the ewe becomes a blank canvas in which he projects his guilt so that he does not have to deal with such complicated emotions. The narrator's unethical treatment of Missy underscores the anthropocentric perspective that allows humans to treat nonhuman animals as mere commodities, without regard for their ethical needs.

Martin's neglect of the sheep's welfare is increasingly evident in the latter part of the narrative. For instance, when the narrator drives to the beach on impulse, he leaves Missy locked inside the house with no entertainment. While observing the sea, he recalls Missy's "once-bright eyes since her stubborn retreat into melancholy. I was quickly able however to relegate this discomfiting thought to the veiled corners of my mind" (*ODT* 140). Despite recognising the emotional distress that he causes the ewe, Martin chooses to ignore it and shifts his focus elsewhere. Furthermore, when Missy goes missing, Etti assists Martin in searching for her, but they eventually give up and accept that she is lost, with Etti saying "'[m]aybe it's for the best'" (*ODT* 165), implying that their responsibility towards Missy will cease if she disappears. Notably, Martin's response to this suggestion is physical: he kisses Etti, and they become intimate. As we read, "I caught her hand and

placed it in my hair and bent down and kissed her on her upturned mouth. And her eyes were shaded and her lips soft and yielding and our bodies pressed close warm and fevered in the damp chill of the field" (*ODT* 165). Missy's role in the narrative primarily revolves around facilitating physical closeness between the two human characters. Consequently, she is reduced to a mere object, existing solely for the convenience of the narrator, who neglects her inherent value. The celebration of her absence, as a result, underscores Martin's deficiency in ethical accountability and his anthropocentric worldview.

The novel's climactic scene is reached when Martin and Etti abscond to France following Etti's suggestion to take Missy to a sanctuary run by a woman named Brigitte Bardot[44] (*ODT* 219), an unmistakable reference to the French activist. In their haste to leave, the narrator and his sister-in-law opt not to inform Etti's husband, Pierce, and instead choose to bring Missy to the sanctuary straight away, as per Etti's insistence to "go now" (*ODT* 219). Despite the characters' ironic insistence that the trip to France is a mission to take Missy to safety, they still pretend to be a young married couple (*ODT* 227). While one could argue that this pretence is purely functional, the narrator is pleased to observe that they look "like a young pair at the commencement of their holidays" (*ODT* 224). While still in France, the narrator proposes that they elope. Interestingly, Etti responds by saying, "'[y]ou know I can't elope with you, Marty. You have no prospects'" (*ODT* 252). Therefore, both characters use Missy as a tool to avoid facing the reality of their actions, possibly because their elopement is not feasible in the long term in pragmatic terms.

The narrator's plan to use Missy is not flawless. To maintain the illusion that they are not having an affair, they must keep Missy close to them, which requires taking care of her. However, from the moment they embark on their trip to France, Missy is systematically ignored, even while still in Ireland. Although the narrator fears that the way they are treating her may result in her death, and so "there would be no reason then to drive to Provence in search of Brigitte Bardot" (*ODT* 228–29), the human characters agree that the best solution is to dose her with sleeping pills at every meal, reducing her to a passive symbol of innocence to justify their actions. This allows them to avoid

---

[44] This extratextual reference might point to the Foundation Brigitte Bardot. It was established in 1987 to fight for animal rights ("Brigitte Bardot"). A controversial figure, as she has made racist, anti-Islam and arguably homophobic comments, she is nonetheless an ongoing widely-known figure in popular imagery easily recognised by most readers.

acknowledging their ethical accountability towards the narrator's brother, Pierce. However, this use of the sheep proves ineffective in protecting the characters from the consequences of their actions, as Pierce dies in a car accident while driving to France to "fetch [them] back" (*ODT* 227). The utilisation of Missy as a shield by the two humans is then revealed to be feeble and contrived.

This exploitation is exemplified not only by Martin's desire for dominance but also byhis desire to have sex with his sister-in-law while pretending he is not sleeping with his sister-in-law. Missy's demise unveils a disheartening truth: despite her transition from farmed animal to Martin's pet, she never truly eluded the grip of necropolitics. She had previously been relegated to a state resembling the living dead within the Institute. In this condition, she could be exploited and subjected to oppression, and eventually, she would be sold to the slaughterhouses to be turned into meat. After he overdoes her with sleeping pills, the narrator leaves her body in the following way:

> I would have liked to bury her deep and safe in the ground but I had no implement with which to dig a hole. I laid her down in a hollow under a tree and covered her over with sheaves of grass, in the hope that she would have disappeared into the earth before some various farm dog or bird of prey could find her. This hope, I knew, was vain. (*ODT* 261)

It is noteworthy that the narrator's initial excuse for not burying Missy is his lack of digging tools, despite having ample funds from his credit cards to purchase them or using his own hands. This ironic excuse highlights that the narrator's choice not to bury Missy, like all his other interactions with her, is not due to a lack of alternatives. Despite his excuses, he admits that it is "vain," revealing his lack of belief in his own lies. The absence of burial for Missy aligns with Ivy D. Collier's analysis of nonhuman cemeteries and burial practices, in which Collier concludes that "most animals found buried throughout human history were not buried as companions and were not buried in graves: they were buried in pits" (3). The narrator's failure to even bury Missy in a pit underscores his refusal to recognise her value as a living being. Instead, the narrator sacrifices Missy, the living dead sheep, to maintain human supremacy and control. As Carol J. Adams observes, such symbolism based on killing animals perpetuates politically charged images of absorption, control, and violence (244), evident not only in the treatment of farm animals but also in the narrator's decision to overdose Missy.

Moreover, Martin's lack of empathy also results in a lack of grievability in line with DeMello's denunciation of the fact that "[m]ost animals, who die in numbers that defy the imagination, don't live grievable lives, and thus are not mourned when they die" ("Introduction" vii). Missy is then an ungrievable subject who, despite having spent months outside the Institute, has remained a farmed animal that can be disposed of without ethical consequences. This exposes the anthropocentric understanding of animals prevalent in 1990s Ireland, as well as Martin's anthropocentrism, despite his attempts to deny it. It is not only that farms are war zones in line with Mbembe's necropolitics, but also that the narrator extends this zone to his own house, exposing that farmed animals do not cease to be treated as such only because they are outside farms, like Missy. Thus, the text denounces the all-permeating effect of necropolitics in 1990s Ireland and its effects on other species. In short, *ODT* explores themes of humanimal relationships and power dynamics while exposing the anthropocentric bias that oppresses both farmed animals and pets, revealing that the physical proximity to humans is not enough to guarantee their status as ethical subjects. It is in this anthropocentric context in which the nonhuman is rendered as living dead and so easily disposed of that I now turn to examine the role of the sheep in the always-changing notions of Irishness.

3.3. The Human and the Colonised Other

Rosi Braidotti contends that humanism is articulated around the long-discussed concept of the "human" in which any other entity is discursively otherised. As Braidotti explains, "[a]ppeals to the "human" are always discriminatory: they create structural distinctions and inequalities among different categories of humans, let alone between humans and nonhumans" ("A Theoretical Framework" 35). Not only does humanism defend an idealised model of what a human being should be, but it also marginalises those who fail to achieve this model, facilitating their oppression. According to Cary Wolfe, the discourse on animality, defined as "the use of that constellation of signifiers to structure how we address others of *whatever* sort (not just nonhuman animals)" is one of the most deeply rooted aspects of western societies ("Introduction" x). This discourse, based on the anthropocentric human/nonhuman dichotomy, has historically provided a justification for the exploitation of the "inferior" counterpart and the creation of the human/nonhuman ethical divide by otherising nonhuman animals. Interestingly, Wolfe argues that it is not only nonhuman animals who have been otherised because of their species but also certain

groups of humans who have been denied "humanity" ("Introduction" x). Hence, it is unsurprising to read that discursive animality is always "a raced and gendered charge specific to a time and place" (Nath 258). In other words, the otherisation of nonhuman animals within anthropocentrism has established the foundation for the marginalisation of any group of humans deemed "subhuman" or not human enough. For example, British cultural imperialism dehumanised colonised peoples, including the Irish. One passage often used to exemplify this is Charles Kingsley's letter to his wife in 1860, in which he describes the Irish as follows:

> I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country... [T]o see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black one would not see it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours. (111)

This radically dehumanising description of the Irish exemplifies the dehumanisation that often accompanied British imperialism. This practice helped to justify English colonialism, as Ireland was perceived as different from the "norms" of Lowland England, resulting in the Irish being regarded as "filthy, rude, barbaric, wild beasts" and so as lacking "civilisation" and the implicit "humanity" (175). This dehumanisation is symptomatic of anthropocentrism, which not only denigrates certain categories of people but also animals. Kingsley's letter is then not only significant because it shows the anthropocentric foundation of racism, but also because, as DeMello denounces, it exposes that dehumanising language "denigrates certain categories of people — women and minorities, primarily — but they denigrate animals as well" (*Animals and Society* 302). Examining the role of the "human" in *ODT*, this section aims to determine whether the ewe Missy is turned into a colonised Other by the narrator and whether her human DNA enables her to escape her categorisation as the Other and the subsequent oppression. In other words, this section seeks to determine whether Missy's liminal status as a sheep-human hybrid enables her to attain a semblance of "humanity," thereby shielding her from the process of othering, oppression, and exploitation driven by colonial discourse. Alternatively, it delves into the possibility that she represents yet another manifestation of British colonial discourse being perpetuated.

3.3.1. Who Gets to Be Human?

During the economic boom of the 1990s, Ireland emerged as the Silicon Valley of Europe. It focused on high-tech sectors and forged local economic linkages, which proved to be a winning formula in Ireland's economic growth (Green, 2001, as cited in Ó Gráda 9). This period saw a high level of optimism due to the significant benefits it brought to a large number of Irish citizens, particularly those living in urban areas. In Haverty's novel, the genetic modification of sheep such as Missy serves as an exploration of the possibilities of high technology in rural Ireland during this period. Thus, this section not only examines the animalisation of some human characters but also explores the implications of Missy's hybridity as a sheep with human DNA. It looks into whether her hybridity blurs anthropocentric dichotomies and serves as a protective shield against her otherisation and potential colonisation by Martin.

To begin with, the characterisation of Young Delaney in *ODT* may echo Cary Wolfe's critique of the discourse of animalisation or dehumanisation. The narrator fears and detests the neighbouring farmer who opposes the changes brought by the Celtic Tiger and technology. When the narrator first speaks with the farmer, he asks about an unclear "her," and Martin describes the farmer as follows: "his ears were pricked, you could nearly say, like a gun-dog scenting a prey. The naïvety of his alertness was touching" (*ODT* 11). This comparison of the neighbour with dogs not only animalises him and suggests that the narrator perceives him as inferior, but it also justifies the narrator's hatred towards him. Later in the novel, it is revealed that the narrator has had sex with his sister-in-law. The fact that he feels like prey when Delaney "scented" him may suggest that he attempts to animalise the farmer to disempower and dismiss any threat he may pose, even though this "threat" stems from his own guilt, not from the neighbour. Thus, the text exposes how the animalisation of humans is a means of exerting power and control.

It is worth noting that there exists a subtle animalisation of the narrator as well. Initially, he visits his brother's house with the newlyweds Pierce and Etti, where they relax in the living room and discuss current events. While doing so, Etti mentions the death of an unmarried young man who was the same age as Martin, "twenty-nine," which creates an awkward silence. Etti then breaks the silence by saying "[i]s it still raining? The dogs will be soaked. Don't let them in, Marty. Please" (*ODT* 14). Moreover, Etti states that she does not want the dogs inside the house. Given that the house is a common

symbol of marriage (Barr et al. 2), that the dogs are mentioned right after Martin not only dehumanise him but also expose that he may disrupt their house and marriage as well, which is precisely what happens at the end of the novel when he runs away with Etti, resulting in Pierce's death and Etti's pregnancy.

Additionally, the protagonist's association with dogs in *ODT* reveals the hierarchical nature of dichotomies. When Etti asks him not to let the dogs in, he responds by saying that he was "[s]ubsid[ed] then into the task of filling in the little squares" (*ODT* 14). This exposes the hierarchical nature of the anthropocentric binary whenever a human animal, like Young Delaney or the protagonist, is dehumanised. In other words, Martin's association with dogs is significant because it reveals his own self-deprecation and his anxiety over his own inferiority, perhaps motivating the way in which he treats Missy.

The narrator establishes his relationship with the ewe firstly through the act of naming her, which is one of the most direct and evident methods. Initially, the narrator's perception of the animals in his hometown is shaped by the anonymous farm animals inhabiting it. At the outset of the novel, the narrator reflects on all of the farm animals in the village, who are destined to be slaughtered and consumed by humans, "[a] motley collection of dun-coloured beasts" (*ODT* 48). The narrator views nonhuman animals as unnamed and as "beasts," a classification that reinforces their inferiority as nonhumans and facilitates his detachment from them and their death. Conversely, the historian appears to have no difficulty naming Missy even though she is a sheep, a typical livestock species, not too different from the other genetically modified sheep his brother buys for his farm. The human protagonist encounters the sheep at the Institute, a facility where genetically modified sheep are created and sold to Irish farmers in Haverty's Celtic Tiger Ireland. These sheep, like regular cattle, are unnamed and treated as numbered commodities to be sold. However, the narrator notes that one of these sheep stands out from the rest. With seeming spontaneity, he decides to purchase her and names her "Missy" (*ODT* 24). Therefore, by naming her Missy, the narrator may explore a nonhuman animal as an individual instead of as another unnamed "beast."

Perhaps precisely because of this individualised treatment of Missy, at the outset of the novel, the protagonist treats Missy, the sheep, "affectionately," attending to her needs and attempting to imagine her thoughts (*ODT* 45, 47). This stands in stark contrast with the typical treatment one might expect sheep to receive in most farms. However, this supposed affection is short-lived, and the protagonist gradually transitions to a complete disregard for her physical presence. As the narrator becomes closer to Etti, the further he

grows from Missy, until he begins to despise her. The protagonist hates Missy's existence in his house (*ODT* 132), forces drugs on her to sleep (*ODT* 232), and finally murders her without remorse (*ODT* 261). The use of the name "Missy" thus seems to suggest not affection but rather disparagement or distaste, becoming more evident as the novel progresses. Therefore, it appears that, whilst the protagonist initially attempted to acknowledge Missy's materiality by giving her a name that seems to correspond to her material reality as a female animal while showing some degree of affection, his gradual detachment from her illustrates the constant dichotomies present throughout the novel that he supports.

Another aspect that the narrator examines during his interactions with Missy is her intelligence. Reason is a trait often associated with humans in anthropocentric hierarchies and is commonly used to justify the othering of certain subjects. Tellingly, when Martin contemplates her intelligence and "genius," he wonders about "the slice of human genius with which she had been wantonly infused" (*ODT* 124), thus associating Missy's intelligence with "human genius" and rejecting the fact that she is physically shaped as a sheep. Similarly, the narrator reflects on Missy's ability to contemplate the landscape, stating that:

> no rationale, however illusory, to soothe the surge of panic, no sense of the future to lull her into dreams of different and better times ahead […] Born with none of these consolations, we learn them if we are lucky with age and experience. She was bereft of either. (*ODT* 124)

Upon analysing the narrator's perspective, it becomes evident that Martin argues that reason is limited to the human species, and Missy, despite her "almost" human-like qualities, lacks "human" intelligence. The narrator not only highlights Missy's age, suggesting her inferiority in experience but also emphasises her lack of verbal skills, which are human traits. For instance, the protagonist expresses his disappointment when Missy fails to respond verbally to his conversations about Etti, stating "[b]ut whatever her level of *human* intelligence, she had no verbal skills" (*ODT* 111; emphasis added). By associating Missy's "genius" with her human DNA and underscoring her lack of human verbal language, the narrator tries to re-establish the human/nonhuman dichotomy. Despite the very evident contradiction the narrator is showing in the discussion of Missy's intelligence, the narrator links Missy's "genius" with her human DNA, underscoring her

lack of human verbal skills in an attempt to reaffirm boundaries and confirm his understanding of himself as a superior being.

Martin's attempts at reaffirming a hyperseparation between sheep and human through Missy is further exemplified by her food preferences. The narrator emphasises that Missy refuses to eat sheep food, revealing her human-like characteristics. When he attempts to feed her for the first time, he notes that she "wouldn't touch a blade of grass. She had no knack of it. When I attempted to feed her some, her nose wrinkled up and she let it hang loosely out of her mouth like an idiot" (*ODT* 46). The protagonist struggles to find food that the ewe can enjoy and fails to consider her small size and need for continued bottle-feeding. This oversight exposes the irony of the situation: even if the ewe had the potential to enjoy grass, her digestive system is not yet developed enough.

However, he makes a surprising discovery when he offers Missy a bowl of half-eaten porridge: "[a]t least one morning on a whim and out of desperation at her lack of appetite, I placed in front of her my bowl of half-eaten porridge, drenched in sugar and milk, still warm. Voraciously she lapped it up and then looked at me beseechingly for more" (*ODT* 47); Missy takes "[h]uman-food. Baby-food, even puppy-food. But not sheep-food" (*ODT* 47). This assertion is highly ironic because the ingredients of porridge — milk and oats — are part lambs' regular intake. Interestingly, the narrator only mentions Missy as having this eating preference, failing to consider the other modified sheep, as he does not even ask Pierce what they eat. Rather than questioning whether other sheep would also enjoy porridge, the narrator focuses on Missy's "humanity." setting her apart from the rest of the modified sheep.

Tellingly, the narrator also takes great care to physically distance Missy from the other modified sheep. At the beginning of the novel, Martin observes that the ewe is "standing at a distance of a few yards from me, slightly apart from the rest of the flock" (*ODT* 24). This description becomes significant when one considers the hierarchical order of things results in a "humanity [which] holds an elevated, perhaps even supreme, position on a purported hierarchy" (Tyler 18). Therefore, by ostracising Missy from her peers, Martin can justify his temporary closeness to Missy without "polluting" his human superiority. This also reinforces the difference between the species by highlighting that Missy is unlike any other sheep. In short, as the narrator acknowledges,

> [d]id I not love her precisely because she was *semi-human*? No animal had ever
> elicited that feeling in me, none among the myriad species I grew up with, none of

the dogs and certainly not any other lamb or indeed any other vulnerable young thing.
(*ODT* 98–99; emphasis added)

The text reveals the evident and profound anthropocentric prejudice of the narrator, who oscillates between attempting to conceal his bias and moments when he openly exhibits his prejudice without any qualms. Not only does the narrator christen the ewe with a name that starkly diverges from how he treats her, but also his sole appreciation of her is linked to her human genes. Consequently, the text exposes the anthropocentric hierarchies operating in the novel and the narrator's complicity in perpetuating them despite the material reality that he continuously tries to ignore. Precisely because of Missy's partial humanity, she may also blur interspecies boundaries in Haverty's Celtic Tiger novel. The first description of her hybridity is given early in the novel by their seller at the Factory when addressing Pierce:

"They're very troublesome to manage, sheep are, Mr Hawkins, as you know yourself. But these human genes make them resistant to a lot of the usual ovine infections. Make them that bit less sheeplike, if you follow me. These little fellas here now are a fantastic improvement. They're close enough to what you could nearly call a trouble-free sheep, Mr Hawkins." (*ODT* 23)

The initial portrayal of the sheep genetically modified at the Institute confirms their status as crossbreeds. Rather than being regarded as taboo or kept secret, the hybridity of these sheep is celebrated as an accomplishment of the technoscientific progress of the Celtic Tiger. The fact that human DNA has been incorporated into these sheep serves to underscore their hybridity, not only across animal species but more specifically between humans and other animals, potentially undermining anthropocentric dichotomies and the notion of human exceptionalism. By selecting human DNA, the hybridity of the sheep may expose the shared materiality that exists among animal species, serving as a reminder that humans themselves are also animals.

In the seller's initial description of the genetically modified sheep, their hybridity subverts the expected traits associated with both humans and sheep. Despite sheep being commonly associated with meekness and obedience (Stenner, "Sheep, Beasts, and Knights" 171), the seller explains that these sheep are "trouble-free" precisely due to their human DNA. This suggests that the hybridity of the sheep challenges both material and

symbolic constructions. If, as Tom Tyler argues, one dimension of anthropocentrism is that it "severs[s] humanity entirely from the rest of the natural order, making it something that is fundamentally different in kind" (20), the description of these hybrid ewes challenges these boundaries by showing that the DNAs of humans and sheep are compatible enough to produce modified sheep, with no significant visible changes to the sheep's physical features. Even though she is presented as a sheep with human DNA and not vice versa, her genetic hybridity should hinder any clear-cut ontology, perhaps pointing to the construction of bridges between species, as Haraway advocates for ("Anthropocene" 162–63). This is nothing new, as literature has been argued to serve to "separate humans from animals, but also to confuse and conflate them" (Ortiz Robles 1). This underscores the idea that human DNA is too similar to sheep DNA to visibly alter their bodies and so it exposes the artificiality of the anthropocentric hyper-separation of the species.

The narrator's perspective appears to deny the implications of the sheep's hybridity, however. When the seller first describes the sheep as being half human and therefore "trouble-free," the narrator responds by describing the sheep as having a "stupid ovine gaze" (*ODT* 23–24). This response highlights the narrator's anthropocentric worldview and his rejection of the hybrid sheep's potential to challenge established dichotomies. Additionally, the narrator frequently describes Missy enjoying wandering around just like he does. Quite sceptical about what he sees in the ewe, he explains that she "[g]ave the impression of enjoying the sensation of being out and about in the coloured balminess of the air only as I did myself'" (*ODT* 113). That the narrator describes Missy's habit in such sceptical undertones suggests that he does not fully believe or accept that she can enjoy things that he enjoys as well. This hierarchical perspective is further revealed when the narrator dresses Missy like a dog (*ODT* 249) while in France with Etti. By doing this, the narrator blurs the boundary between the sheep and dogs but still maintains a strict one between humans and sheep. Thus, while the narrator may be aware of the blurring of boundaries, he is unwilling to acknowledge or celebrate it.

Martin's rejection of Missy's hybridity is highlighted in his use of the term "monster" to describe her when Fintan, a former colleague, asks about her. When Fintan asks "'[w]hat is it anyway?'" referring to Missy, the protagonist reflects that she is: "'[a] monster. I suppose that's what she is. Small-sized certainly as monsters go. But a monster all the same'" (*ODT* 214). Martin's willingness to narrate Missy as a monster is an attempt to maintain the hierarchical dualisms between humans and animals, despite the blurring

of boundaries that Missy's genetic modification represents, in stark contrast with other Irish texts that openly embrace the smudging effect of liminal human/nonhuman figures.[45] Martin's anxiety compels him to perceive Missy's hybridity as a threat, leading him to reject her. This is because his anxiety is rooted in a fear of losing his own superiority over nonhuman animals. Thus, the hybridity caused by technoscience does not suffice to pose a real challenge to anthropocentrism in Haverty's novel. Because of this, the following subsection examines how the ewe is colonised by Martin, the rational historian who may embody the coloniser Self.

3.3.2. The Colonised Other

The representation of sheep in *ODT* provides a perfect opportunity to explore the complexities of Irish history and identity within the context of colonialism. As Lucy Neave notes, sheep have been "unwitting agents of colonial violence" by having unwillingly aided the colonising invasion and occupation (128). By presenting a genetically modified sheep as a sign of technological advancement, *ODT* may shed light on the ongoing legacy of colonialism in Ireland and the impact it has had on the country's development. This is significant because the 1990s was a period of profound transformation for Ireland. As Timothy J. White argues, the country underwent a shift from a nationalist community that was deeply invested in its Celtic past as a way of distinguishing itself from British influence towards a neoliberal consumerist society where national identity was no longer the primary focus (91). Similarly, Gerry Smyth contends that the economic boom of the 1990s led to significant changes in Irish society, with the country embracing a free-market ideology that downplayed the role of the state and national identity (133). Acknowledging the colonial past is therefore crucial to understanding the complexities of Ireland's contemporary society and the various changes it has undergone over time. The use of Missy in *ODT* provides a powerful vehicle for exploring these themes. Through the lens of this genetically modified sheep, readers are invited to reflect on Ireland's past and present, and how colonialism has shaped the

---

[45] Katarzyna Poloczek astutely elucidates that the mermaids in Eavan Boland's "The Woman Turns Herself into a Fish" (1982) are inherently border creatures through which the author explores the concept of crossing boundaries between species (138).

country's development. Given the ongoing legacies of colonialism in Ireland and the debates around national identity and the role of the state, examining these issues through the lens of a genetically modified sheep offers a fresh perspective on Irish history and identity. As Mary Kelly contends,

> [o]ne of the legacies of colonialism in Ireland and elsewhere is its effect on how we understand and approach the past. In the Irish context one dominant narrative has been that which has painted the colonial community (the Anglo-Irish) as a class of alien Others who lived parasitically off Irish land and labour and were out-of-place in the Irish landscape both during colonialism and after it. (137)

The discourse of colonialism heavily relies on Enlightenment ideals, which seek to separate "human" rationality from nature. As Raymond Murphy suggests, Enlightenment thought is characterised by "a radical uncoupling of the cultural and the social from nature, that is, by the assumption that reason has enabled humanity to escape from nature and remake it" (12). This view has fuelled the belief that colonies could be acquired and restructured to suit human needs and desires (W. M. Adams 23). In Haverty's novel, the restructuring of nature is explored through the genetically modified sheep. Focusing on Missy and her interactions with the narrator, the novel illustrates the conflicts between past and present, while also showcasing the ways in which socio-economic changes have reshaped interspecies interactions.

Val Plumwood's *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* proposes that the models of colonisation can be effectively used to analyse anthropocentrism in western societies if we consider "earth others as *other nations"* (*Environmental Culture* 100). This becomes particularly relevant in Ireland, as the proximity of the indigenous Irish to animals was constructed to justify the colonial force to subdue and control the native population, as Kathryn Kirkpatrick argues ("Quick Red Foxes" 26). In this context, it follows that "comprehensive accounts of postcolonial contexts must appreciate the interconnection of humans with nonhumans" (James et al. 1). Unfortunately, despite the passing of time, the animalisation of the Irish persists, as exemplified by the fact that the economic boom is known as the Celtic Tiger. Ironically, this colonial discourse can continue to work through the Irish as formerly colonised subjects so that certain entities like animals are otherised through this same discourse. Plumwood advocates for a post-anthropocentric understanding of all animal species to better analyse how colonial

discourses continue to operate today, particularly that of rationalism. According to Plumwood, reason is "the characteristic which sums up and is common to the privileged side of all these contrasts and whose absence characterises the Other" (*Environmental Culture* 101). The Self, in this context, would be embodied by those who represent reason, a male elite unconcerned with the bodily sphere of labour or materiality (*Environmental Culture* 20). Hence, by recognising the animalisation of humans, we can better understand how colonisation operates and how it can be deconstructed.

The introduction of Martin Hawkins as the protagonist and narrator in the novel from the beginning (*ODT* 1) immediately unveils his former occupation as a revisionist historian in Dublin, setting the stage for a critical examination of the rationalist paradigm of historical analysis and the controversial nature of these historians within the context of the Celtic Tiger. As an academic historian, Martin's role embodies the quintessential "rationalist" profession, one that prioritises reason and abstract thought. Historians, tasked with the selection and inclusion of sources in official history, rely on a process of rational and objective analysis to shape historical narratives.

Notably, revisionist historians like Martin also challenge established historical perspectives; however, scholars such as Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh denounce that they provide partial readings of historical events that merely reinforce the *status quo*. As Bhloscaidh denounces, Irish revisionism champions an empirical and sceptical approach that seeks to obscure the lack of actual objectivity among revisionists (205). The tension between traditional Irish nationalism and economic aspirations, as highlighted by revisionist historians (White 91), underscores this connection, and suggests a "collapsing national narrative," as argued by Eve Patten (265). Similarly, Mary M. McGlynn contends that the financial success of the Celtic fostered a denial of the future, transforming memory into something to be rejected as a "bad dream." As McGlynn's points out, this period "erased the nightmare of the colonial modernity, repressing national traumas and the ongoing asymmetries and economic polarities of neoliberalization" (216). Given this historical context, the novel's inclusion of a revisionist narrator invites an examination of whether the legacy of colonisation continues to exert influence on contemporary Ireland. In essence, readers are introduced to a narrator who may be positioned to minimise or dismiss the ongoing impact of colonisation on Ireland, providing insights into the complex interplay between history, identity, and economic development of the country in the 1990s.

In *ODT,* Missy can be seen to represent one of the many "earth others" that Val Plumwood identifies in western societies, particularly if we take Martin as an embodiment of the colonising Self. Neave notes that sheep play a significant role in colonialism, serving not only as a source of wool and capital but also as a symbol of the progress of the colonisers and their colony. Sheep were used to "displace responsibility for the fate of indigenous people onto their cattle, and sheep" (128–29).

Early in the novel, the narrator provides a detailed description of his rural birthplace, including the animals and human neighbours that surrounded him. Martin's portrayal of his childhood, which was spent among a variety of animals on his parents' farm, is of particular interest. He states that "there was the big herd of cows to be milked and the churns to be got to the creamery by ten. There were all the different species to be fed, the cattle and the calves, the hens and the geese, the two pigs they always kept […]. All these animals had their uses" (*ODT* 48). This description is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it is reminiscent of the Genesis account in which God created animals and plants to be ruled over by humankind (*New International Version*, Gen. 1.25). Moreover, the way in which the narrator states that "[a]ll these animals had their uses" amplifies the role of anthropocentrism in his understanding of rural Ireland. Thus, the narrator seems to be evoking the Bible to justify his nostalgia for the pastoral Ireland of his youth and, perhaps more importantly, the portrayal of the farm animals highlights their utility and purpose in the narrator's rural upbringing, exposing the narrator's blatant anthropocentrism.

The narrator's strong hold onto the past and his opposition to the transformations occurring in his village are manifested in his conversations with neighbouring farmers regarding the newly modified sheep and the increasing farm sizes. One of them argues that small farmers like themselves will always be indispensable. In response, the narrator expresses his disappointment that "[t]his is not the way things are going. The farmer, the small independent farmer anyway […] is an endangered species" (*ODT* 117). The narrator's pessimism about the destiny of his village and the farms of his childhood reflects the socioeconomic changes of the 1990s. This attitude is significant because it highlights the impact of modernisation on rural life and its inhabitants. The dialogue between the narrator and the farmers shows how those who hold traditional values are struggling to adapt to the new reality of the island.

Despite Martin's nostalgia for a rural past, his description of the treatment of nonhuman animals highlights the continuing anthropocentric attitudes that persist in both

past and present Ireland. Martin's account of the impact of the Celtic Tiger on the countryside focuses on the shift from small farms to larger and more concentrated macro-farms, highlighting the economic pressures that drive change, revealing that the past — and idealised — rural Ireland he misses is gone. Moreover, although Martin longs for an idyllic past, he purchases a genetically modified sheep, which serves as a parody of his own contradictions, which reveals his inability to reconcile his nostalgia with the reality of contemporary Ireland. Ultimately, the text exposes the narrator's lack of coherence and highlights the futility of denying the changes taking place in Irish society. By using humour and irony, the text underscores the limitations of nostalgia and the need to confront the challenging changes of 1990s Ireland.

Perhaps precisely because Martin struggles to accept the changes taking place in 1990s Ireland, he does not only create an idealised image of his past as a child but also displays colonising strategies on Missy as a way of soothing his unstable identity. As William M. Adams argues, when the coloniser names and classifies both people and places, the aim is to control them (24). In this sense, Martin's naming of Missy might already be a foundation for her discursive colonisation rather than a mere individualisation of the ewe. Early in the novel, the human protagonist encounters Missy at the Institute. These sheep are unnamed and are simply commodities to be bought and sold. However, one sheep stands out from the rest and the narrator decides to buy her and names her "Missy" (*ODT* 24). While the naming of the sheep could be seen as an attempt to provide her with an ontological value, it could also represent a form of rationalist colonialism, which seeks to control the Other through the use of language. Tellingly, the etymology of "Missy" adds an additional layer of complexity to this act. "Missy," originally used in the 1670s, denotes a "playful or diminutive form of miss (n.2), at first chiefly among servants" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). That is, the name he consciously chooses cannot help but echo a master/slave divide, prevalent in colonial thought. Hence, through this process, the coloniser Self attempts to impose its own values and systems on the Other.

Martin seems to apply the tools of colonisation on Missy through her reduction to a myth. As Moana Jackson argues, the creation of myths can serve to mask "the reality or extent of dispossession that shaped the past and present" (89), thereby justifying the *status quo*. In Haverty's novel, Missy is mystified through references to pre-Christian and Christian folklore. The narrator describes Missy as a "mythic creature" (*ODT* 78) who has no agency and is dependent on him for liberation from her "woolly cage" or, in the

narrator's own words, to be "release[d] from her woolly cage and her wrong-shaped skull" (*ODT* 99). He also portrays her as a shape-shifter, stating that she was a "sheep, who, it transpired, was under an evil spell, and was really a girl in sheep's clothing all along" (*ODT* 81), introducing in the novel the idea of the shape-shifter,[46] a common motif in Irish Celtic folklore (Dhuibhne 77).

Missy is depicted as a myth not only through subtle references to Irish but also to Christian folklore. The text makes many references to Christian narratives from the moment Missy first appears. The protagonist notes that Pierce bought thirteen sheep instead of the twelve he originally intended, echoing the twelve apostles in the Christian tradition (Muhammad 41). Given that he buys thirteen only after Martin's persistent urging, the number may foreshadow Martin's betrayal and Pierce's death, as if Missy's arrival anticipated Martin's betrayal towards the end of the novel. Similarly, the chapter in which Missy is introduced ends with the narrator mentioning the Apocalypse (*ODT* 27). The ewe is explicitly referred to as "The Lamb of God" (*ODT* 109), bringing the figure of Jesus Christ to readers' minds.

Likewise, on one occasion, the narrator is cleaning Missy, and he remarks that she smells like "clouds of incense that the priest swings" (*ODT* 102). Rather than smelling like an organic being, she is reduced to a liturgical smell that is central to Christian churches and rituals. The act of cleaning Missy could also be interpreted as her mythification and consequent denial of her material dimension, as well as a means of justifying Martin's superiority as her "priest." Instead of acknowledging Missy as a sentient being with actual needs and agency, the narrator portrays her as a romanticised myth. By doing so, Missy is further otherised and colonised, not only through the naming process but also through mythification. This depiction of Missy is reminiscent of the British colonising agenda, which sought to control the ontology of the colonised Other and justify their oppression. The narrator's romanticisation of Missy serves to conceal the reality of her oppression and dispossession as a living being with actual needs and agency. Ultimately, the narrator's actions serve to justify and perpetuate Missy's oppression as

---

[46] Irish folklore is rich with tales of shape-shifters. Some notable examples are the Morrigan, often associated with war and death, appearing in the ancient Irish epic "Táin Bó Cúailnge" (The Cattle Raid of Cooley) (R. O'Connor 181); selkies, beings capable of transforming from seals into humans, appearing in contemporary Irish fiction (Potts, "Underneath the Wave" 133); and the pookas, animal spirits known for their ability to assume various forms, most commonly that of a goat (Englehart 412).

the colonised Other. Unlike other shape-shifters in Irish literature who Katarzyna Poloczek argues are empowered precisely because of their shape-shifting nature (138), Missy's liminality is not enough to resist the otherisation she suffers from Martin. Rather, Missy is reduced to the martyr figure of the sacrificial lamb, as section 3.4.2. further elaborates. Therefore, the use of pre-Christian and Christian folklore to describe Missy serves to validate the *status quo*, ultimately falling short in its resistance against colonisation and rationalism.

Notably, the ewe can also represent 1990s Ireland and the high technology that started to gain strength on the island because of the genetic engineering that can be found in her body. If we consider Missy as a representation of both past and present Ireland, Martin's instrumentalisation of her, which lasts until he kills her at the end of the novel, could be interpreted as a commentary on his role as a revisionist historian in 1990s Ireland. This interpretation raises the possibility that he embodies the critique often directed at revisionists, accusing them of fostering British imperialism (Bhloscaidh 225) and, by extension, its colonial discourse. In other words, Martin's actions and the discourse he embodies as a revisionist historian, when applied to Missy, echo the historical application of British imperial discourse to the Irish. Therefore, the way in which Martin otherises and metaphorically objectifies Missy may serve to highlight the ongoing colonisation of Irish nonhumans in the context of the economic boom.

The title, *One Day as Tiger,* may remind readers of other literary works, perhaps most notably Angela Carter's "The Tiger's Bride" in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979). In Carter's story, the father loses his daughter because he loses a bet against the Beast, who is a tiger ashamed of his animal appearance who tries to look as human as possible and so he wears a mask with a perfect man's face painted on it (Marchant 143). This allusion can be also interpreted as a reference to the Beast in Spenser's "Book VI." Anne Fogarty argues that here the Beast represents a "haunting spectre of unaccommodated Otherness" ("The Colonization of Language" 104) comparable to the colonised Irish ("The Colonization of Language" 92). The novel's focus on the colonial past through a revisionist narrator adds another layer of meaning, suggesting that Missy's colonisation and killing by Martin is an attempt to control and suppress an unaccommodated Otherness, reflecting Martin's denial of his own otherisation as an Irish within British colonial discourse.

However, in *ODT,* the Beast can be linked with Martin, the narrator and discursive coloniser of Missy. While Missy is not sent to Martin due to a lost bet as in the Bride in

Carter's short story, Martin's obsession with disguising his desire for his sister-in-law and his "tiger" side leads him to rationalise his actions, using Missy as a symbol of innocence. Martin becomes the actual Beast of the novel, trying to embody the tiger for one day but eventually becoming the monster at the end of the novel. He kills Missy, provokes his brother's death, and leaves Etti pregnant. Identifying Martin as the Beast exposes the violent way in which the coloniser consumes the colonised Other and critiques the violence and power imbalances inherent in colonialism.

Finally, it is worth noting the implications of the title in relation to how the nonhuman Missy has been instrumentalised by Martin. *One Day as a Tiger* echoes a well-known proverb: "Better to live one day as a tiger than always as a sheep." At first glance, this proverb extols the virtues of boldness and risk-taking, suggesting that such choices can lead to a life of greatness, while a cautious and conventional existence may yield a mundane and unfulfilled one.

However, the novel takes a profoundly ironic turn with this thematic backdrop. As the narrative unfolds, we witness that the protagonist, Martin, far from embodying the spirit of a daring tiger, becomes ensnared in the consequences of his actions. His involvement with his sister-in-law in France results in his brother's untimely death, leaving him isolated, bereft of family, and grappling with profound anxiety. Adding to this predicament is his sister-in-law's pregnancy, possibly carrying his child. The story does not culminate in the triumphant and fulfilling life that the proverb seems to endorse. Instead, Martin finds himself a victim of his own choices as a revisionist historian, confined to the rural landscapes of Tipperary with limited avenues for a different future. The neighbours' reminders of his responsibility to care for Etti (*ODT* 263) underscore the weight of his actions.

In essence, the novel's title encapsulates the narrative's parodic tone and highlights Martin's blindness to reality despite his academic education. It challenges the conventional wisdom implied by the proverb, forcing readers to grapple with the complexities of human decisions and their unforeseen consequences. Martin's character serves as a critique of a revisionist historian navigating the complex terrain of Irish history, as well as an embodiment of the anxieties experienced by many in the face of the sweeping changes of 1990s Ireland. *ODT* ultimately emerges as a thought-provoking exploration of identity, risk, and the intricate interplay between anthropocentrism and colonialism. Therefore, the following section focuses on the gender dimension to discern how anthropocentrism and colonialism may intersect with patriarchy in *ODT*.

3.4. Celtic Tiger Androcentrism

The exploitation of feminised Others by patriarchal thinking reduces them to mere objects, reinforcing patriarchy's notions of masculinity and femininity. Pets, often fulfil this purpose, given their introduction into the nuclear family, where gender roles are constructed and reinforced (Irvine and Cilia 1). DeMello argues that women are often associated with pets, especially lap dogs, as "pets were seen as feminizing and symbolized women's inferiority" (*Animals and Society* 169). In *ODT,* Missy may be seen as a pet by Martin, and she is always involved in the narrator's negotiation with his anxious masculinity. Because of this, this section examines how patriarchal conventions operate in *ODT* by first examining the rivalry between Martin and Pierce, and then the connections made between Missy and Etti, and how these connections affect the female characters.

3.4.1. Brotherly Rivalry

Maureen O'Connor argues that the newly independent Irish nation struggled to distance itself from colonial stereotypes of the "savage" Irish, and instead assumed the role of a custodial patriarchal society once occupied by their English masters. In O'Connor's words, "[t]he 'hypermasculinity' of the newly independent nation struggled to distance itself from colonial representations of the 'savage' Irish, including the feminizing and zoontolizing of the native, but did so by assuming the role of custodial patriarchal once occupied by their English masters" (135). This patriarchal society is deeply rooted in the colonial history of Ireland and is closely tied to anxieties surrounding masculinity. With significant changes on the island, such as the inclusion of women in the workforce during the Celtic Tiger, the traditionally patriarchal role of men as breadwinners was challenged. This pressure felt by Irish men was so strong that Will H. Courtenay argues that Irish society expected men to embody traditional masculinity traits such as independence, toughness, and emotional detachment to the extreme (1387). As a result, male anxieties were triggered during this period of economic growth, especially in rural Ireland, where, Caitríona Ní Laoire contends, "traditional masculine identities are coming into conflict

with changing social and economic structures in modern Ireland" (97). It is in this context that the other-than-human animal can be reduced to mere symbols of masculinity. As Alicia Puleo argues, nonhuman animals are frequently used as symbols to build virile identities and assuage anxieties around masculinities (118). This use of nonhuman animals serves to protect patriarchal androcentrism and its idealised notion of "Man." In Fogarty's brief analysis of *ODT,* the academic explains that the novel "dissects with a sure eye the social rituals of masculinity," including the fact that:

> Marty's sense of himself depends, above all, on his interaction with other men. In particular, his envy of his brother's easy manliness, his hatred of Yung Mulcahy, a neighbouring farmer, his competitive friendship with Fintan, a former colleague, and his grudging regard for the male community of the local hostelry, Toby's. ("Uncanny Families" 71)

It is then hardly surprising that masculinities play a significant role in the novel. Moreover, we find numerous references to biblical themes like the Apocalypse or Genesis in the novel, as already discussed in the previous section. Martin's escape with Pierce's wife results in Pierce's death when travelling to France to retrieve them, which offers a distorted version of the biblical story of Cain killing Abel. Jealousy, which led to the first fratricide, is also evident in Martin's intense and ultimately deadly rivalry with Pierce.

One aspect that triggers Martin's anxious masculinity is the fact that Pierce decides to remain in the village and continue working on the family farm after their parents' death. Caitríona Ní Laoire explains in her analysis of rural Irish masculinities that "the loss of a farm is more than the loss of a business enterprise, but instead, can represent the loss of a way of life and a family inheritance, and thus can be represented as a failure in upholding one's responsibilities" (103). The narrator emphasises that Pierce has worked hard to maintain and secure their family's farm, and he has not only succeeded in keeping it but has also become financially successful. The narrator even mentions that the farm is profitable enough to support Pierce's wife Etti and his unemployed brother Martin. Moreover, Etti has expensive hobbies, including shopping in Dublin and horse riding (*ODT* 21), all of which reflect this economic success. Consequently, Pierce is depicted as a successful and admirable embodiment of masculinity in a changing rural Ireland.

In contrast to his brother Pierce, Martin is a former revisionist historian who recently ended his academic career and returned to his birthplace following their parents'

death (*ODT* 3). It is not only that his abstract and intellectual job as a historian is a far cry from Pierce's physical and laborious work but also that he has come to associate his former career with a sense of betrayal against his parents. As he recalls, "it was the thought of Nancy and Robert's confusion at this reversal of their past that fired my scepticism. It would grieve them, it was a betrayal of them and of the generations behind them" (*ODT* 30). It is logical then that he would not only quit his career but also try to emulate his parents' work as farmers, more in line with Pierce.

And yet, upon returning to his birthplace, Martin does not seek to become a shepherd. He instead remains unemployed and occasionally runs errands for his brother. For example, he accompanies Pierce when purchasing modified sheep (*ODT* 24) and delivers a tractor to a neighbour who borrowed it from Pierce (*ODT* 147), but that is it. As a result, the narrator is unable to embody one traditional Irish patriarchal model of masculinity, that of the strong breadwinner who provides for his family, at least not in the way Pierce does. Furthermore, the protagonist cannot even support himself and depends on his brother's stipend for basic needs (*ODT* 221). This situation causes the narrator to feel emasculated due to his former intellectual profession, lack of employment, and financial dependence on Pierce.

Moreover, Martin's attempts to become a farmer are symbolically doomed from the beginning. For instance, he refuses to buy a number of modified sheep like his brother to start his own farm. Instead, he buys Missy, a faulty and hardly economically profitable ewe. This decision indicates that Martin cannot become a successful farmer like his parents or Pierce. Tellingly, Martin becomes a proper farmer only after Pierce's death, when he inherits the farm. This further exposes Martin's attempts to become a farmer as hollow and reveals that he is hardly qualified, or willing, for the job. It also suggests that he only wanted to be better than Pierce rather than genuinely desire to become a farmer and follow his parents' legacy. The differing approaches of Pierce and Martin towards fulfilling their familial and masculine responsibilities are highlighted through their respective occupations and levels of success. Pierce's role as a farmer, with his ability to provide for his family, embodies the traditional Irish rural masculinity, while Martin's failure to become a successful farmer and the abandonment of his previous career suggests a lack of commitment to his responsibilities and a desire to outdo his brother. The importance of the family farm in rural Irish culture and the pressure to uphold one's responsibilities is also emphasised, with Pierce's success representing an achievement of

traditional masculine pride. The novel thus portrays a complex relationship between masculinity, family, and work in a rapidly changing rural Ireland.

One aspect of the way in which Martin is portrayed is the traditional patriarchal division of the spheres, in which men are expected to work outside the home while women are expected to take care of the domestic sphere (Patten 268). This is evident in the novel through Pierce's constant absence from home due to his farming duties, while Martin is often indoors because he is unemployed. The narrator's anxiety over this division of labour is highlighted when Pierce compliments Martin's indoor painting skills, triggering Martin's anxieties, who suspects that Pierce sees Martin as more suited to "female" domestic work rather than the "male" outdoor work of farming: "[t]hat's what I'm best suited to, in Pierce's opinion. Indoor work" (*ODT* 73). In this sense, Martin's desire to outdo his brother and become a successful farmer is complicated by the fact that he feels like a loser before he even begins. His anxiety over this patriarchal division of labour, which positions him as the weaker "indoor" sibling, is deepened by his lack of success in farming. This suggests that Martin is struggling not only with his familial and masculine responsibilities but also with his own identity as a man.

Feeling like a "loser" may be the reason that motivates not only a brotherly rivalry against Pierce as a farmer but also as a husband and potential father. Marriage holds a critical role in Irish society, as Rebecca Anne Barr et al. argue when they point out that the Irish Constitution "delineates women's role in the state as domestic support within heterosexual marriage" (2). The concept of marriage was shaped by the patriarchal ideology that permeated twentieth-century Ireland, resulting in a Constitution that "emphasised marriage and the support of a family as defining elements of manhood" (Madden 179–80). Pierce fulfils his responsibility by marrying Etti shortly after his parents' death (*ODT* 7), which may reassert his masculinity in his community and continue his parents' legacy through reproduction.

In contrast, Martin remains unmarried and embodies the figure of the bachelor, which Madden contends to function "either as a category of resistance to the heteronormative family, what Ulrike Vedder calls 'an explicit counterfigure to the family', or as an emblem of the homoaffectional, a space within which queer narratives and identities may take form" (179). It is in this context that Martin's ontological anxiety as a heterosexual man is further complicated by his admiration for Pierce's apparently stable heterosexual identity, sanctioned by his marriage to Etti. Perhaps because of this, Martin feels anxious when he visits their house early in the novel, feeling like an intruder

into their house, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, and, by extension, their marriage, as proven by the eventual parodic elopement of Martin and Etti as well as Pierce's death.

Despite fulfilling certain expectations of Irish masculinity, such as successfully managing a farm and getting married, Pierce ultimately fails at what is perhaps the most crucial task in this context: having children and, therefore, a biological legacy. Despite being married to Etti for some time, the couple remains childless. Pierce's heavy drinking may be a result of the sorrow he feels at his failure to impregnate Etti and ensure the farm's continuation for future generations. This becomes apparent during a conversation between Pierce and the narrator, in which Pierce asks for a stronger drink in the middle of the day. When the narrator asks him whether they are drowning some new sorrow, Pierce answers "'[n]one I didn't have before anyway'" (*ODT* 74). After the narrator inquires about Etti's whereabouts, Pierce reveals that she "'is lying down. Headache.'" After Martin's insistence on why she is lying down, Pierce explains that it is "[j]ust the usual," which Martin interprets as the monthly occurrence of menstrual bleeding and the consequent lack of pregnancy (*ODT* 75). This failure is significant in the context of Irish masculinity, as the ability to reproduce and provide for one's family is seen as a key element of manhood. Pierce's painful awareness of this failure underscores his struggles to embody the ideal of Irish masculinity, even if his brother, the narrator, is not fully aware of the extent of his brother's anxieties.

In a similar vein to Pierce, Martin is also childless, but unlike his brother, he does not have a wife with whom to attempt to procreate. Probably because of this, at the beginning of the novel, the narrator takes it upon himself to purchase Missy and begins to treat her as his own child, possibly as a means to compete against his brother as a "father." The notion that Missy is perceived as a child is initially evident through the narrator's frequent allusions to his own childhood. For instance, the narrator states that "she would discover her chocolate treat, just like myself and Pierce prodding Robert with our importunate little fingers," connecting Missy's present and Martin's childhood. The narrator's care for Missy also takes on a paternal aspect, as he bathes and looks after her (*ODT* 47).

However, despite now having a "child" in his life, Martin continues to admire Pierce and covets his wife. This can be interpreted as stemming from Martin's anxiety as a bachelor without the traditional heterosexual family to assert his masculinity. Martin not only views Pierce as a rival farmer but also as an ideal husband and potential father, given the significant role that marriage and family play in Irish society. As a single man,

Martin lacks a wife, and therefore, if Pierce is the epitome of a good husband in his eyes, it only follows that Etti is the best wife he could acquire. This could explain why Missy is neglected as soon as Etti becomes sexually interested in Martin. Notably, there is a scene where the male character interacts with both Etti and Missy at the same time:

> Kneeling on the rug by the couch, Etti lifted the worn chintz and peered underneath. I let her be. There was no one else in the world I would have allowed to harass poor Missy. But I would let Etti do with her whatever she wanted. As she scrabbled under the couch for Missy, who I guessed was retreating to press herself against the wainscot, I watched, oblivious to the poor lamb's terror. (*ODT* 107)

This particular scene is indicative of a clear power dynamic where the male character, Martin, assumes authority over the marginalised entity, Missy. As Missy's usefulness as a surrogate child for Martin comes to an end, his care and attention towards her also diminish, revealing his utilisation of both woman and ewe to reaffirm his masculinity through his competition with his brother. This not only exposes the narrator's androcentric bias but also the detrimental effects of his fixation on hegemonic masculinity. Martin's actions are responsible not only for Pierce's death but also for forcing the narrator to replace him on the farm and within the community. Martin is obligated to assume the role of breadwinner for the family, especially since Etti is pregnant, with a strong implication that Martin is the father (*ODT* 292). Thus, Martin's brotherly rivalry with Pierce is taken too far, stemming from his gender anxiety. Martin alienates himself from his brother to the extent that it leads to Pierce's death and Martin's awakening to reality, far from his idealised situation and his nostalgic memory of rural Ireland. Martin's jealousy has tainted everything he has done since his return, emphasising the dangers of competing masculinities for the rivals as well as for the feminised entities forced into this negotiation. To gain further insight into the consequences of Martin's rivalry with his brother on Missy and Etti, the following subsection examines how the narrator creates a discursive male/female hierarchy as well as how these two female characters are connected in their subjugation by the rationalism epitomised by the historian Martin.

3.4.2. The Sacrificial Lamb

Plumwood explains that the construction of "woman" in androcentric cultures is based on a Self/Other dichotomy, where women are deemed as inferior to men ("Decolonizing Relationships with Nature" 57). This binary is reinforced by the likewise patriarchal mindset, which assigns a rational/emotional difference to men and women, justifying women's perceived inferiority. Alicia H. Puleo further points out that patriarchal logic promotes the idea that women are more emotional than men and that this emotionality needs to be overcome to achieve superiority; in the academic's own words, emotions "need to be transcended in order to be a superior, steadfast, and imperturbable being" (119). In other words, the "feminine" traits that women are associated with must be rejected to avoid "contaminating" the superior male Self.

In Ireland, this dichotomy is further complicated by the role of women in the construction of national identity. Anne McClintock notes that "for male nationalists, women serve as markers of national homogeneity, they become subjected to especially vigilant and violent discipline" (97). Women are then turned into symbols of national identity that are exploited by the male subject. However, the role of women in Ireland has undergone significant changes since the 1970s. For example, the marriage bar was lifted in 1973 (Foley 83), condoms became readily available in 1993 (Enright and Cloatre 262), and divorce was finally legalised in 1997 (Fahey 244). Considering all the changes that took place in the last decades of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that expectations of Irish womanhood evolved despite patriarchal resistance. These changes have led to a shift in expectations of Irish womanhood, despite patriarchal resistance. As Rivera Izquierdo argues, a "new Irish woman" emerged in the twentieth century, one "who was no longer voice-less but who rebelled against the Catholic patriarchal society she lived in" (105). Therefore, it is pertinent to examine the portrayal of female figures in Haverty's novel, including the human character Etti and the nonhuman Missy, to determine whether female identities are being exploited to support an androcentric and anthropocentric hierarchy.

Before delving into the connection between women and ewes in *ODT*, it is worth considering how the gendered differences between male and female characters shape the concepts of agency and passivity in the novel. Etti, one of the prominent female characters, is often depicted engaging in active outdoor activities such as riding and shopping in Dublin, actions that are hardly passive. Furthermore, she often undertakes

these activities independently, without the company of her husband. Despite this, the narrator focuses on the one aspect in which she lacks agency, namely financial independence. While her infidelity is suggested throughout the novel, it is explicitly exemplified when she mock-elopes with Martin. However, Etti remains married to Pierce, and when Martin proposes they elope for real, she declines, stating that he lacks prospects and therefore they should not get married (*ODT* 252). As a result, she remains dependent on Pierce, a breadwinner, and unable or unwilling to work, perhaps due to social pressure to conform to the ideal of a leisure wife. Moreover, when Pierce dies, Martin inherits the farm and is told to "[g]o home and look after Etti" (*ODT* 263). Therefore, her agency is limited, creating a problematic foundation for the comparison and occasional confusion of female characters in the novel.

Something similar may be observed in the character of Missy. Whenever the protagonist leaves the sheep locked in the house, she does nothing but wait for him, patiently and passively, which might remind readers of the passivity often expected of women (M. O'Connor, *The Female and the Species* 137), also in Ireland. The alleged passivity of Missy is further explored when Martin and Etti take her to France towards the end of the novel. During the journey, Missy's basic needs of food and socialisation annoy them, and they respond by drugging her with sleeping pills. This action has a twofold effect. Firstly, Missy becomes inactive and embodies the passive Irish womanhood the narrator has attempted to impose upon her and Etti throughout the novel. Secondly, the pills administered to Missy belong to Etti, who takes them to combat her sleeping problems (*ODT* 225). Thus, although Missy is forced to submit by the humans and Etti apparently chooses to submit on her own, both the ewe and the human female characters are here presented as submissive and without a way out.

Upon arriving in France, Missy's passivity is further accentuated when Martin and Etti confine her to their hotel room and are only allowed outside when they feel too guilty about it. They not only drug her to submission but also dress and carry her like a dog (*ODT* 249), creating a twisted version of the happily married couple with their lapdog. Missy is portrayed as having no agency, in a passive position with her lack of nourishment contributing to her lack of activeness. This portrayal of Missy not only embodies the passive ideal of womanhood in Ireland but also serves to recreate a kind of family that Martin seeks in his competition with Pierce. This mock portrayal of the heterosexual family exposes that both Missy and Etti are Martin's puppets, performing to create his dream-like family with heavy ironic undertones. It is clear then that Missy's role is not

only to emphasise Martin's patriarchal control but also to highlight the exploitation of feminised Others, where animals are used to reinforce patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity.

Similarly, Martin may use Missy and Etti as instruments to construct himself as a rational man. Plumwood explains that rationalism is at the core of the western system of thought whereby the domination of "non-rational" entities is justified (*Environmental Culture* 26). Notably, despite the traumatic death of his parents in a car accident, Martin shows no signs of emotional outburst, stating that he "could not cry" (*ODT* 29). This apparent emotional detachment suggests that he struggles to process his emotions, potentially due to the traumatic nature of his parents' death, constructing him as a kind of parody of the idealised "rational" man that he seeks to embody. Interestingly, Missy plays a crucial role in helping him navigate this emotional realm. As Chez explains, especially in Victorian society, companion animals have often been used by men as "emotional prostheses […] to enhance their affective capacities and to complete their humanity" (13) but not so frequently by women for this same aim because they "were assumed abundantly emotional" (14). In this regard, Martin claims that Missy is "the first living thing" he loved and that "she was the first to allow me to love her, now that I was finally ready; and the first to return my love" (*ODT* 98), enabling him to channel his emotions while maintaining a degree of detachment that allows him to justify his questionable decisions, such as killing the ewe and eloping with his sister-in-law. The narrator's use of Missy to navigate his emotions further highlights the rationalism underlying his character and how it shapes his relationships with the two female characters.

Missy also serves as a means for Martin to delve further into his rationality and his belief in his ontological superiority. He describes his enjoyment in observing her, taking her for walks in the fields to investigate the scents and sights of nature as follows: "[i]n the cooler fragrant evenings, I used to take Missy out to stroll in the fields, permitting her to wander among the fresh smells of honeysuckle and other flowers and the mown grass in the expanses of meadows drying into tawny hay. This I regarded in the light of scientific mode of enquiry" (*ODT* 113). This scientific approach to Missy depersonalises her and turns her into an object of rational, empirical investigation. Martin's sense of ownership over the ewe is similarly highlighted at the beginning of the novel, when he states that "I knew I had to have her […] to watch and understand" (*ODT* 25), which he manages to do some lines later, when he calls her "[m]y lamb" (*ODT* 26). While one might interpret Martin's observations of Missy as a form of ethological study, akin to the

animal observation studies that Sherryl Vint notes as being foundational in establishing ethology[47] as a valid research methodology (501), this interpretation does not seem to be the case in Haverty's novel. Instead, Missy is objectified, contributing to the construction of the narrator's rationality and the depiction of the ewe as an irrational object of scrutiny. In this way, the ewe becomes a victim of the narrator's rational ideals, devoid of any agency or subjectivity.

Moreover, Martin also presents both Missy and Etti as less intelligent — and so less rational — than him. Although Martin suggests that Missy may display signs of rational intelligence, the narrator concludes that "[b]ut whatever level of human intelligence, she had no verbal skills" (*ODT* 111). This anthropocentric bias is evident in the hierarchy that is founded on intelligence, which is not limited to the ewe. Martin also insists on Etti's lack of academic intelligence. For instance, when Martin discusses this matter with Fintan, a former colleague from Dublin, the scholar tells him that he doubts Etti is a good match for Martin because she is not exactly bright, the narrator reflects that "[i]t was no news to me that [Etti] was not exactly Mensa standard,[48] brain-wise" (*ODT* 207). The narrator takes standardised intelligence tests such as Mensa as the only valid measure of intelligence. The presentation of both Missy and Etti as inferior in intelligence reinforces their oppression by a rationalist Self, further perpetuating the hierarchies that are deeply embedded in western thought.

Martin's rationalist mindset extends beyond the ewe's species and encompasses her gender, as is evident in his discussion of her biology. When Martin reflects on Missy's DNA, he is unable to imagine that the human side of Missy could be "female," even though the seller does not specify gender. His fixation on the notion that Missy's human DNA is "male" leads him to indulge in a fantasy involving a father figure whom he names "Harold" (*ODT* 125). Whilst Missy is characterised as a "young girl," the father is depicted as a strong and adventurous man who can go anywhere without worrying about

---

[47] Vint explains that, "[c]ombining the science of careful observation with a humanistic concern with subjective experience and relationships, narrative ethology 'affirms the ways in which ethology and fiction alike proceed from the complicated operations of affect and leads to an ethics premised on feelings honored as concrete, intense, and shared'" (501).

[48] In Mensa's official website we find the following: "[m]embership of Mensa is open to persons who have attained a score within the upper two percent of the general population on an approved intelligence test, one that has been properly administered and supervised. There is no other qualification for initial membership eligibility" (Mensa).

his kinship. Such a binary construction of male human/female nonhuman, which continuously disregards the material reality of hybridity, may mirror how British colonisers systematically feminised and othered the colonised Other (DeLoughrey and Handley 27). Furthermore, this reflects Plumwood's argument that in patriarchal systems, the father "is the sole agent and creator, contributing the superior element of mind or form" while the mother "contributes only the inferior element of matter, and is merely a nurse […] for the child – which the father alone created in his image" (*The Concept of a Cultural Landscape* 120). Significantly, the mother of the nonhuman character remains unnamed throughout the novel, exposing Martin's androcentric and anthropocentric bias, whereby the male is associated only with "science" and not with "nature."

Perhaps it is precisely because Martin imagines his father as an adventurer that he pictures Missy as his child, as evidenced by his decision to name her. If one consults a dictionary, "Missy" is often defined as "an affectionate or sometimes disparaging form of address to a young girl" (*Collins Dictionary*). The fictional ewe is thus categorised as "female" and "young" from the very beginning. These two attributes are reinforced by the narrator throughout the novel. For instance, the narrator explains in the opening pages that her seller comments that "[s]he'd come running up to me and look into my eyes all the time I was feeding her, like a baby" (*ODT* 25). Martin implicitly accepts this comparison, as for instance, he sings nursery rhymes to her (*ODT* 46). The narrator even describes her as: "[s]he would follow me or stand at my knee, her head cocked and her glistening eyes gazing into mine, their look not anguished then but considering, alright, the look of an intelligent child (*ODT* 47).

Moreover, the way in which Martin treats Missy also reveals the common way in which women are treated as children under patriarchy (Turton-Turner 17). He repeatedly talks to her "as you would talk to a young child" (*ODT* 46). The ewe is presented as younger than the human character, not only through her name but also through several descriptions of the nonhuman character, always provided by this unreliable narrator. Additionally, Martin explains that "she learned to trust me to depend on me!" (*ODT* 46), further reinforcing the infantilisation and dependence of the female character. Hence, Martin's portrayal of Missy as a young girl is a product of his patriarchal bias, which reinforces the common infantilisation of women and the feminisation of nonhuman beings under patriarchy. Hence, the narrator seeks to perpetuate the patriarchal discourse prevalent in 1990s Ireland.

The characterisation of Etti in *ODT* may reveal a pattern of infantilisation similar to the ewe's. The narrator not only refers to her as Etti instead of her full name, Goretti, but also suggests that her name is highly symbolic. According to Martin, Goretti is "the martyr-girl who died for her virtue" (*ODT* 37), which may allude to Saint Maria Goretti, a canonised saint who was known for resisting her rapist and dying at the age of eleven (34). As Fuller notes, Maria Goretti was celebrated as a martyr of purity by the Catholic Church (vi). By associating Etti with this symbol of purity and innocence, Martin may be projecting onto her his own idealisation of womanhood. Martin's insistence in interpreting Etti as a child becomes particularly apparent during their stay at the Slieve Blooms, where he observes her behaviour in a paternalistic way:

> She seemed to me to be shy as a gangly *child*, which she was attempting to disguise with an essay in bravado. She was wearing a murkily glowing flowered dress, sleeveless, her arms white slender columns, folding, unfolding, her hands gripping her glass as a *small child* grips her glass of lemonade for fear of letting it fall. (*ODT* 193; emphasis added)

The excerpt contains a clear attempt to paternalise Etti, which is a common practice of patriarchy towards women (Turton-Turner 17). The narrator compares Etti to a child twice in four lines and reinforces her "youth" by describing her not only as a child but as a small one. However, this treatment is ironic, as the scene takes place right after the narrator and Etti kiss for the first time, suggesting that she is far from being a child. Not only does this expose the narrator's unreliability in describing an adult woman as a girl after kissing her, but it also reveals the patriarchal mindset behind it. I argue that Martin's need to infantilise Etti stems from his desire to reassert his masculinity by creating a male/female hierarchy supported by an adult/child binary. Therefore, the fact that Etti is an adult may trigger Martin's masculinity anxieties, leading him to reconstruct her as a child he can control.

Martin is not the sole character who attempts to treat Etti as a child in need of adult supervision. While *en route* to the restaurant, Martin notices Etti playing with her bag "like a child who liked to listen to the metallic click the clasps made and was repeating it over and over" (*ODT* 195). Etti's behaviour triggers Pierce, who is especially sensitive as he has already consumed alcohol at home before driving. He exclaims: "[f]or God's sake, Etti" and abruptly removes the bag from her reach, causing her to "rais[e] her eyebrows

and smil[e]. Slightly apologetic but mostly playful" (*ODT* 195). Therefore, the text unveils the link between infantilising and controlling women, Moreover, given Martin and Pierce's competitive dynamic, both male characters seeking to control the female character implies that "the female" is a mere instrument for them to compete with and re-assert their masculinities. This highlights how the female character's agency is disregarded as a means to uphold patriarchal power structures.

Moreover, the use of Etti's name, which connects her to a Catholic martyr of virginity, introduces the theme of female sexuality. However, the text reveals that Etti is far from the image of an innocent child that her name may evoke. Her menstruation is mentioned in *ODT,* as shown when Martin asks Pierce, who is visiting him, where Etti is. Pierce explains that she is "sick" and in bed (*ODT* 74), which readers can infer is due to her menstruation. The fact that both male characters refuse to name it highlights their unwillingness to acknowledge her biological reality and suggests that she cannot fit into the image of an eleven-year-old virgin child who has never menstruated even if they want her to. Therefore, there is a clear tension between the narrator's idealised view of "pure" womanhood for Etti and her reality, exposing the limitations of patriarchal ideals. Despite Martin's attempts to construct Etti as a child-like figure who does not menstruate and can fit into a patriarchal model of womanhood that he can control, the text exposes that she does not conform to it.

Similarly, Etti is not a virgin either. Although there is no explicit mention of Etti having sexual relations with Pierce, there are indications of her being sexually active with other men in the village, particularly with Young Delaney. This is shown not only by his frequent inquiries about her (*ODT* 119), but also by his neighbour's comments that "'[i]t's strange, isn't it,' he went on, 'the way that girl has managed to hook the lot of us.'" (*ODT* 120), but also, and especially, that after Etti and Martin are back from France, the narrator angrily wonders "[w]hat will Young Delaney say when he learns about Etti's baby? Would he be happy to play father to this child of mine?" (*ODT* 263), implying that he is another lover of hers, threatening his position as the dominant male. Therefore, the text exposes Etti's sexuality as not conforming to the patriarchal model of passive femininity or even as a faithful wife, exposing Martin's patriarchal mindset and his attempts to instrumentalise her as a means through which he can re-assert his anxious masculinity by competing with Pierce and young Delaney.

Etti's sexuality is also strongly linked to her equestrian hobby. While the narrator mentions that she rides only after she visits him for the first time, he also intermingles it

with mentions some of her other hobbies (*ODT* 91), arguably downplaying its importance in Etti's life. However, she has been riding for months, and so it can hardly be seen then as a casual hobby but as an activity that she enjoys and that shows her capacity to focus and maturity. In this regard, Sarah Wintle contends that horse-riding and mastery of horses has almost always been associated with "power, status and masculinity," making it a desirable pursuit for feminists in the twentieth century (66).[49] Notably, the narrator's reaction to learning of Etti's interest in riding is less than enthusiastic. When he inquires with another woman, Andrea, about her riding lessons, her response is affirmative, with the added remark that "'[y]ep,' said Andrea. 'Though she doesn't need them. She's a fine horsewoman'" (*ODT* 91), which takes the narrator by surprise. The narrator reacts by belittling Andrea's comment, stating that "[a] fine horsewoman. I was vouchsafed by these words, no doubt commonplace among the ladies up at Grant's for anyone who doesn't sit a horse like a sack of potatoes" (*ODT* 91). Despite having never seen her ride, he insists that his judgement is authoritative compared to that of the "ladies." This implies that the narrator does not believe women can assess Etti's riding skills, in contrast to himself, a man. Interestingly enough, he has never ridden, and so his behaviour may respond to the fact that Etti's riding triggers his anxiety as a man not only because she is more skilful than him in physical activity but also because of the common associations between horses and sexuality (Wintle 69). Moreover, when Andrea describes Etti as a skilled horsewoman, the narrator reacts sceptically, immediately imagining Etti riding as follows: "Etti astride a horse. This picture formed in my head as a vision, a *revelation*" (*ODT* 91; emphasis added). This suggests that the narrator is aware that he cannot repress Etti's sexuality and riding, and thus attempts to control her image to mitigate his own feelings of insecurity about her sexual agency.

In the case of Missy, Martin does not seek to control her sexuality, but the reason may be that there is no need to do so, as the Institute already does. When the narrator is at the Institute with his brother in order to buy some newly modified sheep, Pierce asks

---

[49] Riding as an empowering experience is not a strange occurrence in Irish fiction written by women. A. Jamison for instance explains that in Edith Somerville's writings we can find equestrian riding as part of a feminist empowerment of the female characters (74). O'Connor contends that a similar case takes place in the texts written by Somerville and Violet Martin (*The Female and the Species* 117). A more recent example may be that of Maeve Kelly's "Orange Horses" (1991), where she explores the potential empowerment of equines in a strong patriarchal context.

about the feeding of these sheep. The seller explains that they are bottle-fed because the mothers are too young. The seller then "laughed. Uncomfortably, I thought later, looking back" (*ODT* 24). This reaction may indicate the narrator's awareness of the systematic exploitation of the ewes and the Institute's role in it. As Ferrari notes, the technological modification of animals is often worked around the idea of "complete control of nature" (22). This obsession is perhaps best exemplified in the control of the reproduction of the sheep. Echoing Dolly's cloning, Haverty's text shows genetic engineering and a technoscientific control of animal reproduction. In this regard, Franklin denounces that this "ontological choreography of new reproductive technologies" has been seen as a new form of human "achievement" (210). That is, nonhuman mothers are exploited in Haverty's novel for human benefit to the point that they are not even present or able to feed their own offspring. In other words, within the necropolitics at work in the novel, the sheep are simply a number of instruments exploited and killed when they are no longer of interest for scientists or farmers. Moreover, considering Patterson's observation that "[p]erhaps no animal is more 'downed' and vulnerable than a female giving birth" (119), the extreme vulnerability of these ewes who have given birth to multiple lams could prompt some ethical reflection; and yet, none occurs in the novel. Thus, female reproduction is brought to the front, and the text exposes the common source of androcentrism and anthropocentrism through the critique of the technoscientific exploitation of these females.

Reproduction also takes place at the human level in the novel. Although Martin is not one of the scientists who breed and experiment with the ewes, he plays a role in Etti's pregnancy, the only one she has had. It is revealed towards the end of the novel that she is pregnant, but not with her recently deceased husband's child. Rather, it is the result of her affair-trip with Martin, her brother-in-law (*ODT* 263). Etti is ashamed of her pregnancy and does not acknowledge its cause, which could be interpreted as punishment for her actions. Martin, on the other hand, is not physically punished beyond the loss of his brother. Etti's pregnancy in 1990s Ireland, where abortion was still illegal, makes her vulnerable like the ewe mothers and leaves readers with no information about its outcome. Despite the potential empowering effect of riding, Etti is left back in Fansha, a rural village she does not like, with a dead husband and pregnancy as proof of her moral transgression. Therefore, Etti becomes, like Missy, the vehicle through which the narrator is freed not only from his guilt but also from the consequences of his actions. He remains a single man who has just inherited his family's farm, whereas Etti is left as a sinful

woman instead of as a respectable widow, and she is not given the farm or any kind of economic means to escape her dependence on men. Instead, she continues to depend on her brother-in-law, lover, and the father of her baby.

Finally, the association of Missy and Etti is so strong that the narrator often becomes confused as to which character is being referred to. For instance, after a day in the bog, a neighbour, Young Delaney, asks "[h]ow's herself?" Initially, the protagonist believes he is being asked about Missy, but the neighbour clarifies, "Etti I'm enquiring about" (*ODT* 119). That the association between woman and ewe is here so strong that they are sometimes conflated can echo Neave's denunciation of the common "[c]onnections between sheep and women as subject to men's authority and violence" (130). The text suggests not only that the females of different species are similarly exploited but, more significantly, that both female characters are so alike that readers are prepared to expose and denounce the common exploitation of females in general. This is demonstrated when the narrator eventually kills the ewe and impregnates the woman. Thus, although Missy's oppression ends with her death at the end of the novel, Etti's oppression by the patriarchy is not over, revealing that under patriarchy women continue to depend on men.

As we conclude the analysis of the interconnectedness between Missy and Etti in their shared experiences of oppression as the "female," the next chapter focuses on another significant literary work that delves into the complex dynamics of power, anthropocentrism and androcentrism. In exploring Sara Baume's *Spill, Simmer, Falter, Wither,* the chapter aims to broaden our understanding of literary nonhuman agency and the perpetuation or resistance of patriarchal systems.

4. Kinship among Misfits in Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015)

4.1. Introduction

Finbar McCormick notes that dogs have a long history in Ireland, with remains dating back to 5000 – 4000 BC ("Prehistoric Ireland" 8). This historical context may explain the prevalence of dogs in Irish myths, both pagan and Christian. One of the most prominent pre-Christian myths featuring dogs is that of Cú Chulainn. In this regard, Susan McHugh explains that,

> [a]ccording to this legend, Culann, a renowned smith, kept the fiercest dog in the land until he inadvertently set it on his young nephew. In self-defence, the boy killed the dog but offered himself as a replacement for so valuable an animal. A druid renamed the boy Cú Chulainn, literally "the Hound of Culann", and this moniker grew to mean the Hound of Ulster, signalling how the fearless boy "who willingly exchanges a long life for a brief and glorious one" grows from social liability to the supreme warrior of the Ulster army. (*Dog* 47)

Consequently, dogs are not only central but also depicted as positive figures. In contemporary Ireland, dogs are also everywhere. According to Martin J. Downes et al.'s analysis of the spatial distribution of dogs and cats in Ireland, 640,620 out of 2,142,121 human households in 2006 Ireland were shared by humans and dogs (2). Thus, dogs continue to play a significant role in Irish society, akin to their roles in societies across the globe (McHugh, *Dog* 7). As a result, dogs feature prominently in Irish literature, as seen in works such as Somerville and Ross' *Some Experiences of an Irish R M* (1899), James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1920), Alannah Hopkin's *Dogs of Inishere* (2017), and Manchán Magan's *Three Dogs, Banshee Fingers and Other Irish Words for Nature* (2021).

As part of Irish culture, dogs may have unwittingly become witnesses to the necropolitics that govern contemporary Ireland. Achille Mbembe argues that in many countries, the massive consumerism that exists is dependent on rendering the Other, often from former colonies, into a state of living dead ("Necropolitics" 40). We see then that the living dead are individuals who have been otherised by hegemonic discourses, which are founded on colonialist ideologies. The economic dimension of necropolitics has been

further explored by scholars like Marta del Castillo Bravo, who contends that the capitalism of hyper-consumerism is extremely violent, as it infiltrates our bodies through seemingly innocuous advertisements and packaging, leading to constant frustration and explicit aggression (59). In other words, this necroeconomic system renders certain groups as disposable living dead.

In the context of Irish history, the 2008 economic crisis after the Celtic Tiger is a clear example of how necroeconomics operate. If the Celtic Tiger was a dream, it became "a nightmare overnight, and Ireland witnessed 'the death of the tiger'" (Armie 134). The crisis brought Ireland back to a period of austerity, which, unlike the post-independence austerity that sought to "sever the historical economic relationship with Britain, thereby demonstrating Ireland's independence, sovereignty, and autonomy" (White 90), was motivated by neoliberalism (Ging, "All-Consuming Images" 53). Although the spending cuts implemented in the 2008 crisis reduced public debt, they also deepened poverty, affecting the most vulnerable members of Irish society. This decision was made to avoid punishing the culprits of the financial crisis, such as bankers and corrupt politicians. The impact of this crisis on Irish society, both human and nonhuman, has been profound and long-lasting.

One novel in which we can spot both the literary dog and the 2008 necropolitical violence is in *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*[50] by Sara Baume. A prolific writer who was born in England but raised in Cork since she was four, Baume has published several works, including *A Line Made by Walking* (2017), *Handiwork* (2020), and *Seven Steeples* (2022) as well as numerous short stories such as "Fifty Year Winter," "Solesearcher1," "Green, Mud, Gold" and "The Infinite Goldfish" in recent years (Baume, "An Artist" 118). Despite her extensive bibliography, Baume's writing is of the highest quality, and her novel *SSFW* has garnered numerous awards, including the Hennessy New Irish Writing Award, the Rooney Prize for Literature, the Irish Book Award Sunday Independent Newcomer of the Year, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, and the Kate O'Brien Award. Probably because of the popularity of *SSFW,* it has also been translated into several languages.

SSFW portrays the unlikely friendship between Ray, a lonely, middle-aged man, and a one-eyed terrier named One Eye in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland.[51] The novel is divided

---

[50] Henceforth, *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* shall be referred to as *SSFW*.

[51] It is not uncommon to find outcasts in Baume's writing, as Margarita Estévez-Saá notes (87).

into four parts, each of which chronicles a season of the year and a stage in the relationship between Ray and One Eye. Ray is the narrator of the novel, and he is a socially awkward and reclusive man who lives alone in a small Irish town in what can be perceived as a parodic version of the Anglo-Irish Big House, as argued by Carolina Ulloa (118). His isolation is further compounded by the fact that he is the only surviving member of his family at the beginning of the novel. His mother died when he was two, and he always assumed that she died in childbirth. However, at the end of the novel, Ray learns the truth about her death. His father, who was abusive and neglectful, died two years before the novel's events after having worked in a sweets factory until his retirement. Since his death, Ray has kept his corpse hidden in the attic, where he has been consumed by rats. In general, Ray has never had any close friends or family and spends most of his time reading books in his "big house." However, when he adopts One Eye from the local animal shelter, his life takes an unexpected turn. One Eye is a lively and mischievous terrier who quickly becomes Ray's constant companion. Together, they embark on long walks along the Irish coast, and Ray discovers a new sense of purpose and meaning in his life.

The first part of the novel reveals the budding friendship between Ray and One Eye during the spring season. Ray initially hesitates to adopt the dog but eventually becomes deeply attached to him. The pair develop a routine of taking long walks, and Ray confides in One Eye about his innermost thoughts and feelings. As summer approaches, the relationship between Ray and One Eye becomes more complicated when the dog bites a boy and another dog. Authorities intend to euthanise One Eye for being a potential threat, and both characters flee their house and begin a journey throughout coastal Ireland. As the autumn season arrives, Ray and One Eye face new challenges, sleeping uncomfortably in their car as the weather becomes colder. A pivotal moment occurs when One Eye bites another dog, leading Ray to abandon him on the road briefly before returning to retrieve him. In the final section of the novel, set during the winter season, the relationship between Ray and One Eye reaches its climax as they conclude their coastal journey and return to the village. Here, Ray tries to set fire to his house and the epilogue suggests that he committed suicide in the sea while One Eye is left to run free.

In an especially detailed interview, Baume reveals that she published the essay "Eat or Be Eaten"[52] alongside *SSFW,* providing readers with the necessary context to read the novel (Baume, "An Artist" 123). Precisely because she was not familiar with the "dog books" tradition, she researched it in order to better understand what she was writing about. In the essay, she briefly surveys the genre, citing works such as Jack London's *White Fang* (1906), Franz Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" (1931), Gegard Donovan's *Julius Winsome* (2006)*,* and Paul Auster's *Timbuktu* (2009), and she notes in the essay that,

> [a]s for my own Dog Book, I know that I ended up writing from the point of view of a man speaking to his dog simply because I spend significantly more time with animals than I do with people; Big and Small are the dual protagonists in my life, and as with Alÿs's artwork, they insinuate themselves into my writing as a matter of course. Speaking to a creature who can never understand is quite a different sort of speaking: less self-conscious and prepossessing, more colourful and weaving. And this was what interested me as I wrote, what propelled me through to the epilogue. ("Eat or Be Eaten" 4)

Probably because of the importance of the figure of One Eye, this character has been analysed. Patricia Craig acknowledges the role of the dog One Eye as a figure of innocence in *SSFW* and his name as a reference to James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (194). Katharina Rennhak also pays some attention to the dog in her analysis of the narratology of the novel, concluding that Ray is constructed through his dialogue with One Eye (36). Arguably more interestingly from a non-anthropocentric perspective, Orsolya Szucs sees *SSFW* as a "living experiment" that tests new forms of interspecies coexistence (73). As we can see, Baume's brilliant presentation of interspecies communication in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland has attracted some academic attention.

Although it is true that the dog is a central figure in Baume's novel, some other aspects have also been briefly examined. Carolina Ulloa analyses *SSFW* as travel literature (116) and as a parodic rewriting of the "Big House" novel (118). In line with this, John Singleton contends that the house in Baume's novel represents death (206).

---

[52] Baume's essay's title refers to Jack London's *White Fang,* in which the author writes "the law was: EAT OR BE EATEN" ("Eat or Be Eaten" 2).

Therefore, there has been some academic analysis that has connected the novel to gothic themes. This is not too surprising, as the plot of the novel starts and ends in the family's residence, with the narrative full of references to death, suicide, madness, and isolation, suggesting its gothic dimension. In this regard, Jane Mitchell contends that the gothic holds the power "to scare the reader" and "force an audience to face its deepest fantasies and fears" (68). In this sense, I contend that the use of gothic conventions in *SSFW* may be useful to explore necropolitics and potential subversion of anthropocentric discourses.

With all of this in mind, this chapter aims to discern whether Baume's text reduces One Eye to a mere mechanism to construct Ray as a human, as argued by Katharina Rennhak (36), or if the text resists this anthropocentric instrumentalisation and explores a posthumanist kind of alliance between human and dog. To this end, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first one examines the socioeconomic context of the novel. I first focus on the necroeconomics at work in relation to the 2008 crisis and the impact on the poor and other species. I then explore the significance of the Big House figure in contemporary Ireland as a legacy of colonial Ireland. The second section focuses on how anthropocentrism operates in *SSFW*. It first discusses the speciesist hierarchy found in the novel and Ray's reaction to it. Then, it examines Ray's attempts to communicate with One Eye. The final section of this chapter delves into the gender dimension of necropolitics and of the Anglo-Irish family in the Big House. To do so, it analyses the absence of the mother and the way Ray learns about her. Finally, it scrutinises the father-son conflict, and whether One Eye plays a role in its resolution.

4.2. But Someone Partied, Didn't They?

The economic crisis of 2008 in Ireland brought an end to the optimistic era of the Celtic Tiger. As Diana Negra and Anthony P. McIntyre point out, the 2008 Irish banking collapse "left Ireland particularly exposed to a series of neoliberal manoeuvres that have reshaped the country politically, economically and culturally" (61). Austerity measures were among the most striking consequences of the crisis, which disproportionately impacted the poorest citizens (Blyth 15). Despite the fact that those at the top of the socioeconomic system were responsible for the problem, the government tried to shift the

blame onto the poor by arguing that they had "partied too."[53] This allowed the government to deflect blame from themselves and focus attacks on those who were deemed responsible for the crisis, those who were already marginalised in society. The government and the media accused the poor of relying on social welfare and committing fraud, despite a lack of evidence. As O'Flynn et al. observe, the "we all partied" discourse served as a convenient scapegoat for the reckless gambling of the rich during the Celtic Tiger (931). Tellingly, during the economic crisis, the Irish government and the media accused those depending on social welfare of committing fraud. As O'Flynn et al. note, Minister Fergus O'Dowd claimed that the fraud amounted to €600m, a figure that was uncritically repeated by the media. However, more accurate estimates suggest that the fraud was no more than €82m (O'Flynn et al. 930). The poor were "sacrificed" to absolve the actual culprits of the majority of the collapse, who blamed those who were unable to defend themselves against such accusations.

The austerity measures imposed during the crisis and the scapegoating of the poor can be interpreted as manifestations of necropolitics. In this regard, Fatmir Haskaj argues that "populations have been reconfigured and reconceptualized as 'excess'—not only disposable but also fundamentally valued only in their negation" (1148). Those who are rendered surplus become what Mbembe refers to as "dead in life" subjects, individuals who "cease to be part of the normative social world, a type of existential political excess that opens them to be killed with impunity" (Haskaj 1151). The social death that ensues takes the form of relegation of the subject into "the dust bin or rubbish heap of humanity, the forgotten masses of surplus labor in parts of the globe that do not have the social safety net of the welfare state, […] or the material excess and affluence that provide spaces for a scavenger class […] who live off the scraps of the well-to-do" (1155). In other words, in the case of unemployment, common in economic crises, the "surplus" is left without the social safety net and becomes easy prey for a scavenger class that thrives on scraps. As a result, the poor in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland have become surplus individuals who are subjected to social death until they succumb to illness or starvation. Given the significant role of necropolitics in postcolonial societies (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 13), examining the characters of Ray and One Eye in this context may shed

---

[53] Micheal O'Flynn et al. criticise that the Irish Government insisted on the "we all partied" discourse to justify austerity measures that disproportionately affected the poor (925).

light on how power, violence, and the expendability of certain groups intersect in contemporary Ireland.

4.2.1. Necroeconomics and the 2008 crisis

The manifestation of necropolitics during the economic crisis and the subsequent scapegoating of the poor find a parallel in the symbolism of rats in Baume's novel. While not a novelty in Irish literature, as they are common in Samuel Beckett's writing,[54] rats are often associated with money (Burt 52). Burt explains that because of this connection, rats can represent the mass production of consumerism, as they are both mass objects and consumers (18). The narrator complains of rats that have infested his attic for two years, which may suggest that these rats represent the economic boom prior to the 2008 crisis. Moreover, these rats have nested in the attic where Ray's father was kept two years earlier, consuming his body and clothes, leaving only his bones (*SSFW* 238). This arguably evokes the necroeconomics of the 2008 crisis, which followed the hyper-consumerism of previous years, framing the novel as a gothic exploration of the crisis on the poor.

As mentioned earlier, accusations of fraud against the poor were prevalent in the aftermath of the economic boom. Baume's novel features a narrator, Ray, who may be subject to such accusations. After his father's death, Ray continues to collect his father's pension by filling out forms and ticking boxes. Ray states that "I filled out forms and ticked boxes. I found that continued survival came down to a simple matter of form-filling, a basic proficiency in the ticking of boxes. And because I managed never to miss a box or make an illiterate mark on the bottommost line instead of signing my name,

---

[54] Mary Bryden explains that Beckett wrote about rats without "rating," that is, resisting popular mythology and symbolism of the species. The critic explains that the meanings Beckett ascribes to the rats in his writing have diverse and unpredictable meanings. In the academic's words, "Beckett's rats are not devoid of symbolic status, but this occasional symbolic status is one which takes on a colouring peculiar to Beckett, deriving from his knowledge of rats, and not 'ratified' by popular mythology" (326).

nobody came" (*SSFW* 74). This portrayal of Ray may be consistent with the discourse of the time, in which the poor were accused of committing fraud.

However, it also reflects the difficulties faced by the poor during the austere period. Ray never received an education (*SSFW* 69), and his family had little wealth or economic inheritance. Despite his father's daily work in a factory until his retirement (*SSFW* 94), they struggled to afford basic necessities such as heating or adequate shelter for the harsh Irish winters. Their poverty is so pervasive that Ray's childhood routine is remembered as follows:

> Every morning I built a fire in the bedroom grate and every day I kept it crackling until I was back beneath the duvet for the night, and every night the bedroom ceiling froze and the freeze crept up from the sharp bones of my toes and stopped to take me by the shoulders and shake me aware. (*SSFW* 198)

In this brief passage, we can see how poverty has affected Ray's life from his childhood through to his recent years. The only source of heat in his childhood home was fire, and freezing temperatures often disturbed his sleep. As he recalls, the previous winter had been "tremendously cold," and he mentions that, "[u]nless I succumb to one of those rain-eating illnesses of very old age, I don't expect I'll forget last winter" (*SSFW* 39). Moreover, right after the human character explains the fraud, he states that "[a]nd here I am still, and here you are" (*SSFW* 74). The poverty that has plagued him since childhood continues to pervade his adulthood, as evidenced by his admission that the money obtained from fraud is his only means of survival. This is further emphasised by his decision to adopt One Eye, a dog who was about to be euthanised in the kennel (*SSFW* 6), and whom he saved from certain death. These actions can be seen as a defence of the poor who struggle to survive in a society where government support is lacking. Furthermore, Ray's lack of education and economic inheritance limit his options and make it difficult for him to break out of the cycle of poverty. In addition, the novel suggests that the consequences of poverty can be fatal, as seen at the end of the novel, where Ray is left with no money and the possibility of starving to death. The suggestion of suicide in the novel's epilogue (*SSFW* 273) highlights the bleak reality faced by those living in poverty and exposes the unjust societal structures that perpetuate it. Therefore, while Ray may have committed fraud, his actions are a reflection of the difficulties faced by the poor during austere times.

While Ray does not benefit from the economic changes of recent decades, he is acutely aware of the many changes in the landscape. Baume's novel shows that the socio-economic changes brought about by the economic boom and subsequent crisis are evident. While some of these changes are primarily aesthetic, they reflect wider transformations in Irish society. For example, Ray complains about the introduction of invasive species, such as palm trees, in rural areas. He notes that "[t]he palm is a tropical tree, as out of place in this wetland of cows and fog as a bullseye in a bag of apple drops" (*SSFW* 209). Similarly, Ray reflects on changes to parks, lamenting the introduction of "new-fangled contraptions, these rungs and nooses and pony heads mounted to the sharp end of thick springs" (*SSFW* 222), which he sees as "medieval instruments of torture." He dislikes these changes and complains, "[w]hatever happened to straightforward swings and slides and seesaws?" (*SSFW* 222). In this way, the novel highlights Ray's resistance to the changes in contemporary Ireland's landscape, as well as the wider transformations that have occurred in Irish society.

One aspect of this critique can be seen in the way that technological waste affects the environment. During their journey, Ray and One Eye come across many places that interrupt the natural landscape. For instance, the narrator notes that "[i]nterrupting the fields, there's a golf course and a purposeless dispersal of bungalows. Barns, cars, bales and trees. Cows moving as imperceptibly as the hands of a clock, getting there without ever seeming to go" (*SSFW* 93). The narrator's criticism of the golf course can be seen as a rebuke against capitalist exploitation of nature, which often comes at the expense of the environment and other species.[55] Later, the narrator sees a lot of rusty appliances in an area with a sign that reads: "NO DUMPING: CCTV IN OPERATION" (*SSFW* 187). The presence of these appliances and technological waste denounces the frenzy consumerism that led to the 2008 crisis. The novel also highlights the globalised market's negative effects on the environment and local communities. For instance, Ray mentions that "all grave gravel is imported from China nowadays, that it's against the law to take stones from the beach, they have to be purchased from a Chinaman instead" (*SSFW* 242).

---

[55] As Abbie Richards explains, "[c]ourses dump often unregulated fertilisers and pesticides on their greenways to keep the grass looking unnaturally green. The fertilisers run off into bodies of water, causing a state of nutrient over-enrichment called eutrophication which results in algal blooms that destroy ecosystems. The pesticides run off into water, seep into the soil, or are carried by wind into other ecosystems where they wreak havoc on existing species" (2022).

Despite the potential for these words to be interpreted as somewhat racist, which may be explained by Ray's radical isolation from other humans, they also function as a critique, shedding light on the dispossession of the Irish and the exploitation of the landscape, thereby highlighting the negative effects of the Celtic Tiger boom and the 2008 crisis. Therefore, the novel criticises the negative aspects of Ireland's latest developments, including pollution and poverty, and exposes the destructive consequences of capitalist expansion on nature and society.

Ray's liminal situation allows the text to delve into the experiences of similarly marginalised entities, including nonhuman animals. Certain dog breeds are particularly abused, especially during and after the 2008 crisis. Ray mourns the death of a group of greyhounds who "were left tied up in their compound and froze to death. Without kennels, they lay on the concrete and were buried the first night of the blizzards. The article's photograph showed a scene of wheelbarrows, shovels and ropes which trailed off into the drifts" (*SSFW* 208). Cruelty against greyhounds is an ongoing issue on the island. During the 2008 crisis, a high number of dogs were abandoned or disappeared. According to the *Irish Times*, 15,576 greyhounds were registered in Ireland in 2013, but many of them "disappeared," likely killed or abandoned by their owners (B. O'Connor 2015). In a more recent documentary, RTÉ denounces the cruelty against these animals, stating that 16,000 are born in Ireland every year and that 5,987 were killed in 2017 because of poor performance or failure to make qualification times (*IrishCentral Staff* 2019). Ray's vivid depiction of the dogs' demise underscores not only the fatal effects of cold exposure but also the lack of agency of the dogs, who were tied up against their will. They were subjected to such a fate because they were deemed no longer economically valuable for racing. In other words, as the Other, animals like these greyhounds are affected by necroeconomics and so they can be disposed of with no consequences. The novel also examines necroeconomics on farm animals. In the middle of the novel, the narrator pays attention to the harbour where he sees a ship pulling out. He describes the ship as follows:

> Inside there are hundreds of individual crates, and inside each crate, there's a calf. I picture the calves are tan, white, black, mottled, and the ones with window cabins are staring out across the bay. But they can't see as far as the bird walk. They didn't notice what went on while they were watching. They don't understand what's happening to them and they are mooing, even though we can't hear them from here,

they are mooing tragically for their mothers, for solid earth beneath their hooves. (*SSFW* 108)

The novel portrays the commodification and exploitation of animals in the food industry, reducing them to mere objects for human consumption. The mention of farms in Baume's fictional Ireland is brief, but it denounces the consequences of farming for these animals. The calves are depicted as "mooing tragically for their mothers," which reveals not only empathy towards these animals but also a denunciation of their transportation far away by ship as is common in globalised capitalism. This twofold critique against contemporary farming exposes the undeniable suffering of animals and its impact on the natural environment, which is exacerbated by their transportation. During Ray and One Eye's journey, they meet a former pig farmer who reveals a callous attitude towards farm animals. When asked if his pigs ever saw the sun, the farmer responds, "'[n]o need, the pig sheds were only massive'" (*SSFW* 168). The text's critique of the anthropocentric view of intelligence as the basis for ethical treatment is emphasised by Ray's observation that "'[p]igs are smart,' I say to which the farmer agrees that they are '[t]he second smartest'" (*SSFW* 168). That intelligence is not enough to grant these animals any kind of ethical regard is further emphasised by the way the former farmer talks about his dogs. As he tells Ray, he would "'[n]ever lock them in. It's proper cruelty to have them locked in.'" (*SSFW* 168). In other words, whether locking an animal is cruel or not depends on which species they belong to, exposing not only a clear speciesist bias but also the foundation for the contemporary farming industry. As the narrator reflects recalling the many roadkills, "[i]t's jackdaws and swans again, the perplexing way in which people measure life, but I let it be" (*SSFW* 168). The narrator ultimately condemns the systematic exploitation of other species and the blindness of humans to the anthropocentric hierarchies that enable it. Thus, the novel underscores how necropolitics affects not only humans but also other beings. The 2008 crisis, in other words, did not create new forms of living dead, but it did exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalised humans and other species to market forces. In short, then, the 2008 crisis otherises certain humans to justify the austerity measures that the capitalist market requires, a necropolitical capitalism that also continues to kill members of other species with no consequences. In other words, both the poor and certain species are turned into living dead who can be exploited and killed.

4.2.2. The Anglo-Irish Big House's Legacy

In light of the significant changes that have taken place in Ireland in recent decades, particularly marked by the Celtic Tiger and the 2008 crisis, it is essential to examine how these changes have affected Irishness, mostly because of Baume's novel central focus on dogs, a species often used by British colonialism to dehumanise the Irish. While dogs of any breed can play a powerful role in articulating ideas of nation, gender, and class, the breed chosen in the novel is often significant and not accidental. As Sarah Cheang explains, whatever the race of the dog, they are "powerful instruments in the articulation of nation, gender, and class [partially because] the practice of dog breeding has been shown to be a rich arena for the expression of social identity through it competitions of hierarchy and heredity" (359). For instance, specific breeds like greyhounds or terriers are commonly associated with Irishness (McHugh, *Dog* 112), probably because remnants of the pre-Christian and pre-British Irish terrier can be found on the island (Scharff 82). An analysis of dog breeds specific to Ireland by R. F. Scharff shows that Irish dogs were likely interbred with British dogs after colonisation started (81), and so dog breeding highlights the colonial history of Ireland and the extent to which British influence has reconfigured Irish nature. In the novel, One Eye, the terrier, becomes a symbol of Irish identity prior to British colonialism, which has been reshaped after it. One Eye thus provides a means of exploring Irishness and its evolution throughout Ireland's history, including the recent changes brought about by the Celtic Tiger and the 2008 crisis.

While both Ray and One Eye are still in the house, One Eye attacks other dogs: particularly, an unnamed Shih Tzu (*SSFW* 104). The attacked dog has a notable pedigree, especially within the context of British colonialism.[56] This type of dog is believed to have originated from Tibet and was popular among the Chinese emperors. As Alex Seymor explains, the breed is named after one of the most beautiful women from China, Xi Shi Quan, feminising not only the dog (2) but also the Chinese. We find here then the feminisation of nature and the colonised Other, a common practice in colonising discourses (M. O'Connor, *The Female and the Species* 6). In the early twentieth century, the Pekingese dog was especially popular among British women, contributing to their

---

[56] This breed is often associated with the Pekingese dog. Sarah Cheang explains that the Pekingese dog became a popular lapdog for high class British women and a symbol of their colonial control over the Chinese (360–461).

sense of British national superiority over China, given the violent means through which these dogs were acquired. That it is precisely this breed that is attacked in the novel becomes symbolically relevant in exploring Irish issues, given the colonial history of Britain in Ireland and Chinese territories. One may infer that the reason why One Eye, representing the past and present of Ireland, attacks a Shih Tzu dog is due to the colonial heritage discursively associated with the breed. Thus, the instability of human ontologies caused by socio-economic changes is addressed through nonhuman animals, illustrating how other species remain instruments to negotiate national ontologies.

The negotiation of national identities in *SSFW* is also evident in its gothic elements. As Jarlath Killeen notes, "[i]f the Gothic is often seen as the return of the repressed, the past that will not stay past, Ireland has usually been constructed as a place where the past had never in fact disappeared, a place where the past is in fact the always present" (*Emergence* 10). The author of *SSFW* has commented in some interviews about her childhood in Cork. She explains that she used to feel "a bit 'othered' because my dad was a divorced Englishman, and I was born in the UK […] I always knew I was – just slightly – different to my peers because of my dad, of my vaguely-English accent, of my foreign surname" (Baume, "An Artist" 120). Given that she lived in Cork, one of the places where the majority of Big Houses between January 1920 and July 1921 were burned (Donnelly 142), Baume's sense of displacement may have influenced her exploration of these buildings in *SSFW*. Thus, this section will focus on the national ontological anxieties presented in the novel and the role of the house in the national discourse portrayed in the novel.

The Irish Big House is a significant element that embodies the discussions of Irishness or lack thereof. Vera Kreilkamp defines it as "a country mansion, not always so very big, but typically owned by a Protestant Anglo-Irish family presiding over a substantial agricultural acreage leased out to Catholic tenants who worked the land" (60). This definition exposes the key role of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy and Ireland's colonial background. These houses were a symbol of an old elite regime in landownership that remained loyal to the British crown, raising suspicion and sometimes hostility among nationalists, including some IRA members (141). Probably at least partially because of

this, during the 1910s, especially after the 1916 Rising,[57] "over two hundred Big Houses were burned" (Kreilkamp 72). As James S. Donnelly Jr. explains, "[t]he burning of Big Houses belonging to landed Protestant and the occasional Catholic was one of the most dramatic features of the Irish Revolution of 1919-23" (141). Therefore, these houses remained problematic symbols of Anglo-Irish ascendancy in twentieth-century Ireland.

Likely due to their political significance in the past century, it has been a significant and recurring element in Irish fiction. According to Kreilkamp, the Big House genre emerged as a national literary form in 1800 with Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800)*,* which portrays the decline of the gentry inhabiting these houses (Kreilkamp 61). As Kreilkamp explains, we find "the neglected house as symbol of family and class degeneration [and] the improvident landlord alienated from his duties" (62). In the nineteenth century, it became full of allegorical Gothic motifs that invoke the anxiety of the way in which the "beleaguered Ascendancy interact with and intrude upon the developing conventions of a more transparently realistic Big House fiction" (67). These anxieties may not have disappeared yet, for these houses have remained a constant presence in Irish literature with canonical writers like Sheridan Le Fanu, Somerville and Ross, and Bram Stoker continuing to create doomed and isolated satanic landlords residing in their "encumbered, decaying or strikingly archaic mansions" (68).

The Big House genre has endured long after the establishment of independent Ireland in 1922 (Kreilkamp 61). Throughout the twentieth century, we can find numerous examples of this genre, such as Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), which explores themes including Catholicism and nostalgia for the age of English aristocracy and captures the dying days of Anglo-Irish society, JG Farrell's *Troubles* (1970), John Banville's *Birchwood* (1973), which contains a dark and unexpected secret involving the identity of blood relatives (Nakamura 6), William Trevor's *Fools of Fortune* (1983), which develops a kind of paradise regained in which the old order has been displaced (Norris 112), and Jennifer Johnston's *Fools Sanctuary* (1987), a novel set during the Irish Civil War that explores English imperialism and its decline with a focus on a once-grand Irish hotel during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). These works share a

---

[57] The 1916 Rising, also known as the Easter Rising, was an armed insurrection in Ireland in which members of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army (IRA) occupied buildings in Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic independent of British rule (McGarry vi).

common thread: eccentric characters and a decaying social order that threaten their lifestyles and even their lives.

In the case of *SSFW*, the house in which Ray resides and which he attempts to burn at the end of the novel may also frame the novel within the Big House tradition. In *SSFW*, Ray's residence is depicted as a fairly big estate with several floors, an attic, a big albeit abandoned garden and even a store to rent out (*SSFW* 199). These features are common to these Anglo-Irish houses, which could occupy several generations of a family. Although the house could have been purchased by the father before Ray's birth, it is highly unlikely because of their extreme poverty, suggesting that it is some kind of inheritance. Moreover, as the narrator notes, "[m]y father's house is one of the oldest in the village" (*SSFW* 13). Consequently, the house may be as old as the history of Ray's family on the island. This would imply that Ray's family and their house is one of those which were not burned during the Rising.

Nonetheless, it is essential to consider that, as Carolina Ulloa argues, Baume's novel presents a parodic reinterpretation of the traditional Big House (118). The scholar's assessment is substantiated by several factors. Firstly, the house is conspicuously unkempt and cluttered with refuse, diverging from the typical high-class aesthetic. Additionally, the absence of any heating system in the house accentuates its state of decay (*SSFW* 198). Furthermore, the family's source of income from renting, derived from renting out a small local space rather than an expansive estate, suggests that the house has lost its former grandeur, if it ever had it. In this context, Ulloa aptly notes that "parody deals with the logic of the paradoxical" (102). Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that Ray's oppressive "big house" engages in a discourse that echoes the myriad paradoxes inherent in the Anglo-Irish houses, symbolising Ireland's complex and paradoxical colonial history.

One of the key aspects of the families inhabiting these estates is religion. Although it is true that the narrator explains that his father attended Catholic Mass every Sunday, he notes that "I don't believe he believed. He only went to mass on Sundays because he liked to grumble and smoke by the gates after the communion notices" (*SSFW* 114). We find then a potentially Anglo-Irish family whose patriarch attends Catholic meetings but who is not Catholic himself, perhaps presenting him and his family as outsiders. Moreover, right after this, the narrator states that "I don't believe either" (*SSFW* 114). Therefore, the family is, if not protestant or agnostic, at least not conforming to the traditional Irish Catholic model of family. This characterisation potentially positions them

as religious outsiders within their community, echoing the historical perception of the Anglo-Irish in the twentieth century.

If this were the case, the fact that Ray's father used to pay the old neighbour to sit and educate him could be linked to the way in which these landlords used to hire Irish natives. As Ray describes her, "[i]t was the old neighbour whose name I can't remember who, after she'd taught me to sew, taught me to read. I remember she lived above the grocer's and I called her Aunt even though she wasn't" (*SSFW* 69). Perhaps because Ray is looking for a new figure able to fill the void of his absent mother, the main character turns the neighbour into an aunt and constructs a family. However, Ray's search for a family member in his neighbour is hardly successful. When Ray first describes her "aunt" to One Eye, he readily admits that, despite his desire for an aunt, "she was just the woman my father enlisted to sit with me during the day" (*SSFW* 69). In other words, she is a paid sitter, an employee, not because she was fond of him. Moreover, the neighbour is a fully Catholic woman, who, as Ray notes, "[h]er only books were the Bible and a mass missal with a leatherette cover, if these can even be called books" (*SSFW* 200). That is, the old "aunt" is a deeply Catholic woman who is paid by the landlord to educate his only and isolated child. That she is paid to stay with the child only for some hours a day instead of all day long leads to her death, as all the things she taught him about first aid cannot be applied (*SSFW* 69). The limitation of hours is most likely caused by the family's poverty. Thus, there seems to be here a parody of the working relationship between the Anglo-Irish gentry and their employees, emphasising their decadence as well as their attempts to recreate their ascendancy's traditions.

As a heavily charged symbol, the Big House in *SSFW* shapes the relationship between Ray and his father with the outside world. Despite his father's efforts to socialise after mass every single Sunday (*SSFW* 114), he becomes increasingly isolated after retirement. As Ray observes, no one ever visits their house (*SSFW* 100), and even after his father's death, no one inquires about him, indicating his exclusion from the community. This isolation is likely due to his father's Anglo-Irish ascendancy, marking him as the "other" and thus socially excluded. Furthermore, his father's already limited communication with Ray becomes non-existent after retirement. Ray notes,

> [i]n the latest years of my father's life, he misplaced all of his small talk. Have I told you this already? Have I told you how, gradually, he stopped making his usual humdrum enquiries: whether the post had come yet, or if it looked like rain, or what

we were having for supper that night. Maybe his mind had gone. Maybe he was an imbecile. Maybe he just didn't see the point of wasting what breath he had left on such meaningless niceties, I can understand that. (*SSFW* 159).

I argue that this silence can be seen as the weight of the house on his shoulders, turning him into a living dead who is completely shut down from the rest of the community and left to die once he is no longer economically useful as a retired old man. The father is silenced by the weight of a history that positions him as the evil Other, with no means of escape from the oppressive effects of the house except by leaving it, something he never attempts, not even temporarily. As we read, the only item the father owned outside the residence was a rowboat which, Ray explains, he never used (*SSFW* 77). This may be another symbol of the father's status as a living dead imprisoned in the legacy of the Big House: even though the rowboat would have been a way to escape the house, he does not pursue this venue and so he never abandons the house or its legacy. The father's paralysis is further elaborated in the way he dies. As we read, "[m]y father never got up from the table all the time he was choking. He didn't thrash around; he didn't knock anything over. He placed his nose neatly between the crockery and leaned the weight of his head down after it without upsetting so much as a teaspoon (*SSFW* 230–31). The father's quiet death reflects his inability to make noise, to upset anything, especially the oppressive legacy embodied by the residence, represented by the table and its utensils. Consequently, the father is unable to resist the oppressive effects of the Big House and dies slowly until his final death while eating a sausage, his usual meal and symbol of the routine within the house that he cannot escape until the end of his days.

Similar to the father, Ray's isolation is hardly easy to miss. Ray's interactions are limited to his father, who died two years prior to the novel, and a paid neighbour, who passed away when Ray was nine years old. The narrator explains that he never had the desire to join the other children or attend school like them, stating, "[b]ack then, it never dawned on me that I should have the things they had too. I would have to be made again, I thought. I would have to be reborn" (*SSFW* 60). This statement suggests that Ray's difference from the other children stems from his lack of ascendancy, as these other children are not from a "Big House family" like him. Therefore, Ray's isolation highlights the effects of the building on his isolation from the rest of Ireland, as his position in society is determined by his family's history and current poverty.

Additionally, in reflecting on the future of the house after his death, the narrator envisions the intrusion of neighbours who will come to scavenge for valuable utensils and appliances. He predicts that "[t]he neighbours will come poking to see what utensils or appliances might be worth recycling for themselves, and then they'll quickly move on again, empty handed. Shocked by how life might come to be so wretched as ours, so insignificant" (*SSFW* 230). This intrusion not only represents a violation of the house but also highlights the lack of understanding and knowledge that outsiders have about Ray and his family. In the context of the Anglo-Irish gentry, their shock would be even greater as they may still hold onto outdated perceptions of this social class from the nineteenth century, failing to recognise the current state of decay of Ray's Anglo-Irish family. The isolation of this outsider family not only impacts Ray's social interactions but also exposes the way in which his community wrongly imagines this type of family.

Interestingly, Ray does not seem to harbour any hatred towards the idea of his neighbours intruding into his home and possessions. This attitude could be attributed to the national difference which makes the narrator see himself as a threat. As a child, Ray was drawn to the story of the *Billy Goats Gruff*, and in particular, the "crouching troll," whom he identified with on a personal level. As the narrator explains, "[w]hen I was a boy and came to this page, I thought of the children passing on their way to school and felt a twinge of camaraderie with the crouching troll, as though I'd discovered my species" (*SSFW* 81). In fact, he acknowledges that "I've grow (sic) to resemble this troll as an adult, as an old man" (*SSFW* 82). This clear identification of himself with the monster in the stories he loved as a child is an indication that he has accepted his status as an outsider in his community. Perhaps this is due to his ascendancy, symbolised by the house, which marks him as different from the others. As a result, the profound isolation and difference between the children outside and inside the residence reveal the Anglo-Irish ontological anxiety and the impossibility of erasing it. They cannot simply obliterate a history they did not write but share, and the shadow of the Big House looms over them.

That the house affects Ray and how he interacts with his community does not mean that there is no resistance against this oppressive power as embodied by the house and the father as part of the family's legacy. Ray's first and most important resistance takes place with his father's death. Ray does not take action when his father suffocates to death, and he reflects on the aftermath in the following way:

I knew, I knew, I knew. To do all of these things. But I didn't. Not one.

> I stood at the sink facing my father with my arms dangling at my sides. […] I
> watched as his lips and fingernails turned blue.
> The blue began pale, with only the intensity of a sea aster, but then it continued to
> intensify through harebell and into forget-me-not. And I wasn't paralysed by fear or
> stunned into spontaneous memory loss.
> Nothing like that. I didn't do anything because I simply decided not to. (*SSFW* 226)

Ray's decision not to intervene and save his father's life, despite having been taught how to respond in such a situation during his childhood (*SSFW* 69), can be interpreted as a form of rebellion against his father and the family legacy he represents. Ray becomes complicit in his father's death, which may remind readers of one key work in the Big House genre, Rosamond Jacob's *The Troubled House*. According to Gerardine Meaney, in Jacob's novel, the Troubles are enacted through the house, both metaphorically and materially, mainly through the interaction between father and son, where the son eventually kills the father as a form of resistance against the colonial regime (245). Baume's text can be read as a castration of the father figure as a symbol of Ireland's colonial past.

In considering Ray's resistance to his family's legacy, we can identify a second key moment in his weekly attendance at mass within the community, which he continues to do every Sunday after his father's death. While Ray's continued attendance may suggest a continuation of his father's legacy, his actions during the last homily reveal a form of resistance. As he tells One Eye, he has not been to mass for almost one year and one half of a year now, "[n]ot since the occasion upon which I stop in the middle of the homily and pronounced the word HORNET. I pronounced it with less force than a shout but enough force to be heard from the pulpit" (*SSFW* 58). When he interrupts the service to pronounce the word "HORNET," he speaks up against the othering he experiences due to his connection to the figure of the Big House. This moment represents a significant departure from his father, who died in silence, and marks one of Ray's earliest acts of rebellion. As such, it sheds light on the complex relationship between religion, power, and identity in Baume's work.

Although Ray has already resisted his father and the house's legacy, there are still lingering effects. Ray's father continues to haunt him even after his death, as he is mentioned throughout the novel. This serves as a reminder of Ireland's colonial past, which continues to haunt future generations. Ray feels trapped not only within the house

but also in his own existence as a paralysed character who does not move forward. Adopting One Eye may offer a solution to Ray's situation. When One Eye bites a dog and a boy, Ray leaves the house for the first time in his life to avoid the dog being euthanised (*SSFW* 104). Although this could be viewed as a purely negative experience, it is also the reason why Ray became motivated enough to abandon the house. This marks a moment of physical liberation for Ray and highlights the dog's role in his decision. By leaving the house, Ray is able to escape its oppressive influence, albeit unintentionally.

Upon returning to the village and the house after his travels with One Eye, Ray starts to imagine the house on fire. As he tells One Eye, "sometimes I think that I will burn my father's house, which isn't my father's house any more and I shouldn't keep calling it that" (*SSFW* 254). Only after being away from the house and experiencing new things with One Eye does Ray finally dare to imagine burning it, reminiscent of the burning of many Big Houses in Ireland in the early twentieth century. Shortly after, Ray attempts to set the house on fire, using firelighters and oil to ignite it. As we read, "I don't have any petrol or paraffin or even alcohol. I scatter a box of firelighters across the living room floor. I find a can of Easy Oil and spray it onto the rocking chair, the coffee table, the carpet. I light a match. I throw the match. I run" (*SSFW* 267). While the fire does not catch, the act of attempting to burn down the house is symbolically significant. It represents Ray's attempt to destroy the legacy of British colonisation in Ireland and purify it with an alternative national identity. However, the fact that the fire does not catch suggests that the legacy cannot be easily erased, and the novel may end in an arguably pessimistic tone.

This pessimistic ending is further emphasised by what can be seen as the narrator's suicide. The epilogue provides clues about Ray's fate, even though it is uncertain. The narrator describes the last scene by saying that "[t]here is a tiny figure, right on the cliffslope's edge, like a sock puppet to the theatre of the open sea" (*SSFW* 273). Given that we can read that the last lines of the epilogue say "[h]e is running, running, running. He is One Eye" (*SSFW* 273), which creates a circular narrative with the prologue. The implication is that One Eye is free, and Ray may have passed away, freeing One Eye to run wild without his human companion. Moreover, after introducing this "tiny figure," the third-person-narrator describes the scene as follows:

His shoulders are hunched and his head is lowered. There's a trail of smashed briars and gorse running across the slope in a straight line, from the spot where the tiny figure is hunching, into the water.

And he is looking down as though he is waiting for something to rise from there.

The tide is high. (*SSFW* 273)

The epilogue of Baume's novel provides a possible resolution to the open-endedness of the narrative, and it is plausible to infer that the "something" One Eye is waiting for in the sea is Ray. Since Ray cannot swim (*SSFW* 263) he would drown if he entered the sea, and the smashed briars along the straight line from One Eye's position to the sea may indicate Ray's heavy walking towards the sea. Therefore, it is likely that Ray committed suicide, leaving One Eye to fend for himself. Although this could be read as a defeat, Mbembe argues that "under conditions of necropower, the lines between resistance and suicide, sacrifice and redemption, martyrdom and freedom are blurred" ("Necropolitics" 40). Ray's suicide can then be interpreted as a final act of resistance against the system that alienated him as a living dead. Although it might seem like a form of defeat, his decision to take control of how he wants to die can also be read as an ultimate act of agency. Unlike the heroine of the Big House novel *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002) by William Trevor, who is determined to end her life in the house (Nakamura 4), Ray decides to end his life outside the house, in the sea, probably as a final gesture of resistance against the house and everything it represents. Hence, Ray's suicide is not a total defeat but rather the final resistance of an Anglo-Irish legacy that is long past and accepts his fate.

Furthermore, the novel ends on a positive note with One Eye running towards his future, symbolising resistance against necropolitics for, even though the human is dead, the dog is still alive, "running, running, running" (*SSFW* 273). The dog is then not only the witness of the Anglo-Irish family's final death by observing Ray's suicide but also his living legacy. By leaving the dog instead of the house as his legacy, Ray's suicide can be regarded as a more optimistic choice. Instead of looking for hope in the past, Ray realises that a non-oppressive future can only arise from interspecies connections with the dog One Eye. Therefore, despite the potentially bleak ending, the novel actually ends with a beam of hope in another species, suggesting that hope resides in opening ourselves to relations with other species. Because of all of this, the following section focuses on anthropocentrism and Ray's reaction to it in search of non-hierarchical interspecies communication.

4.3. 2008 Necropolitics: Pets, Slaves, and their Masters' Parties

4.3.1. Pets and Other Animals

Val Plumwood argues that anthropocentrism leads to a "sense of power and autonomy" (*Environmental Culture* 120) that is based on a hierarchical human/Other distinction. One common justification for human superiority is the attribution of certain traits, such as intelligence and agency, to humans only, but Plumwood highlights how this hyper-separation between the species "produce[s] typical hegemonic constructions of agency" that allow the dominant party to "'forget' the other" as long as they remain useful to the dominant group (*Environmental Culture* 110). Jacques Derrida similarly contends that reason is often used to otherise certain groups, both within and beyond the human species. As Derrida provocatively suggests:

> It is not just a matter of asking whether one has the right to refuse the animal such and such a power (speech, reason, experience of death, mourning, culture, institutions, technics, clothing, lying, pretense of pretense, covering of tracks, gift, laughter, crying, respect, etc.—the list is necessarily without limit, and the most powerful philosophical tradition in which we live has refused the ''animal'' all of that). It also means asking whether what calls itself human has the right rigorously to attribute to man, which means therefore to attribute to himself, what he refuses the animal, and whether he can ever possess the pure, rigorous, indivisible concept, as such, of that attribution. (*Animal* 135)

Derrida's critique of classical philosophical oppositions, which asserts that they entail a violent hierarchy rather than peaceful coexistence (*Positions* 41) aligns with Judith Butler's perspective on anthropocentrism and dualisms. Butler emphasises that anthropocentrism denies the shared material vulnerability of all living beings, reinforcing the hierarchies that privilege the dominant Self ("Rethinking" 2). By discursively othering certain beings, anthropocentrism constructs a false sense of purity and ontological protection for those deemed superior. Therefore, both Derrida and Butler highlight the inherent violence and power dynamics present within philosophical and anthropocentric frameworks.

Yi-Fu Tuan's perspective in *Dominance and Affection—The Making of Pets* suggests that pet-keeping is rooted in dominance, serving to ease human anxieties toward nature (5). This perpetuates an anthropocentric worldview, as humans assert control over their animal companions, thus failing to dismantle the hierarchical relationship between humans and animals. However, Donna Haraway proposes an alternative approach based on relatings, which emphasises the importance of embracing the messy and complex love that arises from interspecies connections (*The Companion* 34). In this framework, the inherent flaws and mistakes in interspecies interactions are acknowledged, challenging traditional notions of dominance. By actively engaging with the present moment and recognizing our own mortality, we can form non-anthropocentric connections that transcend conventional dichotomies (*Staying* 1). This necessitates embracing the complexities and uncertainties of these relationships rather than seeking simplistic solutions, as I contend we can observe in *SSFW*.

Baume's novel may be one place through which the intricate and often contradictory perspectives surrounding human and other species relationships are explored, particularly through the interactions between Ray and One Eye. While the primary focus lies on Ray's bond with One Eye, it is important to recognise that Ray has previously encountered other species. This is evident when Ray reflects on his ninth birthday visit to the zoo, a memorable experience he shared with his father, partially because this is the only birthday he has ever celebrated. Recalling this event, Ray describes the poignant atmosphere of the rain-soaked zoo as follows:

> There's nothing sadder than a rainy zoo, or wildlife park. All the creatures look either slightly dejected or slightly deranged. The big ones paced their enclosures. The small ones cowered under something and I couldn't tell if they were sheltering from the downpour or trying to hide. I moved on reluctantly from each compound. I wanted to stay there forever amongst all the sad animals. As the rain grew heavier, my father coaxed me into the gorilla house, then left me to go and stand in the doorway and smoke. There was a gigantic silverback leaning against the window of his enclosure. His hands were so humanlike, his nails exquisitely kept, much more so than my own. Slowly, slowly, he extended the index finger of his right hand and placed its tip against the glass. I lifted mine and laid it level on the other side. And we stayed like that a long while, until my father came back and told me it was time to go. (*SSFW* 87)

Baume skilfully depicts Ray's initial encounter with other species during his inaugural zoo visit, an important interaction given his isolated existence within the confines of the house. Instead of aligning himself with fellow human visitors, Ray empathises with the animals, particularly the gorillas. He recognises a profound kinship with them, as they too experience confinement and a lack of agency. Hence, this identification may arise from Ray's realisation that these animals, like him, are enslaved beings, mirroring his own enslavement under his authoritarian father in their residence. Ray's isolation extends beyond the physical boundaries of his home, as he remains legally unrecognised and devoid of existence beyond it. It is only in his forties, and solely because his father requires a driver, that Ray finally receives his "first ever document of identification" (*SSFW* 133). The act of driving in the novel serves a dual purpose; it is both a symbol of Ray's potential agency and a link to his past and the abuse inflicted upon him by his father. This connection between driving and the father's abuse is exemplified by a particular incident recounted by the narrator, where he reflects on a night from his childhood when he was "very young, too young for riding in the front seat of the car" (*SSFW* 192):

> I remember the tonsured back of my father's head as he drove and the radio playing wordless songs, and I remember crying. I bawled and screeched and sobbed and snivelled because I'd dropped Mr Buddy on the floor and couldn't reach to pick him up again. All of a sudden my father yanked the handbrake and stopped the car. He leaned over and lifted me from the back seat. Then he placed me into a tuft of grass at the side of the road, and drove away. Young as I was, I remember thinking this wasn't the sort of thing fathers were supposed to do. I remember thinking he would soon come back, he would definitely come back. But he didn't. (*SSFW* 192)

The deliberate emphasis on this particular moment within the narrative serves to underscore the profound trauma inflicted by Ray's father, thereby accentuating the crucial role of driving as a thematic device for exploring the intricate layers of Ray's past experiences. A significant instance that epitomises the father's abusive conduct is depicted when he abandons Ray on the road, paralleling the common occurrence of dogs left behind by their owners. Consequently, Ray's perception of the zoo as a desolate place is not solely attributable to the melancholic ambience caused by the rain but rather stems

from his recognition that the animals are subjected to involuntary confinement, unable to escape their predicament.

It is likely that Ray's empathetic disposition towards deceased animals encountered during his journey with One Eye is influenced by his own childhood encounters. What particularly disturbs Ray is not only the brutal nature of their demise due to vehicular accidents but also the disregard for the value of their lives. The initial instance where the narrator provides explicit details about these lifeless creatures:

> Hares and mice, wagtails and rooks, squirrels and mink. Every kind of creature every kind of killed. Eviscerated and decapitated, lobotomised and disembowelled. Sometimes the only remains are a puff of uprooted plumage, pale down dancing in the whoomph of air from passing vehicles, no sign of the bird from which it was bashed loose. The people inside the grim reaper cars don't care, they have places to go, they keep going. (*SSFW* 143–44)

The text describes the corpses of animals found on the road and highlights the lack of concern by those who caused their deaths. The explicit description of these lifeless creatures in the text vividly portrays the extent of their mutilation and the absence of concern displayed by the drivers responsible for their deaths. The indifference towards the animal corpses is further highlighted by the contrast with the attention given to a human death marked by a crucifix on the same road (*SSFW* 130), exposing the underlying anthropocentrism within Baume's fictional Ireland. The observation that only a young girl is mourning one of the roadkill animals emphasises the biased treatment of animal grief. As the narrator states,

> [t]here are two men and a woman in the road. One man is standing on the tar, the other is directing the traffic. The woman is kneeling down beside the swan. I think she is crying, she seems to be crying, and this makes me suddenly angry. I think of all the other creatures we've seen since we set out. I think of the rat, the fox, the kitten, the badger. I think of the jackdaw, did you see the jackdaw? We passed it in the queue to pass the swan. Its beak was cracked open, its brains squeeged out. Why didn't anybody stop for the jackdaw? Because the swan looks like a wedding dress, that's why. Whereas the jackdaw looks like a bin bag. Because this is how people measure life. (*SSFW* 143)

Ray articulates his apprehension regarding the unequal treatment of animals in the context of grief, specifically noting that the sole animal being mourned is a swan, a creature that Herbert J. Levine recognises as frequently associated with themes of beauty, love, and transformation within William Butler Yeats's poetry (413). The swan's symbolic connection with notions of beauty might explain Ray's critical perspective towards the swans, manifested in his observation of their resemblance to "wedding dresses," possibly alluding to Yeats's literary works. By questioning this mournful emphasis on swans, Ray effectively exposes the deeply ingrained anthropocentric bias prevalent in poetry and Irish literature, thereby shedding light on the prevailing anthropocentrism that permeates society. Furthermore, Levine's analysis of Yeats's depiction of swans reveals the narcissistic tendencies of humans who regard other species solely as reflections of their own thoughts and sources of personal enjoyment (418). Thus, within this context, *SSFW* serves as a condemnation of the human inclination to grieve solely for what is perceived as connected to oneself, as the swan's mourning is driven by the young woman projecting her own emotions onto them, irrespective of their intrinsic existence and material reality.

The portrayal of One Eye in the novel can be interpreted as that of the arguably anthropocentric "obedient dog trope" (Chez 27), wherein the canine character exemplifies loyalty and obedience towards Ray. Throughout the story, One Eye constantly displays characteristics associated with this trope, patiently waiting for Ray and faithfully adhering to his commands. An instance highlighting this behaviour occurs when Ray attends Mass, leaving One Eye outside with the instruction, "[b]ack in a minute" (*SSFW* 115). Upon Ray's return, he reassures the unmoving dog by stating, "'[i]t's okay,' I tell you, 'I'm home again now'" (*SSFW* 117). Such conduct aligns with the stereotype of an obedient dog that has been trained to be submissive and obedient to its owner's directives.

Furthermore, a striking parallel between the father and son is evident when Ray momentarily abandons One Eye after the dog engages in a fight with another dog. As Ray drives away, the text reveals, "[n]ow I get back into the car and slam the door. Now I drive away, and leave you" (*SSFW* 191), echoing Ray's own memories of being abandoned by his father on the road. However, it is crucial to note the stark contrast in their respective experiences. While Ray waits for hours for his father's return, who did not do so, One Eye is left alone for only a few minutes. Realising his error in abandoning the loyal companion, Ray's emotions shift from rage to panic, prompting him to swiftly turn back and rescue One Eye:

> Now all my rage transforms to panic. I do an unwieldy U-turn on the too-narrow road. I thwack down the nettles with my number plate. I speed back. It's been only a moment. You're still as I left you. Your lonely peephole's fixed on the precise spot at which my taillights disappeared. Now you're on your feet. Now you're beating your stubby tail with all your strength. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I should never have blamed you. It's my fault. Everything is my fault.
>
> I'm tired now. I want to go home. (*SSFW* 193)

This critical moment underscores the profound attachment and emotional bond that Ray shares with One Eye, which far surpasses the level of attachment his father exhibited towards him. Ray's immediate remorse and sincere apology upon realising his mistake highlight the depth of his emotional connection with One Eye, who had been patiently waiting for his return. Hence, the novel portrays One Eye as able to embody the obedient dog figure.

However, the portrayal of One Eye in the novel complicates the notion of him solely embodying the obedient dog trope. Despite being depicted as loyal and obedient, One Eye's character reveals layers of complexity. His aggressive tendencies are evident when he bites both a Shih Tzu and a boy (*SSFW* 105). In similar circumstances, a dog with such aggressive behaviour would either be euthanised or undergo re-education (O'Sullivan et al. 42), as advocated by the boy's mother who shouts, "'VET'S BILLS!' she shouts, 'DOG WARDEN! MUZZLE! PUT TO SLEEEEEEP!'" (*SSFW* 105–06). Nonetheless, Ray strongly opposes this idea, even though it results from One Eye's decision to attack the dog and the human despite Ray's attempts at controlling him.

Furthermore, despite One Eye's defiance of Ray's commands, the human narrator demonstrates a reluctance to resort to euthanising the dog as a means to eliminate the problem. Instead, Ray opts to confront the issue and, as if echoing Haraway's words on interspecies interactions, to "stay with the trouble:" One Eye and his occasional violent behaviour. This decision to defend One Eye can be evidenced by his rejection of euthanasia and refusal to muzzle the canine, which can be seen as a more visual form of control. In an earlier incident, One Eye attacks another dog, prompting Ray to acquire a muzzle. However, the dog's discontent with this device becomes apparent:

> Once the muzzle is on, the weight of the moulded plastic grill draws your neck down and you hang your nose, more sad than angry. At first you just sit motionless with your head hung. Gradually, you begin to panic. Now you thrash and claw at the

muzzle, now you growl as though it were an enemy creature. And I feel immediately terrible terrible terrible, and free you. I hang the muzzle on the apron hook in the kitchen.

"It's gone now, see? We will not speak of it again" (*SSFW* 41)

Ray's immediate response upon removing the muzzle from One Eye reflects a profound sense of remorse, as if he had betrayed the dog's trust by forcefully subjecting him to the muzzle. If the muzzle symbolises human dominance over animals, Ray's rapid action and subsequent apology to One Eye indicate his reluctance to exert control or assert dominance over the dog, even if it means that the dog may attack more animals without the muzzle. Importantly, no authorities intervened to seize One Eye on this occasion, likely due to the absence of any harm inflicted on a human, unlike in the second attack. This observation exposes a clear anthropocentric bias, revealing that dogs are primarily perceived as a threat only when they pose a danger to humans. In this context, Ray's resfusal to euthanise the canine may respond to a resistance against anthropocentrism.

Moreover, Ray's refusal to euthanise or exercise control over One Eye through the use of a muzzle can be interpreted as a deliberate rejection of the anticipated dominance over the dog. By rejecting the obedient dog trope and avoiding attempts to reduce One Eye to a submissive pet, Ray delves into a more intricate and tumultuous bond between humans and dogs. This decision to embrace the complexities of the human-dog relationship rather than seeking a problem-free resolution signifies Ray's resistance to reducing the bond to conventional expectations and to a problem-free bond. Hence, the canine's agency is here respected by the narrator, even if there is a price to pay for it.

It is noteworthy that the frustration experienced by Ray towards One Eye is not solely attributed to the dog's violent tendencies but also encompasses an understanding of the origin of this behaviour. There are moments in which the text heavily suggests that the dog's violence is not simply innate but rather influenced by learned expectations, as exemplified by the dog's anticipation of approval and reward following his acts of aggression. For instance, after attacking another animal on the beach, the text emphasises One Eye's hopeful demeanour, stating that "[y]ou're intact, and looking up at me with tongue lolling idiotically, tail skipping. With eye and tongue and tail, you're begging a chocolate treat, expecting my approval" (*SSFW* 63). Similarly, following the attack on the Shih Tzu, we read that "[y]ou wag your tail in expectation of *approval*" (*SSFW* 106; emphasis added). These descriptions further reinforce the idea that his violent tendencies

are a consequence of human influence, potentially stemming from prior training or conditioning that encouraged him to harm and kill other nonhuman animals.

By the end of the novel, we find a strong suggestion of which group of humans trained One Eye to behave as violently as he does. At some point, Ray notices that One Eye is growling at a group of Travellers, and he reflects on the reason behind his hunting impulse. He contemplates: "[n]ow I remember from somewhere that these are the kind of people who bred you, the kind of people from whom you ran. Is this why your chest's dropped low to the concrete, why you're pulling, pulling, pulling?" (*SSFW* 214). This behaviour underscores the detrimental impact of humans on nonhuman animals when viewed through an anthropocentric lens. The inclination to punish or eliminate the dog without attempting to address the underlying causes perpetuates an anthropocentric discourse that reinforces the notion that noncompliant animals must be controlled or eradicated, disregarding the fact that the dog's behaviour has been shaped by human influence. Thus, it is not only that human's choices resulted in a violent dog who attacks other animals but also that the humans who presumably did it are not punished for this. In other words, the text denounces the anthropocentrism permeating the Ireland Ray and One Eye inhabit. Perhaps for this reason, Ray decides to give the canine an opportunity and refuses to euthanise or restrict him when prompted to do so.

Building upon Ray's refusal to exert dominance over One Eye, his recognition of the dog's agency emerges through their initial encounter. At first, the narrator perceives the dog solely as a means to address the rat infestation in his attic, questioning the kennel about its suitability for ratting purposes. As we read, Ray asks the kennel if the dog is "'[a]ny good for ratting?'" (*SSFW* 6). This inquiry implies a utilitarian view of One Eye, positioning the dog as a tool rather than a companion. However, Ray's perspective soon evolves as he begins to identify shared experiences of confinement, likening his own home to a prison with walls, windows, and doors, much like One Eye's enclosure at the kennel. As he explains, his house "has walls and windows and doors instead of PVC-coated diamonds, but still it's solitary. Still I'm all on my own, like you" (*SSFW* 9), highlighting the parallels between their isolated existences. This realisation establishes the groundwork for a potential posthumanist alliance, wherein Ray embraces a perspective that goes beyond human exceptionalism. This posthumanist perspective is evident from the novel's opening pages, where Ray addresses One Eye as a subject rather than an object, emphasising their shared journey by stating "[y]ou find me on a Tuesday,

on my Tuesday trip to town" (*SSFW* 3). Hence, the protagonist does acknowledge the dog's agency and resists reducing him to a mere trope or object.

It is also important to note that from the very beginning of the relationship between Ray and One Eye, the canine also has a moment of freedom in which he decides to stay with the human. When the human locks the dog to buy groceries, the dog escapes, and here we read the following:

> You arrive at the end of the village and seem to slow. Now you stop and turn around and look back over the length of where you've just run. Can you see me on the footpath? I've dropped the carton and stumbled to my knees. A rivulet of spilled milk catches the crisp packet, sails it to the gutter. Suddenly I don't care whether people can see me and hear me and know who I am; I don't care what they're thinking. My arms are outstretched and I'm calling your name over and over, louder and louder, wailing into the bay and sending all the oystercatchers soaring. ONEEYE ONEEYE ONEEYE ONEEYE! Why do you stop so suddenly? Is it that you can't remember where you're going any more, that you can't think of a place that's home or see anything more familiar than what's now behind you? The man of must and porridge and boulder and plait, the car, the salmon house, the village that murmurs. Now you sit down in the ditch. Now you stay until I reach you. I slip my fingers under your collar, and you don't resist as I lead you back. (*SSFW* 20)

In this poignant scene, Ray's vulnerable mental state becomes evident when he becomes distressed by the escape of the newly adopted dog. However, the significance of this moment extends beyond Ray's emotional turmoil as it highlights the agency of One Eye, who is presented with the choice to either continue running or return, thereby asserting his autonomy and leaving the human dependent on the dog's decision. This portrayal challenges the conventional notion that only humans possess decision-making abilities and the capacity for self-determination. By granting agency to One Eye, the text prompts readers to contemplate the multifaceted and intricate dynamics within human-nonhuman animal relationships.

Moreover, the novel deviates from the anthropocentric narrative of human dominance and ownership over animals. The narrator, in recognising his misguided approach, explicitly acknowledges that One Eye does not belong to him. As he concedes, "[y]ou don't belong to me and I was wrong to ever treat you like you do. You belong to the inveigling hills, to the fields and ditches untrammelled, to the holes in the forest, the

horizon line, the badgers" (*SSFW* 170). This non-anthropocentric perspective challenges readers to question their preconceived notions about the treatment of nonhuman animals and prompts a reevaluation of the hierarchical power dynamics between humans and other species. By resisting the reduction of animals to mere tools or objects, the novel offers a nuanced portrayal of the human-nonhuman animal relationship. It encourages readers to move beyond conventional expectations and explore a more intricate understanding of the interconnections between humans and nonhuman animals, wherein agency and autonomy are acknowledged and respected, even if it results in a messy and somewhat unsatisfactory bond.

Bearing all of the above in mind, Baume's novel explores the construction of nonhuman characters and reimagines the humanimal bond, shedding light on the resistance against anthropocentrism. Baume's portrayal of Ray's interactions with nonhuman characters, particularly One Eye, challenges anthropocentrism by depicting the complexities and contradictions of humanimal relationships. Ray's sympathetic connection with animals arises from his own experiences of confinement and lack of agency, highlighting the shared vulnerability of all living beings. The text also criticises the unequal treatment of animal grief and the anthropocentric bias prevalent in society, exposing the speciesism at work in the novel's fictional Ireland. While One Eye initially embodies the obedient dog trope, the novel complicates this portrayal by showcasing the dog's aggressive tendencies and Ray's refusal to resort to euthanasia or muzzling as a means of control. This resistance against simplistic solutions reflects the novel's exploration of non-anthropocentric connections that transcend anthropocentric dichotomies.

Building upon the novel's departure from the anthropocentric narrative of human dominance and ownership over animals, the exploration of interspecies communication becomes even more crucial. By recognising his flawed treatment of One Eye and acknowledging the anthropocentrism that has shaped the canine, the narrator opens up possibilities for alternative modes of engagement. The shift towards a non-anthropocentric perspective challenges us to critically examine their ingrained beliefs regarding the treatment of nonhuman animals, thus paving the way for an examination of imaginative approaches to bridge the gap between humans and animals. In this context, the following section delves into the concept of imagination as a potential means to foster interspecies communication and understanding, offering insights into how the messy

bond between humans and animals can be navigated through the imaginative exploration of shared experiences and perspectives.

4.3.2. Interspecies Communication

Ray's inclination towards introversion contrasts sharply with his innate desire for communication, a desire that has been limited to interactions with his father and his dog, One Eye. However, Ray's exchanges with his father were predominantly one-sided, leaving him with a limited understanding of his father's personal life. Reflecting on this, Ray admits, "I knew very little of my father other than what I witnessed for myself. He spoke to me in a practical way, he never really told me things" (*SSFW* 96). This limited knowledge of his father may help explain Ray's acceptance of One Eye's lack of verbal response. In a way, the canine's silence resonates with Ray due to the resemblance it bears to his father's reserved nature. However, the reasons for their silence differ, as the dog's inability to speak stems from biological constraints, whereas the father deliberately chose not to communicate with the narrator. With the absence of Ray's father in the novel, the focus shifts towards Ray's communication with One Eye, thereby underscoring the broader theme of interspecies communication. The second-person perspective employed by the narrator of SSFW accentuates the significance of Ray's conversations with the dog, permeating the entire novel. It could be argued that, following his father's demise, One Eye assumes the role of a surrogate companion, a position often ascribed to animals who are perceived as "children, faithful servants, and friends" (N. Charles, "Animals" 717). Thus, One Eye may be seen as a mere mechanism through which the human narrator is constructed, as argued by Rennhak (30), or perhaps as something more profound — a companion species.

One way to explore what kind of bond Ray and One Eye share is to examine how humans refer to their animal counterparts. Naming is a crucial aspect of characterisation in literature, and companion animals are usually given proper names both in fictional and actual life. Also, naming facilitates interspecies communication by providing a means to refer to a specific individual (Borkfelt 116).

Nonetheless, naming is hardly a neutral process. While Nickie Charles argues that this linguistic ability can individualise an animal, "endowing it with attributes that are conventionally seen as human" ("Animals" 717), naming can also serve as a means of

human domination over other beings. In the Bible, for example, Adam is given the power to name animals. As Borkfelt explains, Adam is endowed with language and thus "given the power for his very first act of control over the animals by God" (118). Therefore, it is important to exercise caution when examining the way humans name animals and the nature of their interaction to determine whether this naming facilitates or resists anthropocentric dominance over other species.

Baume's novel presents a departure from the convention of naming characters who narrate. The narrator of the novel remains unnamed within the novel, providing a peculiar perspective on the story. The only hint we receive about the narrator's name is a passage that reads:

> I'm fifty-seven. Too old for starting over, too young for giving up. And my name is the same word as for sun beams, as for winged and boneless sharks. But I'm far too solemn and inelegant to be named for either, and besides, my name is just another strange sound sent from the mouths of men to confuse you, to distract from your vocabulary of commands. (*SSFW* 8)

Even though the narrator remains unnamed in the novel, in the "About the Book" section, we learn that the narrator is: "[a] misfit man [who] finds a misfit dog. Ray, aged fifty-seven, 'too old for starting over, too young for giving up'" (*SSFW* 2). Nevertheless, Ray never introduces himself in the novel, which resembles the gothic style of Edgar Allan Poe's nameless narrators. According to James W. Gargano, Poe's narrators are often mentally unstable characters who struggle with communication (178). As Gargano observes in his analysis of "Ligeia," Poe's narrators struggle to capture the "inexpressible" and resort to "words of no meaning" (178). Ray's complaint that "my name is just another strange sound" without any significance for the dog suggests that he shares Poe's narrators' struggle with language. In other words, Ray's lack of a proper name within the pages of the novel he shares with One Eye anticipates the many problems they will face when communicating.

Unlike Ray, the dog is given a proper name from the outset, before he meets the human. One Eye is introduced in the prologue by the third-person narrator after he flees from an unknown danger and loses one of his eyes, leading this narrator to refer to him as One Eye: "[h]e is One Eye now" (*SSFW* 2). Later, when Ray brings the dog home for the first time, he greets him with "[w]elcome home, One eye, my good little ratter" (*SSFW*

12). Not only does the narrator refrain from trying to impose a different name on the dog, but One Eye's name also accurately reflects his most distinctive physical feature, his missing eye. By giving him a unique identity, One Eye is seen as an individual rather than a generic representative of his species, which helps to prevent taking him for a random dog. However, it is important to acknowledge that language remains limited. Exemplified by the lack of a name for the narrator and the communication gap between dogs and humans, these constraints may explain why Ray pays close attention to One Eye's sense of smell, as he tries to understand the dog's world. This approach is in line with Rebekah Fox's views on communication between humans and nonhuman animals. As Fox contends, "non-verbal, non-cognitive interaction […] challenges human social and conceptual boundaries […] valuing animals for their own characteristics rather than trying to define their 'personhood' through the recognition of human-like attributes" (533). Baume's emphasis on the sense of smell in literary dogs is not new, as she was inspired by Paul Auster's *Timbuktu* while writing *SSFW* ("Eat or be Eaten" 2)*,* and both authors highlight the importance of scent in the canine species. As Auster writes,

> [f]or the fact was that Mr. Bones was a dog, and dogs enjoyed smelling whatever they were given to smell. It was in their nature; it was what they were born to do; it was, as Willy had correctly observed, their calling in life. For once, Mr. Bones was glad that he had not been endowed with the power of human speech. If he had, he would have been forced to tell Willy the truth, and that would have caused him much pain. For a dog, the whole world is a symphony of smells. Every hour, every minute, every second of his walking life is at once a physical and a spiritual experience. (45)

Baume's novel portrays a similar approach to Auster's in acknowledging the difference between human and dog communication without prioritising one over the other. When Ray brings One Eye home for the first time, the dog stays hidden beneath the dash with "only [his] nose protruding" (*SSFW* 10). Ray later observes One Eye on the beach, noting the dog's intense interest in the smells around him:

> At certain stages of the summer, the bay is fringed by a phlegm of dirty white weed. The top gets crusted by the sun, but underneath, it's soup. Parsnip, no, cream of mushroom soup. On hot days at low tide, the soup smell steeps the village. Do you get it? Of course you do, you can smell everything. You can smell feelings; you can smell time. (*SSFW* 107)

Ray consciously avoids asserting the superiority of human language over One Eye's sense of smell, which has the remarkable ability to "smell time." As a result, he strives to understand and learn the dog's barking and bodily language. In fact, his efforts to communicate with One Eye go beyond mere questioning about the world around them, as evidenced early on in the novel when Ray hears the dog sighing: "I feel the bulge and fall of your ribcage as you sigh. You seem to do a lot of sighing. I find it strange because I always thought of a sigh as an expression of the sort of feeling which animals are not supposed to be capable of" (*SSFW* 73). Ray then proceeds to ask the dog about the mechanics of his sighing: "[d]oes it build within your chest until your muscles spasm and push it out, away?" (*SSFW* 73). Although he acknowledges that he will never receive a verbal response, his questions serve to demonstrate his respect for the limitations of human-dog communication and his desire to bridge the gap between them. Furthermore, Ray's engagement with One Eye exemplifies his dedication to comprehending the nonhuman world while taking accountability for the breakdown in communication, rather than attributing it to the dog. His conclusions about One Eye are based on his own sense of smell and the dog's physical clues, which helps to avoid speaking for the nonhuman character and prevents the dangers of compensatory humanism,[58] while still allowing for Ray's imaginative efforts. Despite this, the narrator acknowledges the difficulties of communication between animals with different language systems, as seen during a stop on their road trip:

> 'It's surely going to rain soon,' I'd say, 'What do you reckon to a chop tonight?' I'd say. And now I address it all to you. You who never spoke anyway. You who misunderstands almost everything. I describe the things we pass even though nothing is interesting, even though I've already mentioned it several times over, even though I know now I sound like the imbecile. (*SSFW* 159–60)

The narrator continuously asks the dog questions, yet still fails to comprehend the reason for One Eye's sighing, which frustrates Ray. To address this issue, Ray turns to the

---

[58] Braidotti explains that compensatory humanism is "a belated kind of solidarity between the human dwellers of this planet, currently traumatized by globalization, technology and the 'new' wars, and their animal others. […]. In this cross-species embrace, Humanism is actually being reinstated uncritically under the aegis of species egalitarianism" (*The Posthuman* 79).

knowledge he has acquired from reading books his entire life to enhance their communication. In particular, he assumes that the dog can learn human words, as he highlights that "[t]here is a book on one of my book shelves […] and somewhere it says that animals like you are capable of learning to understand as much as one-hundred-and-sixty-five human words" (*SSFW* 8). Although it is true that One Eye recognises certain words like "bed," (*SSFW* 156), this is not enough to create satisfactory interspecies communication. When the narrator is frustrated by One Eye's lack of comprehension, he attempts to make the dog speak in human terms by bellowing a sentence entirely composed of the dog's words: "WALKIES, BICKIES, BEDTIME I bellow, ALL GONE, WAIT, FOOTBALL, BOLD I bellow, SPEAK, ONE EYE, SPEAK" (*SSFW* 161). However, this appears to be more of a wishful thought or complaint rather than a genuine desire. The emphasis on human language in the books results in a limited form of communication that fails to satisfy the narrator. Therefore, the narrator's attempts to communicate with One Eye reveal his desire to bridge the gap between human and nonhuman communication, while recognising the limitations of such communication. The potentially anthropocentric biases in the books he reads also highlight the challenges of humanimal communication. While the narrator's efforts show a willingness to learn and understand the dog's communication, they are also shaped by his limited understanding and expectations based on human language.

Perhaps due to the limitations of verbal language in achieving interspecies communication, the narrator pays close attention to the dog's body language and perspective. For instance, during one of their first walks together, the narrator points to a cat and waits for the dog's response, saying, "'LOOK', I say again, and again, I point. Now I wait for you to find the tattered cat who is prowling the shore wall, stalking a scrumpled tissue. You make a noise in your throat like a tiny propeller and this is how I know you see the cat too" (*SSFW* 30). Similarly, later in the novel, the narrator and One Eye observe other animals on the beach, and the narrator encourages the dog to experience the scene directly, saying, "'See for yourself,' I tell you, 'see'" (*SSFW* 271). This contrasts with the narrator's earlier tendency to describe everything to One Eye, indicating a growing awareness of the limitations of human language in conveying the full richness of experience.

Similarly, during a walk to the beach, the narrator notes that the dog can see every bird that a local birdwatcher misses, even if he cannot name them: "[s]ee the shelducks and little egrets, the cygnets and swifts. You see every bird the local twitcher misses,

although you can't name a single one" (*SSFW* 76). Thus, the novel establishes a hierarchy of communication that values direct sensory experience over language, highlighting the insufficiency of human language for satisfactory interspecies communication. The narrator's attempts to communicate with One Eye serve to underline the limitations of language and the importance of direct experience in understanding the nonhuman Other. This critique of language also challenges those who speak for nonhuman animals without acknowledging the limitations of human language.

As language fails to provide a complete understanding of One Eye for Ray and to acknowledge the dog's distinct perception of their shared reality, the novel offers an alternative mode of communication — dreams. Throughout the narrative, there are several instances of such dreams, where Ray dreams from the perspective of the dog. The first of these dreams happens shortly after One Eye comes under Ray's care, and it establishes the pattern for the subsequent ones:

> In the dream, smell is everything to me, smell is my native language. I hear voices and pivot my head around to the right, but there's only a blank wall with its white paint scuffed. I see I'm behind a locked door; the locked door of a cage which is high up. My head is all doddery and my face is stinging, throbbing. Now I realise that when I pivot my head around to the left, there is nothing. (*SSFW* 25–26)

The narrator's use of smell as a primary means of communication in his dreams suggests an attempt to bridge the gap between himself and One Eye. This emphasis on scent in the dreams serves as a compensatory mechanism for the shortcomings of language, allowing the narrator to experience the world through the dog's sensory system. These dreams serve to strengthen the tenuous bond between them by enabling the narrator to understand One Eye's unique communicative system and to inhabit his experience, including his missing left eye. Unlike the traditional anthropocentric approach of translating nonhuman communication into human language, the dreams in the novel subvert this approach by translating human experience into nonhuman terms. As such, these dreams represent a radical departure from anthropocentrism and offer a promising avenue for understanding and relating to nonhuman animals.

In addition to dreaming about living as the dog, Ray also envisions the dog's birth. As one dream recounts, "I dream a dream of being born. I slop down onto a bed of newspapers. It's cold and dirty and the headlines are blotted by amniotic fluid. Beyond

the end of my nose, I see the pink tips of my mother's tits, and all around I feel the clamour of my litter, the heat of tails and legs and bodies battling to suck" (*SSFW* 51–52). Through these dreams, Ray attempts to fill the gaps of knowledge he knows he will never have about One Eye's life before their encounter, trying to go to the dog's origin itself. In the last dream, Ray vividly imagines the dog's loss of his eye, providing insight into the traumatic experience from the dog's perspective:

> Tonight I dream of your badger, of the badger who took your eye. I dream myself down, down, down an unfathomably small hole. Deep, deep, deep through a bone-crunching tunnel. I dream the air wrung out of my lungs. I dream the smell of an earthworm mausoleum. I dream the muted shouts of men from somewhere up above and far behind. […]. Now I dream the flash of the badger's teeth and a sound like a violent collision of fur and flesh. I can't see anything any more and now I know; one of my eyes is filled with blood and the other is inside the badger. (*SSFW* 181–82)

By utilising the power of dreams, the narrator gains insight into One Eye's experiences, offering a new mode of communication that transcends the limitations of human language. The emphasis on scent within these dreams enables the narrator to immerse himself in the dog's perspective, thereby bridging the gap between human and canine. In addition, these dreams serve to fill in the gaps in communication and understanding between the two species, providing a possible means to learn about One Eye's past. The dreams also have two further narrative effects. Firstly, they are constructed purely from the narrator's imagination, lacking any scientific basis, thus revealing the subjective nature of imagination without attempting to present the dreams as facts. Secondly, the narrator takes on the persona of One Eye within these dreams, blurring the lines between human and canine. After awakening from one dream, the narrator reflects, "[w]hen I wake, I am me again, and you are you" (*SSFW* 182), a separation that takes place only after the species hyper-separation is dismantled in the dream. The narrator can temporarily inhabit the dog's body, experiencing what it may feel like to be One Eye. This phenomenon also occurs later, in the only dream that is not about One Eye but instead focuses on the dead greyhounds he read about in the newspaper:

> I dream I'm tied to a post and standing up to my chest in snow. Even asleep, even inside the dream, tied to my post, I know the picture - making part of my mind has borrowed the dream's landscape from an article I read in the newspaper roughly this

time a year ago. It was about a group of greyhounds who were left tied up in their compound and froze to death. Without kennels, they lay on the concrete and were buried the first night of the blizzards. The article's photograph showed a scene of wheelbarrows, shovels and ropes which trailed off into the drifts. Now I can see, in my dream, greyhounds on their backs with their legs standing high and rigid as the post I'm tied to. I can see tongues stuck to fangs and turned a powdery blue, the colour of cornflowers. (*SSFW* 208).

The extent of the narrator's empathy is exemplified in this instance, as it expands beyond his relationship with One Eye to encompass all living beings, irrespective of their relationship with him. Thus, these dreams function not only to bridge the communication gaps between humans and animals but also to challenge the anthropocentric boundaries separating species. By imagining himself as a dog he never knew, the narrator blurs the lines between human and animal, further exposing the artificiality of the boundaries that humans have erected. This dream serves as a poignant reminder that all living beings are interconnected and that empathy and understanding can transcend species barriers, leading to posthumanist alliances that can resist the anthropocentric necropolitics that oppress humans and other species; in other words, we find here a form of "politics of friendship" as Jorge Riechmann defends, that allows us to reject the sadomasochistic outline of domination (xiii).

To summarise, Ray demonstrates a desire for communication despite his inclination towards introversion. The absence of Ray's father shifts the focus to his communication with One Eye, underscoring interspecies communication as a central theme. The emphasis on scent and the nonverbal cues of the dog's body language further reinforces the importance of understanding nonhuman communication beyond human language. The narrator's attempts to bridge the communication gap between human and nonhuman characters highlight the limitations of language while valuing direct sensory experience. Additionally, the novel introduces dreams from the perspective of the dog, providing an alternative mode of communication that allows the narrator to imaginatively inhabit One Eye's experience. These dreams subvert the anthropocentric approach of translating nonhuman communication into human language, offering a radical departure from rational and scientific understanding of the nonhuman Other and opening up new avenues for understanding and relating to other animals.

Moreover, while the novel explores the intricacies of interspecies communication, it also reveals the presence of androcentrism, subtly influencing the narrative. Androcentrism, the privileging of male perspectives and experiences as the default or norm, manifests itself in various ways throughout the text. By examining how androcentrism operates within the novel, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex power dynamics at play in human and nonhuman interactions and critically engage with the underlying assumptions that shape our understanding of communication and identity. Hence, the following section focuses on how gender is presented in the novel as well as how it interacts with necropolitics and the role of One Eye in these themes.

4.4. Gendered Ontologies of the Living Dead

One area to explore and challenge necropatriarchal practices is Irish fiction, particularly in the Gothic Irish tradition. In gothic works, we not only find abundant references and exploration of death (Álamo Felices and Bonachera García 2), which suggests a potential exploration of necropolitics but also the heterosexual family that inhabits the Big House. As Maeve O'Riordan explains, the Big House is not only a "female space" ("Gender and the Ascendancy" 45), but also the space in which the roles "were defined by gender, age, and marital status" ("Gender and the Ascendancy" 46). In this context, the father is expected to represent the family publicly (O'Riordan, "Gender and the Ascendancy" 46), while the mother's duty to find good servants and be the moral guide for the development of the child, especially the heir (O'Riordan, "Gender and the Ascendancy" 43). Thus, the Big House is a space in which gender roles are negotiated, and each member of the family is expected to fulfil their gendered role. Additionally, as Agnes Andeweg and Sue Zlosnik contend, Gothic fiction "opens up a radically transformative space in which alternative relationships may be configured. Both contesting and reinforcing notions of the nuclear family, Gothic fiction may offer figurations of alternative kinship ties" (2). It both contests and reinforces notions of the nuclear family, potentially providing figurations of alternative kinship ties. By examining how Ray struggles with gender obligations while living with One Eye in the house and during their journey could be enlightening, not only to understand Ray's human position as a man but also to explore whether the dog shapes him in some way, potentially contesting patriarchal gender norms and generating alternative and posthumanist families. It is in this context that this section now turns to

analyse the gendered description of the narrator's family as well as the role of One Eye in creating an alternative model of family.

4.4.1. The Absent Mother

One issue that deeply troubles Ray in Baume's novel is the conspicuous absence of his mother. This absence may constitute one of the secrets of the novel's Big House, setting the gothic tone and obsessing Ray until the end of the novel. This absence raises questions about her role as a mother in *SSFW,* particularly in the context of Irish fiction where the mother often symbolises the Irish nation. Edna O'Brien denounces in her memoir that Ireland:

> has always been a woman, a womb, a cave, a cow, a Rosaleen, a sow, a bride, a harlot, and, of course, the gaunt Hag of Beare [...] She is thought to have known invasion from the time when the Ice Age ended and the improving climate allowed deer to throng her dense forests. These infiltrations have been told and fabricated by men and by mediums who described the violation of her body and soul. (1)

Precisely because the Mother Ireland motif is of great importance, Irish maternity became, as Julia C. Obert explains, "a kind of imprisonment, with death as the punishment for attempted jail-break" (285). Ann Owens Weekes' study of twentieth-century Irish fiction outlines that the mother motif is crucial in the Nationalist iconography of the Irish Literary Revival, which draws upon the tradition of women as maidens or mothers, including Dark Rosaleen, Cathleen ni Houlihan, and Mother Ireland, but failed to consider the needs of real women (104). Weekes explains that the importance of women as mothers in nationalist Ireland can be seen in "the riots provoked by Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907" (104). The play scandalised audiences by featuring a female character, Pegeen Mike, who expressed her own sexual desires and subverted the traditional view of women as sexually submissive. This subversion of gender roles, particularly the female expression of desire, likely contributed to the play's controversial reception. In twentieth-century Irish fiction, authors such as Somerville and Ross, Edna O'Brien, and Elizabeth Bowen also feature dead mothers as a recurring motif (Weekes 105), perhaps to emphasise their total absence in their children's lives.

Therefore, the Mother Ireland motif and the traditional view of women as maidens or mothers were central to the Nationalist iconography of the Irish Literary Revival, potentially still influencing the depiction of the mother figure in contemporary fiction.

In the late twentieth century, feminist activism achieved significant advancements in improving women's lives. According to Weekes, during the 1970s and 1980s, women in Ireland saw the removal of the marriage bar that prevented them from working after marriage, the right to equal pay, and anti-discrimination laws in the workplace. Additionally, married women gained access to paid maternity leave, and single mothers were extended children's allowances. The availability of contraceptives became easier, and rape crisis centres were established throughout the country. However, the pace of change was uneven, as evidenced by the 1983 ban on abortion (Weekes, "Figuring the Mother" 104). As the twenty-first century began, Debbie Ging notes that Ireland's post-Celtic Tiger society views feminism as no longer necessary, despite continued patriarchal images and a discourse of "war-of-the-sexes" in the media ("All-Consuming Images" 53). As such, post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland is at a crossroads in negotiating gendered identities, the role of women, and maternity.

The absent mother is a common motif in more recent literature too, as seen in novels such as Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* (1992) and Anne Enright's *The Gathering* (2007). In McCabe's novel, the mother is too depressed and physically abused by the boy's alcoholic father to care for her son or herself, ultimately leading to her suicide and leaving the son to deal with the father on his own (Cullingford 192). In *The Gathering*, the protagonist's mother is portrayed as, according to Héloïse Lecomte, "so vague" that she almost becomes a "ghost," reflecting Enright's tendency to make the absent present (138). The numerous examples of absent and present mother figures in Irish literature demonstrate the significance of female figures and maternity in Irish society and its literature. In this context, the absent mother is a common motif, and Baume's novel is no exception. The absence of Ray's mother is striking and plays a crucial role in setting the gothic tone of the novel. Ray's obsession with his mother and his continuous questioning of the dog about his own mother highlights the importance of the mother motif in *SSFW*. Perhaps because of the gothic influences in Baume's novel, the mother is like the typical gothic mother: "dead, imprisoned or somehow abjected" (Anolik 25). The first time the narrator tells One Eye about his mother, he states the following:

> As a boy it took me years to realise I didn't have [a mother]. At the beginning I
> believed children were allowed to have only one parent. That's just the way it was.
> Only a rare few, only the children in storybooks and on television were lucky enough
> to have hit the double jackpot. I got a father, that was my lot. By the time I realised
> I'd misunderstood, it was too late to suddenly ask him what happened to the woman
> who gave birth to me. (*SSFW* 52)

In this mention of Ray's mother's absence, the novel not only reveals that she is missing to the extent that he spent some of his childhood unaware of her existence, but also highlights his isolation from the rest of the village, causing him to normalise her absence and the lack of mentions of her figure towards the protagonist. Additionally, Ray's mother's absence sheds light on the societal expectations placed on women, particularly mothers, in patriarchal societies. According to Laura Sydora, the Catholic Church's dominant role in Irish life meant that Catholicism established the moral standards in Ireland, which included defending feminine purity. Sydora argues that the twentieth-century ideal Catholic Irish female "[c]ombined with a Victorian notion of femininity, the ideal Catholic Irish female—a paragon of the Virgin Mary—is conceptualized without regards to her body" (252). This idealised model of maternity is impossible to attain and leads to the oppression of women, resulting in feelings of frustration and inadequacy as mothers. In this context, the absence of Ray's mother can be seen as a criticism of the unattainable expectations placed on mothers to embody this ideal, highlighting the physical impossibility of doing so.

  As a mother, the Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ; and yet, this moment is not described in great detail in the Bible, and, as a result, there is no mention of blood or any other kind of "dirt" associated with this act. This aseptic portrayal of the birth of Jesus is linked to the construction of the Virgin Mary as a figure who is free from any form of impurity. Similarly, when Ray reflects on his birth, he explains that he is unable to picture a woman giving birth to him and instead he "accepted the chimney was my birth canal, the fire grate was my cradle, my mother was the house" (*SSFW* 52). Ray's birth might be viewed as a parody of Jesus Christ's birth, especially given that Ray also dies at the end of the novel as if in a parodic representation of his death. Therefore, Ray's birth denounces his mother's inability to fully embody the impossible model of womanhood of the Virgin Mary.

The explicit identification of the mother with the house is also in line with Jane Mitchell's view of the house and the woman in gothic fiction. Mitchell contends that the house "becomes 'both habitat and prison' and is simultaneously associated with 'defence, penetration and entrapment'. As the house is perceived as female, it taps into the male anxieties about female sexuality and childbirth" (62). Similarly, the close identification of Ruby with the "troubled" house[59] in Baume's novel is also a figure of paralysis and death, akin to Joycean themes. In the middle of the novel, Ray reflects on how "the house is just plaster and brick and board, and it's a sad place, don't you think it's sad? And it didn't give birth to me and it isn't my mother. It is inert, immoveable" (*SSFW* 124). The house and the mother are strongly connected in their immobility: the house because it cannot move, and the mother because she is long dead.

Similarly, Mitchell explains in her analysis of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (2011) that the house symbolises the marital status of the mother. According to Mitchell, in Gothic literature, women often find "marriage to be an uncanny institution and the marital home an uncanny space, unlike the warm, intimate environment that has been expected" (66). Therefore, the house in Baume's novel symbolises not only the Anglo-Irish legacy, as examined in this thesis in section 4.2.2. but also the oppressive nature of marriage for mother and son. This institution silences the mother and leads to the abuse of the son by his father with no one intervening to help any of them, one because she is already dead, and the son because he is completely isolated.

The way the mother's death is treated in the text may shed light on her role in the family. To begin with, we only learn her name at the end of the novel, after the narrator dares check his deceased father's bed and look for some clues on who her mother was. In doing so, he discovers "a fashioned sweet jar with a screw top and sticker that reads SHELBY'S ASSORTMENT YOUR NAME HERE." Probably following the jar's instructions, there is a name spelled out underneath it: "RUBY" (*SSFW* 237). That the first mention of the mother's name is in a general sweet jar suggests her strong connection to the domestic, in line with the identification of the character with the house. Likewise, probably as part of Ray's obsession with looking for the mother, he opens the jar immediately only to find it stuffed with "packets of sherbet dip, empty but for a sprinkling

---

[59] The centrality of the house as the substitute of the absent mother in Baume's novel echoes Rosamond Jacob's *The Troubled House* (1938).

of the purest white powder" (*SSFW* 237). Rather than finding any trace of her mother, he finds what may have been her favourite sweet or just a gift from his father to her, as he worked in a sweet factory until his retirement. This anticlimactic revelation of the secret about the mother is faced with Ray's disappointment, who asks One Eye, "[w]ell, what do you think, is this my mother on the sherbet jar?" and proceeds to tear away the sticker with the written name "as though she might be in some small way revealed" (*SSFW* 237). After the sweet jar's anticlimactic revelation, Ray has to confront once again disappointment and look for her mother somewhere else: in the graveyard. As he explains,

> Now I find her easily. All the years I never looked, and now here is my mother. Here she was all along. OUR DEARLY BELOVED RUBY. On a plain grey slab in the perpetual downpour. DIED 1956 AGE 23 the headstone says. I answer by saying it out loud. "Nineteen fifty - six," I say, "when I was two." (*SSFW* 243)

In this excerpt, Ray reflects on the fact that her mother had been buried in a conventional manner, not hidden in the house. This not only dispels his fear that her death was caused by his birth but also challenges the gothic convention of tragic deaths caused by childbirth. In fact, Ray's mother died for unknown reasons when he was an infant, subverting the gothic trope and exposing the unnecessary suffering he has endured due to his abusive father and the suffocating environment of the Big House. Thus, the absence of Ray's mother is compounded by his father's silence on the matter, highlighting how women can be silenced even beyond their deaths by their living family's inaction. The absence of the mother, both materially because she is deceased and also because of the lack of information about her leads us to examine the family dynamics between Ray and his father, and whether and to what extent One Eye offers an alternative to Ray that does not oppress him.

4.4.2. Like Father, Like Son?

Masculinity has been a long source of anxiety for men, at least since the nineteenth century. As Michael Kimmel notes, "men have been afraid of not measuring up to some vaguely defined notions of what it means to be a man, afraid of failure" (15). This fear is rooted in the hierarchical patriarchal binary behind normative forms of masculinity. Val

Plumwood denounces that men "are stereotyped as active, intellectual, inexpressive, strong, dominant and so on, while women are represented in terms of the complementary polarity as passive, intuitive, emotional, weak, and submissive" (*Environmental Culture* 103). Failure to conform to this hegemonic masculinity leads to being labelled as the Other, making one vulnerable to the othering process of necropatriarchy, with no political or ethical consequences. Ed Madden advocates for re-negotiated forms of masculinity in which men are allowed, for instance, "a broader range of male emotional and affectional expressions" (70). In contemporary Ireland, the negotiation of masculinities is heavily influenced by the strengthening of neoliberalism in recent decades. According to Debbie Ging, Ireland has witnessed a reinforcement of biodeterminism when discussing gender since the economic boom in the 1990s. As Ging explains,

> neoliberalism's mutually beneficial rapport with biodeterminism has arguably diminished the responsibility of the government vis à vis a range of social problems including crime, anti-social behaviour, social exclusion and paedophilia, since it locates these problems in the genes, hormones or brainwaves of individual bodies. ("All-Consuming Images" 69)

Biodeterminism not only places blame on individuals, ignoring the social dimension of human life and gender roles, but also absolves the State of any responsibility. This weakens the State and the social response to renewed patriarchal forms of oppression, strengthening patriarchal forms of masculinity that continue to create male ontological anxieties. Jarlath Killeen argues that fears related to masculinity can be examined in gothic works as they have "long been useful as a means by which the cultural and existential battle could be fought" ("Muscling Up" 168). Therefore, to examine Baume's novel by paying attention to the gothic elements and their interaction with constructions of gendered identities can reveal whether the work defends or "fights" against neoliberal necropatriarchy.

In analysing masculinities in *SSFW*, it is worth to note the long tradition in Irish literature that deals with the father-son conflict. This theme can be traced back to the Cú Chulainn myth, in which Cú Chulainn kills his only son, Connla, and becomes a failed father (243). This aspect of the myth became popular during the Irish revival and was widely rewritten, with Augusta Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) serving as a key inspiration in later rewritings. William B. Yeats rewrote the myth in *On Baile's*

Strand (1903), exploring a Cú Chulainn forced to fight and kill his own son, Connla, whom he is his son only after his death. John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) is a more subversive reinterpretation, with a young man claiming to have killed his father in a reversal of the myth. Regardless of following or resisting the Cú Chulainn myth, the father/son conflict becomes "a recurrent paradigm of the impossibility of a national, civil society" (Meaney 243).

Contemporary Irish fiction continues to explore the father/son conflict motif while examining new forms of masculinity. In Cassandra Sian Tully de Lope's doctoral dissertation on Irish masculinities, she analyses Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart* (2014) and argues that the protagonist, Bobby Mahon, embodies Irish disappointment in the post-Celtic Tiger years and is suspected of having killed his father, similar to Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* one century before and, as will be argued in this section, as Ray kills his father by his inaction in *SSFW*. Another example of contemporary Irish authors exploring new forms of masculinity is Claire Kilroy, who satirises the hyper-masculinity associated with the economic boom. Bracken and Harney-Mahajan argue that Kilroy's writing "illustrate[s] how the vast economic success of some individuals during the Tiger era cultivated gendered constructions of heteronormativity" (2). Consequently, contemporary Irish fiction not only examines the long-lasting father-son motif but also explores what being a man means in contemporary society. In this context, analysing Baume's novel is of interest because it sheds light on how the work interacts with notions of masculinity and the father-son conflict motif.

In *SSFW,* the narrator provides a detailed description of his father's behaviour as a distant man who barely talks to him and who spends his time working until his retirement, perhaps in line with the traditional expectations of the distant father in families of Anglo-Irish ascendency living in the Big Houses (O'Riordan, "Gender and the Ascendancy" 43). Ray's father is aloof towards his only child, as he failed to provide him with any significant education during his upbringing, except for driving lessons when Ray was already in his forties (*SSFW* 132). This reveals a clear lack of communication and emotional intimacy between father and son, as the father only seemed to focus on teaching Ray skills that directly benefited him, highlighting his self-centeredness. Ray often complains to One Eye about his father's lack of interest in having meaningful conversations with him, and the only discussions they had were limited to superficial topics like the weather and meal planning (*SSFW* 159). Therefore, the father embodies the distant father figure of Anglo-Irish ascendancy.

In a similar vein, Ray's father is also expected to act as the breadwinner of the family, as the patriarch. As Barbara Hobson explains, in the Republic of Ireland, gender difference "is imprinted in the Constitution in the construction of familialism and nationalism" with a strong focus on the "strong male-breadwinner" (64). The narrator seems to describe his father as following this model: "[m]y father always left very early in the morning and arrived back travel-weary and infused with the scent of the pineapple air freshener that swung from his rearview mirror, and some nights he didn't come back at all" (*SSFW* 64). Additionally, as the patriarch of a Big House, the father is likewise expected to manage the property. Ray's father is paid monthly for the local in their property, first to a fashion boutique and then to a hairdresser (*SSFW* 198). Thus, Ray's father conforms to the hegemonic model of fatherhood, which is a traditional expectation for most fathers. As an Anglo-Irish man, Ray's father also has to represent the family in public, as the "landlord" (O'Riordan, "Gender and the Ascendancy: The Families Who Owned, and Lost, the Island of Ireland, 1852–1922" 46). This is mostly done by attending Mass on Sundays, as well as spending time with the neighbours afterwards. Ray notes that his father "[h]e only went to mass on Sundays because he liked to grumble grumble and smoke by the gates after the communion notices" (*SSFW* 114). Therefore, the father socialises with the neighbours, thereby representing his family in public, as expected of him as the patriarch of the family.

In traditional masculinity, dominance is a recurrent aspect. The text provides ample evidence of the extent to which Ray's father dominates him. One crucial moment is when the father leaves Ray on the road for crying, arguably echoing the patriarchal belief that "boys don't cry." This experience is so traumatic that the narrator notes he has not cried since then (*SSFW* 192). From his childhood to his adulthood, the father's domination of Ray is achieved through abuse and fear. Even when Ray is in his fifties and witnesses his father's death, he laments that "[n]ow I see. I see how uncourageous I was. I see how I only asked about the neighbour woman because I was yet too afraid to ask about my mother woman instead. The old man was dead and still I hadn't the nerve to confront him" (*SSFW* 233). Similar to the many questions he asks One Eye, the narrator does not expect an answer. However, the problem is that he does not even dare to verbalise his questions and emotions to his father after many years of dominance and isolation. The father's dominance over Ray extends beyond his body and beyond his death for, as Ray tells One Eye,

[m]y father is the man you can smell all over the house, his house, but never find. You'll smell his dead skin cells in the leather bind of never-opened books and swept beneath the never-lifted rugs. You'll smell his dead breath, sausage scented, through the cracks in the roof plaster and the draught from the keyhole of the shut-up-and-locked room. You'll smell him most of all in the feet sweat pong of my slippers; here the stench is so strong I can smell it too. (*SSFW* 80)

In other words, the father apparently successfully emulates the gender role expected of him as an Anglo-Irish patriarch in a Big House until his death. Ray struggles with his father and his legacy, which is a recurring theme in Irish literature, as noted by Sian Tully de Lope in her analysis of masculinities. She explains that it is common to find sons who try to rebel against their fathers only to eventually become their fathers (71). In the case of Ray, his inability to even verbalise his needs to his father's corpse evidences his inability to rebel against him and the masculinity he represents. As he laments, "I'm not the kind of person who is able to do things" (*SSFW* 185), which reveals his paralysis and disempowerment. Nevertheless, when his father suffocates to death, Ray decides not to help him despite knowing how to do so, indicating that he is rebelling against his father, even if it is only by inaction (*SSFW* 226). The question remains whether Ray will eventually assume his father's role as the family patriarch.

After the death of his father, Ray takes in One Eye as his companion. One could argue that the dog serves as a means for Ray to prove his dominance and emulate his father's patriarchal masculinity. This view aligns with Haraway's critique of how domestication of other species is connected to the "humanist techno philiacs [who] depict domestication as the paradigmatic act of masculine, single-parent, self-birthing, whereby man makes himself repetitively as he invents (creates) his tools" (*The Companion* 28). However, Ray's attempts to control One Eye always end in failure, as already explored in this thesis, which shows that Ray is not interested in dominating One Eye as his father dominated him. Similarly, Ray is far from a distant figure like the father; the novel is after all centred around Ray's conversations with One Eye, showing that he is deeply connected to the dog. Instead, he seeks a different type of relationship with the dog.

Moreover, as an isolated man, Ray further fails to represent his family, house, and legacy in public by ceasing to attend Mass after his father's death, precisely because his isolation and lack of education prevent him from working, relying on his father's pension until the end of the novel. In a similar vein, he realises only at the end of the novel that

the hairdresser has stopped paying rent (*SSFW* 254), which evidences his failure to exhibit even the most basic tasks as a landlord. Therefore, Ray's inability to embody the traditional patriarchal figure marks the end of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy of his family and its gender roles.

It should be noted that the father was not the perfect patriarch landlord either. After his retirement, he starts to spend more and more time at home, rarely going anywhere with just some scheduled exceptions such as the weekly mass. As Ray notes, "he only came back to remain in the salmon pink house on his retirement because he was old and spent and had nobody to care for him, nobody but me" (*SSFW* 100). Additionally, the father's attempts to maintain friendships outside the house, as seen in his weekly chatting with other attendants to Mass, are rather unsuccessful, as "[w]however they were, or whoever he thought they were, they never came" (*SSFW* 100). This suggests that despite his role as the public representative of the family, the father is ultimately alone with his son, and both are isolated within the house. Furthermore, despite the father's long hours of work, they remain poor. When reminiscing about his childhood, Ray mentions the days when the father brought things for him:

> he'd bring me toys and clothes in crumpled carrier bags. The jumpers were usually bobbled with thumb-holes low down in the sleeves, and the jeans were patched in places with slightly brighter squares of denim. The teddy bears were pre-cuddled, the tyres of the dinky cars shorn to their hubcaps, and if anything ever needed batteries, they came either missing or flat. (*SSFW* 64)

In other words, the father's efforts to support his family through long hours of work were ultimately in vain, as they remained impoverished. Ray's lack of access to newly purchased goods and his portrayal of food as a scarce resource further highlight their economic struggles (*SSFW* 34). The fact that Ray gives One Eye one of the father's tibias at the end of the novel — "and you gnaw it with relish" (*SSFW* 255), reveals the lack of respect towards the decayed patriarch and the legacy he represents. Therefore, the father can be seen as a parody of the figure of Anglo-Irish ascendancy, and so the text exposes not only its inability to endure but also the clear decay of the legacy in terms of gender roles.

Precisely because the protagonist rejects his father's traditional model of masculinity, he could engage with post-Celtic Tiger neoliberal masculinities. To embody

a neoliberal model of masculinity would involve prioritising individualism over the group, resulting in dislocation from social relations and dependencies. Andrea Cornwall observes that this form of hegemonic masculinity results in a situation in which "[m]en – and women – are dislocated from the webs of social relations and dependencies in which they live their everyday lives. 'Empowerment' has come to hold the promise of self-actualization rather than retaining any semblance of the older associations that the term had with collective action and struggle" (10). Although Ray has experienced social isolation due to his upbringing in the big house, he cannot become an individual empowered only by himself. Instead, he receives help from One Eye, who assists him in rejecting his father's legacy and its implicit gender expectations. Ray finds his own way to empowerment, one that is not based on individualism, but rather a connection to others. Thus, he rejects his father's model of masculinity and navigates a path that prioritises social connections over individual success.

Building on the argument presented in section 4.2.2., which demonstrates how the dog assists the human protagonist in becoming empowered against the oppressive legacy of the Anglo-Irish Big House, I also argue that their connection results in the formation of a new kind of family that challenges traditional and neoliberal gender roles. This family can be considered posthuman, as it promotes a close connection between humans and other species and challenges human exceptionalism. Nickie Charles argues that posthuman families emerge from such connections and from the human acknowledgement of their inability to be "an all-knowing subject," rejecting anthropocentric human superiority ("Post-Human Families?" 3). As previously discussed, Ray continuously asks the dog questions without expecting an answer and without trying to speak *for* him, demonstrating his acceptance that there are things that he shall never know. When examining potentially posthuman families, it is important to consider whether the companion animals' precarity is exposed or rather used to underpin power relations ("Post-Human Families?" 3). This rejection of anthropocentrism is emphasised by One Eye's precarious position as a dog, exposed in the novel when the authorities seek to seize him due to his aggressive behaviour. Ray resists this disposability and runs away from the house with One Eye, highlighting the dog's vulnerability and the potential for disposability in nonhuman species. Finally, Charles contends that posthuman families must avoid anthropocentrism of what Braidotti calls "compensatory humanism" ("Post-Human Families?" 3). The novel does not anthropomorphise One Eye to integrate him into a humanist family. Rather, One Eye is presented as a distinct nonhuman species,

emphasising his unique way of interpreting the world through smell. Additionally, the text offers a clear contrast between father and son in the way they treat their family. Just as the father abandoned Ray as a child because he was frustrated by his crying and did not know how to silence him, Ray abandons One Eye on the road after he becomes frustrated by his violent behaviour. Nonetheless, unlike the father, Ray regrets his decision almost immediately and returns to fetch the dog:

> You stay as you are in the road, at exactly the point where I dropped you. […] I watch until the car rounds a corner and I can't see you any more.
> Now all my rage transforms to panic. I do an unwieldy U-turn on the too-narrow road. […] I speed back. It's been only a moment. You're still as I left you. […] I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I should never have blamed you. It's my fault. Everything is my fault.
> I'm tired now. I want to go home. (*SSFW* 193)

This contrast emphasises the vast difference between their respective approaches to masculinity and what a family entails. In contrast to his father's toxic masculinity, Ray embodies a nurturing, empathetic approach to family, which includes his dog, One Eye. The novel highlights Ray's empathetic attitude towards the dog from the beginning, when Ray comforts him for being afraid of the new environment. "it's okay to be frightened sometimes" (*SSFW* 32). Ray's nurturing and caring relationship with One Eye is a clear departure from the traditional father/son motif. Rather than presenting Ray as a fatherly figure who takes care of One Eye, the text presents a narrator who, as he acknowledges, "[i]t's only now you're gone I see how you're my reason for doing things. Now I'm a stiltwalker with the stilts removed. My emptied trouser legs flap in the wind and I can't remember how to walk without being precipitously propped" (*SSFW* 165). Therefore, Ray sees himself as the "puppet," rather than the dominant figure in the family. By accepting that he, as a human and as the patriarch of the family, is not necessarily in control of the other members of the family, an alternative kind of family emerges in *SSFW,* a family not based on dominance. As Meaney observes in the analysis of *The Playboy of the Western World*, the roles of the dominating Self — the father — and the dominated Other — the son — are reversed, but the power structure remains unchanged (253); in *SSFW,* the power dynamic is dismantled, opening up new possibilities for understanding masculinities and family dynamics.

5. Conclusions

As established in the introduction of this doctoral thesis, the animal trope serves as a rich and multifaceted arena of analysis where various ideological aspects converge. Through an examination of the selected novels, it becomes evident that the female, human and otherwise, is consistently subjected to oppression within patriarchal discourse, as Maureen O'Connor fearlessly illuminates in *The Female and the Species*. Thus, it is crucial not only to scrutinise the portrayal of female characters but also to actively challenge and contest the oppressive forces they encounter. This necessitates the recognition of a shared source of resistance that unites all feminised subjectivities, regardless of whether they are human or nonhuman. The theoretical frameworks employed in this analysis have been diverse, as each text demanded a slightly different lens to yield the most captivating and intellectually stimulating findings. Grounded in a posthumanist perspective, this thesis engaged in close readings of the three analysed novels to exemplify how literature can function as a site of resistance, as Scholtmeijer proposes.

By synthesising pertinent research on the humanimal bond, particularly in the realms of ecofeminism and critical posthumanism, this thesis has provided substantial evidence that feeds into the ongoing discussions within the field. The comprehensive textual analysis of each of the three novels necessitated both specific and more general methodological approaches. Rosi Braidotti's conceptualisation of critical posthumanism and the notion of the *zoe* proved critical in providing not only a lens for close readings but also an analysis of the potentially normative "human" figures within the texts. Val Plumwood's critique of rationalism, particularly in postcolonial contexts, has shed light on the continued operation of the rational/irrational dichotomy in these novels. Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics has proved valuable in analysing certain texts, while Donna Haraway's concept of companion species has offered a fruitful lens through which to examine the texts.

Through an exploration of the boundaries between the human and nonhuman and an investigation into how the female, both human and otherwise, can be oppressed by the "human," recurring patterns have been identified in the novels and we have been able to explore the question that, as I noted in the introduction, has been in mind throughout the writing of this dissertation: how does one go about reading literary animals?

As stated in the introduction, the objective of this dissertation was to investigate the evolution of the humanimal bond and its portrayal in Irish literature through the analysis of three novels: *The Lady* (1987), *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), and *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015). Specifically, the thesis explored how the authors constructed nonhuman characters and reimagined the humanimal bond within their texts, as well as the resistance against anthropocentrism and androcentrism across different periods. By addressing these research questions, the thesis aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge at the intersection of gender, literature, and the nonhuman. Through the identification and exploration of how these novels depict the intersectionality of gender, animality, and oppression, this thesis sought to enrich the ongoing discourse surrounding resistance and liberation from patriarchal and anthropocentric ideologies.

5.1. (Anthropocentric) Bonds

In light of the socio-economic contexts surrounding the analysed novels, namely the Troubles, the Tiger era, and the 2008 crisis, this dissertation has strived to provide a profound examination of how different animal species, particularly horses, sheep, and dogs, are constructed in a selection of contemporary Irish fiction written by women. To achieve this, it was essential to contextualise the analysis within the socio-economic backdrop of the respective periods. By delving into these facets, this study offers valuable insights into the ways in which the construction of animal species contributes to the literary landscape of contemporary Irish women's writing.

Upon closer examination of each novel, it becomes readily apparent that they collectively confront the pervasive presence of anthropocentrism and its profound influence on the humanimal bond. These literary works offer distinct perspectives on the matter, illuminating the multifaceted dimensions through which anthropocentrism is both expressed and challenged within the evolving social and temporal landscapes of Ireland. By critically analysing these novels, we gain insight into the diverse manifestations of anthropocentrism and its implications for the relationships between humans and nonhumans. Furthermore, the exploration of these themes within different time periods and societal shifts allows us to appreciate the nuanced ways in which the authors engage with and critique anthropocentric ideologies.

In McCaffrey's novel, the humanimal bond and how anthropocentrism shapes it are explored within the framework of the business of breeding equines. The economic profit-

driven nature of this bond reinforces the influence of anthropocentrism. It allows for the ease with which animals can be killed or sent to the knackers to be turned into meat for human consumption, exposing that nonhuman animals are viewed as commodities in the novel. Despite blurring some human/nonhuman boundaries through the use of language and symbolism, the narrative ultimately reinforces an anthropocentric hierarchy in which the equines are instrumentalised. As noted in the analysis, the novel portrays how equines are used as a means to negotiate the social dynamics of the human characters, as seen through the cutting of their tails in response to a teenage neighbour's pregnancy, which has probably been caused by one of the Carradyne boys. Within the context of *The Lady* and the socio-economic interests and societal norms of 1970s Ireland, the novel exposes the prevalent anthropocentrism in the humanimal bond.

Similarly, Haverty's novel delves into how anthropocentrism can operate in rural Ireland in a way that is intricately linked to the necropolitics of the Celtic Tiger period. The agricultural setting of the novel is shaped by high technoscience, as exemplified by the Institute, where genetically modified ewes are bred and sold. The narrator draws notable parallels between the farm and Nazi concentration camps, emphasising the pervasive necropolitics at play. The naturalisation of anthropocentrism in the novel is evident through the narrator's acceptance of the lambing process and the alignment of the farm's advantages with the neoliberal ideal of efficiency, which is here embodied by the "trouble-free" modified ewe such as Missy. *ODT* serves as a critique of anthropocentrism and highlights the painful exploitation of other species in the face of technological advancements and societal progress.

In Baume's novel, the impact of anthropocentrism is explored against the backdrop of post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, marked by the 2008 economic crisis. The economic dimension takes centre stage as the protagonist engages in fraud as a means of survival, exposing the harsh realities faced by the marginalised. The novel portrays the changes brought about by the economic boom, including altered landscapes, invasive plants, and heavy pollution. Through the protagonist's encounters and observations, the narrative criticises the continued mistreatment of nonhuman beings under the guise of necropolitics. The novel denounces the cruel treatment of greyhounds and sheds light on the commodification of animals within the farming industry. By juxtaposing the treatment of pigs with that of dogs, the text challenges the arbitrary distinctions made based on intelligence and questions the ethics of animal exploitation.

Hence, it is evident that each novel provides a distinct perspective on anthropocentrism within the humanimal relationship. While McCaffrey's work focuses on the economic motivations and social dynamics that perpetuate anthropocentrism, Haverty's novel delves into the intersection of anthropocentrism and necropolitics, highlighting the exploitative nature of farming practices and how even high technology does not change the anthropocentric foundation of farms. Baume's narrative explores the post-Celtic Tiger landscape, exposing the repercussions of anthropocentrism on both the environment and nonhuman beings. Despite the differences in context and approach, all three novels raise important questions about the dominance of human interests and the need for a more inclusive and ethical understanding of the humanimal bond. In conclusion, the analysis of these three novels reveals the anthropocentric nature of the humanimal bond in the fictional Irelands they depict, with Baume's novel standing out as the only one in which the protagonist challenges this anthropocentrism.

5.2. National Identities

The analysis of the three novels has also provided a comprehensive understanding of how national identities are constructed. Each novel delves into the complexities of national identity, examining its relation to the human characters and their interactions with animals.

McCaffrey's novel places equines as symbols of national identity, particularly relevant in the backdrop of the Troubles in Ireland. The characters' acceptance and rejection are tied to their ability to ride successfully, with only those who demonstrate proficiency being considered "Irish enough." This notion is exemplified through the American character Cornwell, whose lack of expertise in riding — as well as his disastrous riding of the Irish horses during the hunting that results in the hospitalisation of Catriona and the death of Blister — ultimately leads to his rejection. On the other hand, the protagonist's cousin, Patricia, who initially faces mockery due to her American riding style, earns acceptance after proving herself by riding the Irish equines. This portrayal highlights how equines serve as a rite of passage and a means of negotiating national identity within the community. Similarly, as noted in the analysis, the equines also become a tool for negotiating English origins, with the husband of the skilled rider Selina portrayed negatively for his indifference towards equines, whereas Selina is presented as

the perfect model for Catriona as a horsewoman, further emphasising their significance in shaping national ontologies and the negotiation of identities.

In Haverty's novel, the exploration of national identity is intertwined with the colonial background of the island. The narrator, a revisionist historian, delves into the colonial past and re-enacts the colonial discourse, this time focusing on the ewe Missy. The narrator attempts to reduce Missy to a myth, employing naming practices and blending Christian and pre-Christian motifs. This examination of Irishness within the colonial context is further emphasised through the explicit title of the novel, which alludes to the colonial discourse of the beast. Haverty's work prompts readers to reflect on the effects of colonialism on national identity and the ways in which it shapes and influences relationships with animals.

Baume's novel explores national identity through the lens of the protagonist's connection to the Big House and his Anglo-Irish family. The family's adherence to the Catholic faith and the hiring of a Catholic caretaker highlights the legacy of the residence and its oppressive consequences. The protagonist initially follows this legacy, isolating himself from the community and viewing himself as an Anglo-Irish enemy. However, as the narrative progresses and One Eye's influence on the human becomes more apparent, he begins to resist this legacy, challenging its influence and ultimately abandoning the house to distance himself from its oppressive colonial discourse. Similarly, while his suicide can be seen as a form of defeat, it can also be interpreted as an act of resistance against the necropolitics associated with the Big House, given that he does it in the sea, outside the confines of the house and its symbolic legacy. Moreover, the novel concludes with a celebratory tone as One Eye, the dog adopted by the protagonist, runs free, symbolising a new legacy that breaks free from the oppressive colonial discourse.

In comparing these aspects, it becomes evident that each novel offers a unique perspective on national identity within the context of Ireland. McCaffrey's work focuses on the role of equines as symbols of national identity and the negotiation of identities based on riding proficiency. Haverty's novel examines the colonial background of Ireland and the impact of colonial discourse on national identity, represented through the re-enactment of colonialism on the character of Missy. Baume's narrative centres around the Anglo-Irish protagonist's relationship with the Big House and his resistance against its oppressive colonial discourse, culminating in a quest for liberation and the celebration of a new legacy represented by the dog, One Eye.

These novels collectively highlight the complexities of national identity and its intersections with humanimal relationships. They emphasise the need for critical examination and questioning of national narratives and their implications for the treatment of animals. By exploring the nuances of national identity within these narratives, the authors prompt readers to reflect on the ways in which the construction of national identity can perpetuate anthropocentrism and reinforce hierarchies that devalue human and nonhuman beings alike. Hence, we must acknowledge the urgent need to question and deconstruct national narratives that perpetuate hierarchies and injustices towards nonhuman beings. They call for a reevaluation of the ways in which national identity is constructed and the impact it has on humanimal relationships. Furthermore, they highlight the interconnectedness of social, political, and environmental issues, illustrating how national identities can shape attitudes and behaviours towards animals and the more-than-human world.

To address these complexities, it is crucial to foster a more inclusive and compassionate understanding of national identity that recognises the inherent value and rights of all beings, regardless of their species. This entails challenging anthropocentric perspectives, promoting ethical considerations in the treatment of animals, and advocating for policies that protect their well-being. It also calls for the reimagining of national narratives that encompass the interconnectedness of all life forms and acknowledge the contributions and agency of nonhuman beings in shaping collective identities. In conclusion, the analysis of these novels offers valuable insights into the intersections of national identity and humanimal relationships. They reveal the ways in which national narratives can perpetuate hierarchies and injustices towards animals, and they emphasise the importance of critically examining and reimagining these narratives. By acknowledging and challenging the anthropocentric biases embedded in national identities, we can strive towards a more inclusive, compassionate, and ethically conscious society that recognises the inherent value of all living beings and promotes non-anthropocentric bonds between humans and animals.

5.3. Animals as Companion Species

In examining the theme of anthropocentrism and its implications for humanimal relationships, these novels likewise offer valuable insights into their complex dynamics. They explore the boundaries of pet ownership and challenge traditional notions of

companionship, highlighting the ethical considerations and power dynamics involved in these interspecies relationships.

McCaffrey's novel portrays the protagonist's connection with equines, particularly ponies, as a means of exploring the forced ethical encounter between humans and animals. The shared fall of the protagonist and her first pony, Blister, serves as a catalyst for recognising their mutual vulnerability, blurring interspecies hyperseparation. As noted in the analysis, while Catriona grieves the loss of her pony, her concern is primarily centred on her ability to ride rather than the pony's death. Moreover, the treatment of Blister suggests that he is considered grievable, as he is given a burial rather than being turned into meat. In contrast, the stallion Tulip is not afforded the same level of care and respect, as he is sent to the knackers for slaughter to be turned into meat. This contrast underscores the selective nature of grievability and the arbitrary value placed on different animals within an anthropocentric framework as well as the fact that these equines are hardly considered part of Catriona's family.

Haverty's novel delves into the relationship between Martin and the ewe, Missy, offering a critique of the continued objectification and exploitation of farm animals within a technoscientific context. Despite advances in genetic modification, Missy is reduced to a pet and subjected to the dominance and punishment of Martin, as denounced by Yi-Fu Tuan. The unequal power dynamics and Martin's treatment of Missy as a dependent and submissive creature reinforce the pervasive anthropocentrism in society. Moreover, Missy's fate further emphasises her lack of value as an individual, as she is left to die after being promised sanctuary. The text then denounces the disposability of nonhuman lives and the disregard for their well-being within an anthropocentric worldview such as the one defended by the narrator.

Baume's novel explores the human-dog relationship as a paradigmatic example of pet companionship. The protagonist's empathetic disposition towards otherised entities, particularly other species, is evident throughout the narrative, not only with the dog. The contrast between the protagonist's abandonment by his father and his own immediate retrieval of the dog, One Eye, showcases his capacity for compassion and the rejection of a similar act of abandonment. The portrayal of the dog as a companion rather than a mere pet is highlighted by the protagonist's struggle to balance his desire for the dog to behave non-violently and his commitment to respecting the dog's agency. Moreover, the text suggests that One Eye's violent behaviour is the result of his education by humans; hence, the novel also sheds light on the ways in which animals are often punished for the actions

of humans, exposing the inherent unfairness and the need to challenge anthropocentric biases.

Collectively, these analyses invite a critical examination of the humanimal relationship and its entanglement with anthropocentrism. McCaffrey's portrayal of equines as outsiders to their family, whether as pets or companions, exposes that they cannot be grieved as they are distanced from their human owners. The examination of pet companionship in Haverty's novel underscores the persistence of anthropocentrism and the oppression of animals interpreted as pets, revealing the need for a more inclusive and respectful approach to their treatment. Baume's exploration of the human-dog bond challenges traditional notions of pet ownership and advocates for a recognition of the agency and value of nonhuman beings. They emphasise the importance of recognising the agency and intrinsic value of nonhuman beings, urging readers to move beyond the traditional pet-owner dynamic and embrace a more equitable and respectful approach to interspecies relationships. By challenging anthropocentric biases and promoting a posthumanist perspective, it is possible to forge alliances with companion species and reshape the narratives and practices that govern humanimal interactions.

In short, the analysis of these novels offers significant contributions to the understanding of anthropocentrism and its impact on humanimal relationships. By challenging traditional notions of pet ownership and interrogating the treatment of animals within the context of national identity and power structures, these novels highlight the complexities and ethical dilemmas inherent in human-nonhuman interactions, which are not resolved simply by representing other species and turning them into "present" referents. This analysis then invites us to move beyond traditional notions of pet ownership and embrace a more inclusive, respectful, and mutually beneficial approach that recognizes the agency, value, and inherent worth of all living beings. Only through such a transformation can we begin to forge a more compassionate, equitable, and sustainable coexistence with our nonhuman counterparts.

5.4. Animals and Masculinities

The analysis of these novels also provides interesting insights into the construction of male identities and the role of animals in shaping masculinities. Each novel explores the relationship between men and animals, highlighting the ways in which the nonhuman can

be used as a symbol, a moral compass, or an instrument in the negotiation of male identities.

McCaffrey's novel delves into the association of equines, particularly stallions, with masculinity. The patriarchs of the Carradyne family, the Colonel and Michael, are both portrayed as embodying a strong hegemonic form of masculinity, which is closely tied to the presence and symbolism of the stallion. The legacy of the grandfather continues to exert influence even after his death, shaping the family dynamics and Catriona's competition as a rider. As we have noted in the analysis, horses serve as a means to construct and express masculinity, as seen in Michael's sexual attraction to Selina while riding a gelding, contrasting with David's violent act of rape driven by his disdain for equines. Equines, in this novel, function as vehicles through which male characters are defined and as moral compasses illustrating their actions.

In Haverty's novel, the focus shifts more towards the dynamics of brotherly rivalry between Martin and Pierce, with animals playing a secondary role in the construction of male identities. The narrator feels emasculated by his brother, which leads him to acquire Missy as a means of rebellion and undermining Pierce's successful farming. However, Missy alone is not enough to alleviate his anxiety and insecurity in the face of Pierce's accomplishments and marriage. Seeking further validation, he turns to Etti, eventually becoming his lover, disrupting Pierce's marriage and leading to his tragic demise. In this narrative, masculinity is defined by the objectification and instrumentalisation of females, both human and animal, as highlighted by O'Connor's critique.

Baume's novel takes a distinct approach to the construction of masculinity through the animal-human bond. The protagonist, a man, experiences a strained and virtually non-existent father-son relationship, satirising the conventional gothic fiction archetype. The father, depicted as a failed breadwinner and socially marginalised figure despite his attempts, represents a parody of ideal fatherhood. Conversely, Ray defies societal expectations and rejects the path laid out for him, growing increasingly resistant to conforming to the legacy of the Big House, particularly after adopting the dog. Here, the animal character becomes a source of empowerment, enabling the protagonist to challenge the oppressive discourse that has isolated him throughout his life. The relationship between Ray and the dog signifies a posthumanist alliance, emphasising the rejection of instrumentalisation and embracing a new form of family that transcends traditional human-centric boundaries.

Examining the conclusions drawn from each novel, it becomes apparent that the portrayal of male identities and their relationship with animals varies significantly. McCaffrey's narrative showcases the influence of equines in constructing masculinity and guiding male characters' moral compasses. Haverty's novel denounces the objectification of females, both human and animal, as a means of defining masculinity. On the other hand, Baume's work challenges conventional notions of masculinity through the transformative power of the animal-human bond, emphasising a posthumanist alliance that. Hence, the novels collectively invite readers to critically reflect on the construction of male identities, the ethical implications of their relationships with animals, and the potential for alternative, more egalitarian forms of masculinity that transcend anthropocentric boundaries.

In conclusion, the analysis of these novels deepens our understanding of the complex relationship between men and animals in the context of constructing male identities. Each novel presents a distinct narrative that intertwines with the theme of masculinity, highlighting the multifaceted ways in which animals are utilised and perceived in relation to gender. By critically examining these narratives, we gain insights into the societal norms and power structures that shape humanimal relationships, as well as the potential for transformation and resistance. This research contributes to broader discussions in the fields of literary studies, gender studies, and animal studies, urging us to reevaluate and reimagine the intersections of gender, power, and species in order to foster more compassionate and equitable relationships with the nonhuman beings that share our world.

5.5. Animals and Femininities

The analysis of the female characters in these novels also allows us to explore the complex dynamics between women and animals, shedding light on the interplay of gender, power, and oppression. Each novel presents a distinct narrative that examines the role of women within patriarchal systems and their connection to nonhuman beings. McCaffrey's exploration of female characters challenges traditional gender roles and presents a juxtaposition between empowered and disempowered women in relation to horses. Haverty's novel exposes the oppressive nature of patriarchy and speciesism, showcasing the interconnectedness of female oppression through the characters of Missy and Etti.

Baume's novel, while lacking prominent female figures, emphasises the damaging effects of an absent mother and the influence of toxic masculinity on male characters.

In McCaffrey's novel, the portrayal of women highlights the division between domestic and public spheres. Catriona, the protagonist, challenges the expectations imposed upon her by her mother, Isabel, who represents a traditional model of womanhood rooted in Catholicism and repressed sexuality. Isabel's rejection of horses and her disapproval of Catriona's interest in riding serve as symbols of her adherence to patriarchal norms. In contrast, Selina, a sexually liberated character, encourages Catriona's pursuit of riding and represents an alternative path for women. However, the empowerment offered by embracing the equine world is problematised by Selina's reliance on male protection and her divorce only after being raped. Furthermore, the novel raises questions about gender disparities in the equine domain, as male characters are encouraged to compete regardless of their competence, while only exceptional female riders like Catriona are accepted, albeit grudgingly. The ambiguity and problematic nature of Catriona's empowerment underscore the limitations imposed by the genre and societal expectations within the novel.

Haverty's novel delves into the oppression of women through the characters of Missy and Etti. Missy represents the submissive and confined female archetype, as she is kept indoors by Martin, parodying patriarchal ideals of womanhood. Etti, although more in the background, is depicted as sexually active and financially independent, challenging conventional expectations, and raising Martin's ontological anxiety as a man. The narrator aligns himself with rationality and positions both women and Missy as lacking rationality, reinforcing patriarchal assumptions about women's inferiority. The novel highlights the interconnectedness of female oppression and speciesism, as both women and animals are subject to Martin's actions — Missy is killed, and Etti is pregnant. The lack of consequences for Martin's behaviour and his subsequent reward underscore the benefits that patriarchal systems afford to supposedly rational men. Hence, Haverty's narrative exposes the common sources of oppression rooted in patriarchy and speciesism, highlighting the ways in which women and animals are reduced to objects to appease male ontological anxieties.

Baume's novel, in contrast, lacks prominent female characters but draws attention to the damaging effects of an absent mother figure. The protagonist, Ray, grapples with the absence of his mother throughout the narrative, in line with the gothic tradition. Her absence fuels Ray's anxieties and the influence of toxic masculinity embodied by his

distant father. The novel highlights the isolation and suffering experienced by male characters as a result of the father's model of masculinity. The absence of the mother figure signifies not only her lack of materiality but also the detrimental impact of patriarchal masculinity on familial relationships and the psychological well-being of the male characters.

By examining the representations of women in these novels, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between women, men, and animals within patriarchal systems. McCaffrey's narrative questions and challenges traditional gender roles, illustrating both empowering and problematic aspects of embracing the equine world for women. Haverty's novel unveils the oppressive nature of patriarchy and speciesism, revealing the interconnectedness of female oppression and the benefits derived from supposedly rational men. Baume's novel, on the other hand, emphasises the absence and detrimental effects of the mother figure, shedding light on the damaging influence of patriarchal masculinity and the isolation experienced by male characters. Together, these narratives contribute to a broader understanding of the multifaceted nature of gender identities, the oppressive forces at play, and the potential for resistance and transformation.

To summarise, the analysis of these novels deepens our understanding of the intricate relationships between women, and animals within patriarchal systems. The novels provide a rich tapestry of narratives that explore the construction of gender identities and the ways in which women are both empowered and oppressed within these frameworks. By examining the different portrayals of female characters, we gain valuable insights into the complexities of gender dynamics, the limitations of traditional gender roles, and the intersections of oppression that arise from patriarchal and speciesist structures. The comparative analysis of these novels prompts us to critically reflect on the diverse manifestations of gendered power dynamics and the urgent need for more inclusive and equitable societal frameworks that honour the agency, autonomy, and well-being of all individuals, regardless of gender or species.

5.6. Interspecies Communication

The way this dissertation tackles the types of association established among members of different species allows us to explore the limitations and possibilities that exist within humanimal relationships. McCaffrey's novel highlights the constraints imposed by the

genre and narrative structure, particularly in the context of Catriona's attempts to communicate with the equines. While she listens to their sounds and observes their bodies, her communicative capacity remains limited, preventing her from creating posthumanist alliances and resisting anthropocentrism. The analysis sheds light on the challenges of bridging the communication gap and the influence of narrative conventions on the portrayal of humanimal interactions.

Haverty's novel presents a stark contrast, as communication with the ewe is completely disregarded. Martin, the narrator, speaks on behalf of the ewe, dismissing her attempts to demand attention. This lack of effort in listening and understanding the nonhuman other exemplifies the limited imagination and communication skills of the narrator. The analysis emphasises the failure to engage in meaningful communication and the way in which other species are often silenced, as well as the consequences of such disregard within the narrative. It serves as a critical examination of the human tendency to dominate and control, overlooking the importance of genuine dialogue and understanding, even if within the limitations of each species.

Baume's novel offers a different perspective on communication, with a focus on the importance of imagination and nonverbal understanding. The narrator acknowledges the limitations of words and rational knowledge when it comes to comprehending the dog, One Eye. Instead of imposing human language and symbolic interpretations, the narrator embraces imagination as a tool for envisioning the dog's past experiences. By rejecting purely rational methods and turning to imagination, the narrator opens up the possibility of empathetic connection and a deeper understanding of the nonhuman other. This approach stands in contrast to Haverty's narrative, highlighting the significance of genuine communication that transcends language barriers and rationality.

When these conclusions are brought into dialogue, a nuanced understanding of imagination and communication in humanimal relationships emerges. McCaffrey's analysis reveals the constraints imposed by genre and narrative structure, illustrating the difficulties of communication. Haverty's exploration exposes the failure to listen and understand the nonhuman other, highlighting the consequences of such neglect. In contrast, Baume's novel offers a perspective that values imagination and nonverbal understanding as pathways to empathetic connection.

By comparing these conclusions, it becomes evident that the novels present a range of perspectives on the theme of imagination and communication. Each narrative offers insights into the complexities and challenges of bridging the gap between humans and

animals. McCaffrey's novel is an example of the limitations imposed by the literary genre, Haverty's novel exposes the consequences of neglecting genuine communication, and Baume's novel highlights the transformative potential of imagination and nonverbal understanding. Together, these analyses contribute to a broader understanding of the multifaceted nature of humanimal relationships and the importance of fostering genuine communication and empathetic connection. In conclusion, the analysis of these novels enriches our understanding of the dynamics of imagination and communication within humanimal relationships. The novels highlight the constraints imposed by narrative conventions, the consequences of neglecting genuine communication, and the transformative potential of imagination and nonverbal understanding. Through a comparative analysis, we have examined the limitations and possibilities portrayed in each narrative, providing a comprehensive exploration of the theme across different literary contexts. These findings prompt us to reflect on the significance of fostering empathetic connections, transcending language barriers, and challenging the anthropocentric perspectives that often dominate humanimal relationships. Moving forward, it is essential to continue exploring the complexities of communication and imagination in order to foster more meaningful and equitable relationships between humans and animals.

5.7. Limitations and Future Research

This dissertation presents a singular perspective on the intricate animal question within contemporary Irish culture and cannot fully encompass the breadth and complexity of this multifaceted issue. The sheer abundance of literary works delving into the shared oppression of women and nonhuman animals in present-day Ireland far surpasses the confines of a doctoral thesis or even a comprehensive research project. Constantly emerging works expand the landscape and attempting to scrutinise the interplay between the "female and the species" in each individual work would be an undertaking of monumental proportions.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that this thesis centred its analysis on women writers as an intentional political choice, considering the historical marginalisation of women also within the literary sphere. However, this conscious choice leaves ample room for future research to explore how Irish male writers and other marginalised voices, including immigrants, non-heterosexual individuals, and other-than-

cis writers, approach the intricate dynamics of the animal question. By expanding the inquiry to encompass these diverse perspectives, a more comprehensive understanding of the topic can be attained. In light of these considerations, this research presents an opportunity for subsequent investigations to delve into the animal trope as portrayed by authors beyond the scope of this thesis. By recognising that the exclusion of other authors was a strategic decision to maintain focus and prevent the dissertation from becoming an interminable endeavour, avenues are left open for future analyses that expand and enrich our understanding of the animal question in Irish literature.

The conclusions derived from the analysis of these texts, viewed through the lens of posthumanism-informed ecofeminism, unveil a myriad of opportunities for postdoctoral research. This dissertation, as a part of the ongoing scholarly exploration of the animal figure in Irish literature, builds upon the valuable contributions of previous researchers in this field. As we look ahead, numerous avenues beckon for further investigation and inquiry.

Primarily, future research can embark on a comprehensive analysis of other contemporary Irish novels, thus expanding the boundaries of our inquiry and enriching our comprehension of the intricate interplay between animals, gender, and power dynamics. By broadening our scope, we can delve deeper into the multifaceted layers of meaning embedded within these narratives.

Furthermore, undertaking a posthumanist examination of anthropocentrism and androcentrism within the works of the authors explored in this study, with a specific focus on Sara Baume's recent publications and Anne McCaffrey's extensive bibliography on animals, which hold immense promise for further exploration. Their analysis would provide valuable insights into the authors' evolving perspectives and their contributions to the discourse surrounding humanimal relationships.

In essence, this research serves as a solid foundation upon which future explorations can be built. It emphasises the continued significance of scrutinising the complexities of humanimal relationships and gender constructs within the realm of Irish literature. The multitude of possibilities awaiting future researchers ensures that the study of literary animals and their cultural significance in contemporary Ireland remains a captivating, fertile, and fruitful area of investigation.

As this doctoral thesis draws to its end, we stand at the precipice of an exhilarating journey, eagerly anticipating the discoveries and insights that await us within this captivating field of research. It is evident that the pursuit of knowledge in this area will

continue to yield intriguing and valuable results. The dynamic nature of the subject matter ensures that there will always be new avenues to explore, fresh perspectives to consider, and further depths to plumb. With each step forward, we inch closer to unravelling the wealth of knowledge that lies within, enriching our understanding of literary animals and their cultural significance in contemporary Ireland. As we embark on this exciting voyage, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing scholarship and embracing the ever-unfolding possibilities that lie ahead.

5. Conclusiones en español

Como se estableció en la introducción de esta tesis doctoral, el tropo animal sirve como una arena rica y multifacética de análisis donde convergen varios aspectos ideológicos. A través de un examen de las novelas seleccionadas, queda claro que lo femenino, ya sea humana u otra, está constantemente sometido a la opresión dentro del discurso patriarcal, como Maureen O'Connor ilumina valientemente en *The Female and the Species*. Por lo tanto, es crucial no solo examinar la representación de los personajes femeninos, sino también desafiar activamente las fuerzas opresoras que enfrentan. Esto requiere el reconocimiento de una fuente compartida de resistencia que une a todas las subjetividades feminizadas, ya sean humanas o no humanas. Los marcos teóricos empleados en este análisis han sido diversos, ya que cada texto exigía un enfoque ligeramente diferente para obtener hallazgos más cautivadores e intelectualmente estimulantes. Arraigada en una perspectiva posthumanista, esta tesis se embarcó en lecturas detalladas de las tres novelas analizadas para ejemplificar cómo la literatura puede funcionar como un lugar de resistencia, como propone Scholtmeijer.

Al sintetizar la investigación pertinente sobre el vínculo humanimal, especialmente en los ámbitos del ecofeminismo y el posthumanismo crítico, esta tesis ha proporcionado evidencia sustancial que contribuye a las discusiones en curso dentro del campo. El análisis textual exhaustivo de cada una de las tres novelas requirió enfoques metodológicos tanto específicos como más generales. La conceptualización del posthumanismo crítico de Rosi Braidotti y la noción de la zoe resultaron fundamentales al proporcionar no solo una lente para las lecturas detalladas, sino también un análisis de las figuras potencialmente normativas "humanas" dentro de los textos. La crítica de Val Plumwood al racionalismo, especialmente en contextos poscoloniales, ha arrojado luz sobre la continua operación de la dicotomía racional/irracional en estas novelas. La noción de necropolítica de Achille Mbembe ha demostrado ser valiosa en el análisis de ciertos textos, mientras que el concepto de especies compañeras de Donna Haraway ha ofrecido una lente fructífera para examinar los textos. A través de una exploración de los límites entre lo humano y lo no humano y una investigación sobre cómo la mujer, tanto humana como no humana, puede ser oprimida por lo "humano," se han identificado patrones recurrentes en las novelas y hemos podido explorar la pregunta que, como señalé en la introducción, ha estado presente a lo largo de la redacción de esta disertación: ¿cómo se aborda la lectura de animales literarios? Como se indicó en la introducción, el objetivo

de esta disertación fue investigar la evolución del vínculo humano-animal y su representación en la literatura irlandesa mediante el análisis de tres novelas: *The Lady* (1987), *One Day as a Tiger* (1997) y *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015). Específicamente, la tesis exploró cómo las autoras construyeron personajes no humanos y reimaginaron el vínculo humano-animal dentro de sus textos, así como la resistencia contra el antropocentrismo y el androcentrismo a lo largo de diferentes periodos. Al abordar estas preguntas de investigación, la tesis tuvo como objetivo contribuir al cuerpo existente de conocimiento en la intersección de género, literatura y lo no humano. A través de la identificación y exploración de cómo estas novelas representan la interseccionalidad de género, animalidad y opresión, esta tesis buscó enriquecer el discurso en curso sobre la resistencia y liberación de las ideologías patriarcales y antropocéntricas.

5.1. Vínculos (Antropocéntricos)

En consideración de los contextos socioeconómicos que rodean las novelas analizadas, específicamente los problemas en Irlanda del Norte, la era del Tigre Celta y la crisis de 2008, esta tesis se ha esforzado por ofrecer un examen profundo de cómo diferentes especies animales, en particular caballos, ovejas y perros, son construidas en una selección de la ficción irlandesa contemporánea escrita por mujeres. Para lograr esto, fue esencial contextualizar el análisis dentro del telón de fondo socioeconómico de los periodos respectivos. Al profundizar en estos aspectos, este estudio ofrece ideas valiosas sobre cómo la construcción de especies animales contribuye al panorama literario de la escritura contemporánea de mujeres irlandesas.

Al examinar más de cerca cada novela, resulta evidente que juntas enfrentan la presencia pervasiva del antropocentrismo y su profunda influencia en el vínculo humano-animal. Estas obras literarias ofrecen perspectivas distintas sobre el asunto, iluminando las dimensiones multifacéticas a través de las cuales el antropocentrismo se expresa y desafía dentro de los cambiantes paisajes sociales y temporales de Irlanda. Al analizar críticamente estas novelas, obtenemos una visión de las diversas manifestaciones del antropocentrismo y sus implicaciones para las relaciones entre humanos y no humanos. Además, la exploración de estos temas en diferentes periodos y cambios sociales nos permite apreciar las formas matizadas en que las autoras se relacionan con y critican las ideologías antropocéntricas.

En la novela de McCaffrey, el vínculo humanimal y cómo el antropocentrismo lo configura se explora en el marco del negocio de la cría de equinos. La naturaleza impulsada por el beneficio económico de este vínculo refuerza la influencia del antropocentrismo. Facilita la facilidad con la que los animales pueden ser sacrificados o enviados a los deshuesaderos para convertirse en carne para el consumo humano, exponiendo que los animales no humanos son percibidos como mercancías en la novela. A pesar de difuminar algunas fronteras entre lo humano y no humano mediante el uso de lenguaje y simbolismo, la narrativa refuerza en última instancia una jerarquía antropocéntrica en la que los equinos son instrumentalizados. Como se señala en el análisis, la novela retrata cómo los equinos son utilizados como un medio para negociar las dinámicas sociales de los personajes humanos, como se ve en el corte de sus colas en respuesta al embarazo de una vecina adolescente, probablemente causado por uno de los chicos Carradyne. En el contexto de *The Lady* y los intereses socioeconómicos y normas sociales de la Irlanda de la década de 1970, la novela expone el antropocentrismo prevalente en el vínculo humano-animal.

De manera similar, la novela de Haverty profundiza en cómo el antropocentrismo puede operar en la Irlanda rural de una manera que está intrínsecamente vinculada a la necropolítica del periodo del Tigre Celta. El entorno agrícola de la novela está moldeado por la alta tecnociencia, ejemplificada por el Instituto, donde se crían y venden ovejas genéticamente modificadas. El narrador establece notables paralelismos entre la granja y los campos de concentración nazis, enfatizando la necropolítica pervasiva en juego. La naturalización del antropocentrismo en la novela es evidente a través de la aceptación del narrador del proceso de corderización y la alineación de las ventajas de la granja con el ideal neoliberal de eficiencia, encarnado aquí por la oveja modificad para no dar problemas como Missy. *ODT* sirve como una crítica al antropocentrismo y destaca la explotación dolorosa de otras especies ante los avances tecnológicos y el progreso social.

En la novela de Baume, el impacto del antropocentrismo se explora en el contexto de la Irlanda post-Tigre Celta, marcada por la crisis económica de 2008. La dimensión económica toma el protagonismo mientras el protagonista comete fraude como medio de supervivencia, exponiendo las duras realidades enfrentadas por los marginados. La novela retrata los cambios provocados por el auge económico, incluyendo paisajes alterados, plantas invasoras y contaminación intensa. A través de los encuentros y observaciones de la protagonista, la narrativa critica el continuo maltrato de los seres no humanos bajo la apariencia de la necropolítica. La novela denuncia el cruel trato a los galgos y arroja luz

sobre la mercantilización de los animales dentro de la industria ganadera. Al contrastar el tratamiento de los cerdos con el de los perros, el texto cuestiona las distinciones arbitrarias basadas en la inteligencia y plantea dudas sobre la ética de la explotación animal.

Por lo tanto, es evidente que cada novela proporciona una perspectiva distintiva sobre el antropocentrismo dentro de la relación humano-animal. Mientras que la obra de McCaffrey se centra en las motivaciones económicas y las dinámicas sociales que perpetúan el antropocentrismo, la novela de Haverty profundiza en la intersección del antropocentrismo y la necropolítica, destacando la naturaleza explotadora de las prácticas agrícolas y cómo incluso la alta tecnología no cambia la base antropocéntrica de las granjas. La narrativa de Baume explora el paisaje post-Tigre Celta, exponiendo las repercusiones del antropocentrismo tanto en el medio ambiente como en los seres no humanos. A pesar de las diferencias en contexto y enfoque, las tres novelas plantean preguntas importantes sobre la dominación de los intereses humanos y la necesidad de una comprensión más inclusiva y ética del vínculo humano-animal. En conclusión, el análisis de estas tres novelas revela la naturaleza antropocéntrica del vínculo humano-animal en las Irlandas ficticias que retratan, siendo la novela de Baume la única en la que la protagonista desafía este antropocentrismo.

5.2. Identidades Nacionales

El análisis de las tres novelas también ha proporcionado una comprensión integral de cómo se construyen las identidades nacionales. Cada novela profundiza en las complejidades de la identidad nacional, examinando su relación con los personajes humanos y sus interacciones con los animales.

En la novela de McCaffrey, los equinos se presentan como símbolos de la identidad nacional, especialmente relevante en el trasfondo de los Problemas en Irlanda. La aceptación y el rechazo de los personajes están vinculados a su habilidad para montar con éxito, considerándose "lo suficientemente irlandeses" solo aquellos que demuestran destreza. Esta idea se ejemplifica a través del personaje estadounidense Cornwell, cuya falta de experiencia en equitación, junto con su desastroso manejo de los caballos irlandeses durante la caza que resulta en la hospitalización de Catriona y la muerte de Blister, finalmente conduce a su rechazo. Por otro lado, la prima de la protagonista, Patricia, quien inicialmente enfrenta burlas debido a su estilo de equitación

estadounidense, logra ser aceptada tras demostrar su habilidad montando los ponis irlandeses. Esta representación destaca cómo los equinos sirven como rito de paso y como medio para negociar la identidad nacional dentro de la comunidad. De manera similar, como se señala en el análisis, los equinos también se convierten en una herramienta para negociar orígenes ingleses, ya que el esposo de la hábil jinete Selina es retratado negativamente por su indiferencia hacia los equinos, mientras que Selina se presenta como el modelo perfecto para Catriona como amazona, enfatizando aún más su importancia en la formación de ontologías nacionales y la negociación de identidades.

En la novela de Haverty, la exploración de la identidad nacional está entrelazada con el trasfondo colonial de la isla. El narrador, un historiador revisionista, se sumerge en el pasado colonial y reinterpreta el discurso colonial, enfocándose esta vez en la oveja Missy. El narrador intenta reducir a Missy a un mito, empleando prácticas de denominación y fusionando motivos cristianos y pre-cristianos. Esta examinación de lo irlandés dentro del contexto colonial se enfatiza aún más a través del título explícito de la novela, que alude al discurso colonial de la bestia. El trabajo de Haverty incita a los lectores a reflexionar sobre los efectos del colonialismo en la identidad nacional y las formas en que moldea e influye en las relaciones con los animales.

La novela de Baume explora la identidad nacional a través de la conexión del protagonista con la "Big House" y su familia anglo-irlandesa. La adherencia de la familia a la fe católica y la contratación de un cuidador católico resalta el legado de la residencia y sus consecuencias opresivas. Inicialmente, el protagonista sigue este legado, aislándose de la comunidad y considerándose a sí mismo como un enemigo anglo-irlandés. Sin embargo, a medida que avanza la narrativa y la influencia de One Eye en el humano se hace más evidente, comienza a resistir este legado, desafiando su influencia y abandonando finalmente la casa para distanciarse del opresivo discurso colonial de la casa. De manera similar, aunque su suicidio puede interpretarse como una forma de derrota, también puede entenderse como un acto de resistencia contra la necropolítica asociada con estas casas, dado que lo realiza en el mar, fuera de los confines de la casa y su legado simbólico. Además, la novela concluye con un tono celebratorio mientras One Eye, el perro adoptado por el protagonista, corre libremente, simbolizando un nuevo legado que se libera del opresivo discurso colonial.

Al comparar estos aspectos, queda claro que cada novela ofrece una perspectiva única sobre la identidad nacional en el contexto de Irlanda. La obra de McCaffrey se centra en el papel de los equinos como símbolos de identidad nacional y la negociación

de identidades basadas en la destreza ecuestre. La novela de Haverty examina el trasfondo colonial de Irlanda y el impacto del discurso colonial en la identidad nacional, representado a través de la reencarnación del colonialismo en el personaje de Missy. La narrativa de Baume se centra en la relación del protagonista anglo-irlandés con la Gran Casa y su resistencia contra su opresivo discurso colonial, culminando en una búsqueda de liberación y la celebración de un nuevo legado representado por el perro, One Eye.

Estas novelas destacan colectivamente las complejidades de la identidad nacional y sus intersecciones con las relaciones humano-animales. Enfatizan la necesidad de un examen crítico y cuestionamiento de las narrativas nacionales y sus implicaciones para el trato de los animales. Al explorar las sutilezas de la identidad nacional dentro de estas narrativas, las autoras incitan a los lectores a reflexionar sobre las formas en que la construcción de la identidad nacional puede perpetuar el antropocentrismo y reforzar jerarquías que desvalorizan tanto a seres humanos como no humanos. Por lo tanto, debemos reconocer la urgente necesidad de cuestionar y deconstruir las narrativas nacionales que perpetúan jerarquías e injusticias hacia los seres no humanos. Exigen una reevaluación de las formas en que se construye la identidad nacional y el impacto que tiene en las relaciones humano-animales. Además, resaltan la interconexión de problemas sociales, políticos y ambientales, ilustrando cómo las identidades nacionales pueden dar forma a las actitudes y comportamientos hacia los animales y el mundo más allá de lo humano.

Para abordar estas complejidades, es crucial fomentar una comprensión más inclusiva y compasiva de la identidad nacional que reconozca el valor inherente y los derechos de todos los seres, independientemente de su especie. Esto implica desafiar perspectivas antropocéntricas, promover consideraciones éticas en el trato de los animales y abogar por políticas que protejan su bienestar. También insta a reimaginar las narrativas nacionales que abarquen la interconexión de todas las formas de vida y reconozcan las contribuciones y la agencia de los seres no humanos en la formación de identidades colectivas. En conclusión, el análisis de estas novelas ofrece valiosas perspectivas sobre las intersecciones de la identidad nacional y las relaciones humano-animales. Revelan las formas en que las narrativas nacionales pueden perpetuar jerarquías e injusticias hacia los animales, y enfatizan la importancia de examinar críticamente y reimaginar estas narrativas. Al reconocer y desafiar los sesgos antropocéntricos incrustados en las identidades nacionales, podemos esforzarnos hacia una sociedad más inclusiva,

compasiva y éticamente consciente que reconozca el valor inherente de todos los seres vivos y promueva vínculos no antropocéntricos entre humanos y animales.

5.3. Animales como "Companion Species"

Al examinar el tema del antropocentrismo y sus implicaciones para las relaciones humano-animales, estas novelas ofrecen valiosas percepciones sobre sus dinámicas complejas. Exploran los límites de la propiedad de mascotas y desafían las nociones tradicionales de compañerismo, destacando las consideraciones éticas y las dinámicas de poder involucradas en estas relaciones entre especies.

La novela de McCaffrey retrata la conexión de la protagonista con los equinos, especialmente los ponis, como un medio para explorar el encuentro ético forzado entre humanos y animales. La caída compartida de la protagonista y su primer poni, Blister, sirve como catalizador para reconocer su vulnerabilidad mutua, difuminando la hipersensación entre especies. Como se señala en el análisis, mientras Catriona llora la pérdida de su poni, su preocupación se centra principalmente en la posibilidad de montar en lugar de la muerte del poni. Además, el tratamiento de Blister sugiere que se le considera llorable, ya que recibe un entierro en lugar de ser convertido en carne. En contraste, al semental Tulip no se le brinda el mismo nivel de cuidado y respeto, ya que se le envía al matadero para ser convertido en carne. Este contraste subraya la naturaleza selectiva de la llorabilidad y el valor arbitrario asignado a diferentes animales dentro de un marco antropocéntrico, así como el hecho de que estos equinos apenas se consideran parte de la familia de Catriona.

La novela de Haverty profundiza en la relación entre Martin y la oveja Missy, ofreciendo una crítica de la continua objetificación y explotación de los animales de granja en un contexto tecnocientífico. A pesar de los avances en la modificación genética, Missy se reduce a una mascota y se somete al dominio y castigo de Martin, como denunció Yi-Fu Tuan. Las desiguales dinámicas de poder y el trato de Martin hacia Missy como una criatura dependiente y sumisa refuerzan el antropocentrismo pervasivo en la sociedad. Además, el destino de Missy enfatiza aún más su falta de valor como individuo, ya que se le deja morir después de haberle prometido un refugio. El texto luego denuncia

la desechabilidad de las vidas no humanas y la falta de consideración por su bienestar dentro de una cosmovisión antropocéntrica, como la defendida por el narrador.

La novela de Baume explora la relación humano-perro como un ejemplo paradigmático de compañerismo de mascotas. La disposición empática del protagonista hacia entidades marginadas, especialmente otras especies, es evidente a lo largo de la narrativa, no solo con el perro. El contraste entre el abandono del protagonista por parte de su padre y su recuperación inmediata del perro, One Eye, muestra su capacidad para la compasión y el rechazo de un acto similar de abandono. La representación del perro como un compañero en lugar de una simple mascota se destaca por la lucha del protagonista por equilibrar su deseo de que el perro se comporte de manera no violenta y su compromiso de respetar la agencia del perro. Además, el texto sugiere que el comportamiento violento de One Eye es resultado de su educación por parte de los humanos; por lo tanto, la novela también arroja luz sobre la forma en que los animales a menudo son castigados por las acciones de los humanos, exponiendo la injusticia inherente y la necesidad de desafiar los sesgos antropocéntricos.

En conjunto, estos análisis invitan a un examen crítico de la relación humano-animal y su enredamiento con el antropocentrismo. La representación de McCaffrey de los equinos como forasteros para su familia, ya sea como mascotas o compañeros, expone que no pueden ser llorados ya que están distanciados de sus dueños humanos. El examen del compañerismo de mascotas en la novela de Haverty subraya la persistencia del antropocentrismo y la opresión de los animales interpretados como mascotas, revelando la necesidad de un enfoque más inclusivo y respetuoso para su tratamiento. La exploración de la relación humano-perro en la novela de Baume desafía las nociones tradicionales de la propiedad de mascotas y aboga por el reconocimiento de la agencia y el valor de los seres no humanos. Destacan la importancia de reconocer la agencia y el valor intrínseco de los seres no humanos, instando a los lectores a ir más allá de la dinámica tradicional de dueño y mascota y abrazar un enfoque más equitativo y respetuoso para las relaciones entre especies. Al desafiar los sesgos antropocéntricos y promover una perspectiva posthumanista, es posible forjar alianzas con especies compañeras y remodelar las narrativas y prácticas que rigen las interacciones humano-animales.

En resumen, el análisis de estas novelas ofrece contribuciones significativas para comprender el antropocentrismo y su impacto en las relaciones humano-animales. Al desafiar las nociones tradicionales de propiedad de mascotas e interrogar el tratamiento

de los animales en el contexto de la identidad nacional y las estructuras de poder, estas novelas destacan las complejidades y dilemas éticos inherentes a las interacciones humano-no humano, que no se resuelven simplemente representando otras especies y convirtiéndolas en referentes "presentes." Este análisis nos invita a ir más allá de las nociones tradicionales de propiedad de mascotas y abrazar un enfoque más inclusivo, respetuoso y mutuamente beneficioso que reconozca la agencia, el valor y el valor intrínseco de todos los seres vivos. Solo a través de tal transformación podemos comenzar a forjar una convivencia más compasiva, equitativa y sostenible con nuestros semejantes no humanos.

5.4. Animales y Masculinidades

El análisis de estas novelas también proporciona perspectivas interesantes sobre la construcción de identidades masculinas y el papel de los animales en la formación de masculinidades. Cada novela explora la relación entre hombres y animales, destacando las formas en que lo no humano puede ser utilizado como símbolo, brújula moral o instrumento en la negociación de identidades masculinas.

La novela de McCaffrey profundiza en la asociación de equinos, especialmente sementales, con la masculinidad. Los patriarcas de la familia Carradyne, el Coronel y Michael, son retratados como encarnaciones de una forma fuerte de masculinidad hegemónica, estrechamente vinculada a la presencia y simbolismo del semental. La herencia del abuelo sigue ejerciendo influencia incluso después de su muerte, dando forma a la dinámica familiar y la competencia de Catriona como jinete. Como hemos señalado en el análisis, los caballos sirven como medios para construir y expresar la masculinidad, como se ve en la atracción sexual de Michael por Selina mientras monta un gelding, en contraste con el acto violento de violación de David motivado por su desprecio por los equinos. En esta novela, los equinos funcionan como vehículos a través de los cuales se definen los personajes masculinos y como brújulas morales que ilustran sus acciones.

En la novela de Haverty, el enfoque se desplaza más hacia las dinámicas de rivalidad fraternal entre Martin y Pierce, siendo los animales un papel secundario en la construcción de identidades masculinas. El narrador se siente emasculado por su hermano, lo que lo lleva a adquirir a Missy como un medio de rebelión y socavamiento del exitoso cultivo de Pierce. Sin embargo, Missy sola no es suficiente para aliviar su

ansiedad e inseguridad ante los logros y el matrimonio de Pierce. Buscando una validación adicional, recurre a Etti, convirtiéndose eventualmente en su amante, perturbando el matrimonio de Pierce y llevando a su trágico desenlace. En esta narrativa, la masculinidad se define por la objetivación e instrumentalización de las mujeres, tanto humanas como animales, como destaca la crítica de O'Connor.

La novela de Baume adopta un enfoque distinto para la construcción de la masculinidad a través del vínculo animal-humano. El protagonista, un hombre, experimenta una relación tensa y prácticamente inexistente con su padre, satirizando el arquetipo convencional de la ficción gótica. El padre, representado como un proveedor fracasado y una figura socialmente marginada a pesar de sus intentos, representa una parodia de la paternidad ideal. Por el contrario, Ray desafía las expectativas sociales y rechaza el camino trazado para él, volviéndose cada vez más resistente a conformarse con el legado de la "Big House," especialmente después de adoptar al perro. Aquí, el personaje animal se convierte en una fuente de empoderamiento, permitiendo al protagonista desafiar el discurso opresivo que lo ha aislado a lo largo de su vida. La relación entre Ray y el perro simboliza una alianza posthumanista, enfatizando el rechazo a la instrumentalización y abrazando una nueva forma de familia que trasciende las tradicionales fronteras centradas en lo humano.

Al examinar las conclusiones extraídas de cada novela, se hace evidente que la representación de las identidades masculinas y su relación con los animales varía significativamente. La narrativa de McCaffrey muestra la influencia de los equinos en la construcción de la masculinidad y en la orientación moral de los personajes masculinos. La novela de Haverty denuncia la objetivación de las mujeres, tanto humanas como animales, como medio para definir la masculinidad. Por otro lado, la obra de Baume desafía las nociones convencionales de masculinidad a través del poder transformador del vínculo entre humano y animal, enfatizando una alianza posthumanista. Por lo tanto, las novelas invitan colectivamente a los lectores a reflexionar críticamente sobre la construcción de identidades masculinas, las implicaciones éticas de sus relaciones con los animales y el potencial de formas alternativas, más igualitarias, de masculinidad que trasciendan las fronteras antropocéntricas.

En conclusión, el análisis de estas novelas profundiza nuestra comprensión de la compleja relación entre hombres y animales en el contexto de la construcción de identidades masculinas. Cada novela presenta una narrativa distintiva que se entrelaza con el tema de la masculinidad, destacando las formas multifacéticas en que los animales

son utilizados y percibidos en relación con el género. Al examinar críticamente estas narrativas, obtenemos percepciones sobre las normas sociales y las estructuras de poder que dan forma a las relaciones humano-animales, así como el potencial de transformación y resistencia. Esta investigación contribuye a discusiones más amplias en los campos de estudios literarios, estudios de género y estudios animales, instándonos a reevaluar y reimaginar las intersecciones de género, poder y especie para fomentar relaciones más compasivas y equitativas con los seres no humanos que comparten nuestro mundo.

5.5. Animales y Feminidades

El análisis de los personajes femeninos en estas novelas nos permite explorar las dinámicas complejas entre mujeres y animales, arrojando luz sobre la interacción de género, poder y opresión. Cada novela presenta una narrativa distintiva que examina el papel de las mujeres dentro de sistemas patriarcales y su conexión con los seres no humanos. La exploración de McCaffrey de los personajes femeninos desafía roles de género tradicionales y presenta una yuxtaposición entre mujeres empoderadas y desempoderadas en relación con los caballos. La novela de Haverty expone la naturaleza opresiva del patriarcado y el especismo, mostrando la interconexión de la opresión femenina a través de los personajes de Missy y Etti. La novela de Baume, aunque carece de figuras femeninas prominentes, enfatiza los efectos perjudiciales de la ausencia de la madre y la influencia de la masculinidad tóxica en los personajes masculinos.

En la novela de McCaffrey, la representación de las mujeres destaca la división entre esferas domésticas y públicas. Catriona, la protagonista, desafía las expectativas impuestas por su madre, Isabel, quien representa un modelo tradicional de feminidad arraigado en el catolicismo y la sexualidad reprimida. El rechazo de Isabel hacia los caballos y su desaprobación del interés de Catriona por montar sirven como símbolos de su adhesión a las normas patriarcales. En contraste, Selina, un personaje sexualmente liberado, anima la búsqueda de Catriona por montar y representa un camino alternativo para las mujeres. Sin embargo, el empoderamiento ofrecido al abrazar el mundo equino se problematiza por la dependencia de Selina en la protección masculina y su divorcio solo después de ser violada. Además, la novela plantea preguntas sobre las disparidades de género en el ámbito equino, ya que se alienta a los personajes masculinos a competir independientemente de su competencia, mientras que solo se aceptan jinetes femeninas excepcionales como Catriona, aunque a regañadientes. La ambigüedad y la naturaleza

problemática del empoderamiento de Catriona subrayan las limitaciones impuestas por el género y las expectativas sociales dentro de la novela.

La novela de Haverty profundiza en la opresión de las mujeres a través de los personajes de Missy y Etti. Missy representa el arquetipo de la mujer sumisa y confinada, ya que es mantenida en el interior por Martin, parodiando los ideales patriarcales de la feminidad. Etti, aunque más en segundo plano, se representa como sexualmente activa e independiente financieramente, desafiando las expectativas convencionales y aumentando la ansiedad ontológica de Martin como hombre. El narrador se alinea con la racionalidad y posiciona tanto a las mujeres como a Missy como carentes de racionalidad, reforzando las suposiciones patriarcales sobre la inferioridad de las mujeres. La novela destaca la interconexión de la opresión femenina y el especismo, ya que tanto mujeres como animales están sujetas a las acciones de Martin: Missy es asesinada y Etti está embarazada. La falta de consecuencias para el comportamiento de Martin y su recompensa posterior subrayan los beneficios que los sistemas patriarcales otorgan a los hombres supuestamente racionales. Por lo tanto, la narrativa de Haverty expone las fuentes comunes de opresión arraigadas en el patriarcado y el especismo, resaltando cómo las mujeres y los animales se reducen a objetos para apaciguar las ansiedades ontológicas masculinas.

La novela de Baume, en cambio, carece de personajes femeninos prominentes, pero llama la atención sobre los efectos perjudiciales de la ausencia de la figura materna. El protagonista, Ray, lidia con la ausencia de su madre a lo largo de la narrativa, en línea con la tradición gótica. Su ausencia alimenta las ansiedades de Ray y la influencia de la masculinidad tóxica personificada por su distante padre. La novela destaca el aislamiento y sufrimiento experimentados por los personajes masculinos como resultado del modelo de masculinidad del padre. La ausencia de la figura materna significa no solo su falta de materialidad, sino también el impacto perjudicial de la masculinidad patriarcal en las relaciones familiares y el bienestar psicológico de los personajes masculinos.

Al examinar las representaciones de las mujeres en estas novelas, obtenemos una comprensión más profunda de las dinámicas complejas entre mujeres, hombres y animales dentro de sistemas patriarcales. La narrativa de McCaffrey cuestiona y desafía roles de género tradicionales, ilustrando aspectos tanto empoderadores como problemáticos de abrazar el mundo equino para las mujeres. La novela de Haverty desvela la naturaleza opresiva del patriarcado y el especismo, revelando la interconexión de la opresión femenina y los beneficios derivados de hombres supuestamente racionales. La

novela de Baume, por otro lado, enfatiza la ausencia y los efectos perjudiciales de la figura materna, arrojando luz sobre la influencia perjudicial de la masculinidad patriarcal y el aislamiento experimentado por los personajes masculinos. Juntas, estas narrativas contribuyen a una comprensión más amplia de la naturaleza multifacética de las identidades de género, las fuerzas opresivas en juego y el potencial de resistencia y transformación.

En resumen, el análisis de estas novelas profundiza nuestra comprensión de las relaciones intrincadas entre mujeres y animales dentro de sistemas patriarcales. Las novelas ofrecen un rico tapiz de narrativas que exploran la construcción de identidades de género y las formas en que las mujeres son tanto empoderadas como oprimidas dentro de estos marcos. Al examinar las diferentes representaciones de los personajes femeninos, obtenemos valiosas percepciones sobre las complejidades de las dinámicas de género, las limitaciones de los roles de género tradicionales y las intersecciones de la opresión que surgen de las estructuras patriarcales y especistas. El análisis comparativo de estas novelas nos insta a reflexionar críticamente sobre las diversas manifestaciones de las dinámicas de poder de género y la necesidad de marcos sociales más inclusivos que respeten la agencia, autonomía y bienestar de todos los sujetos, indiferentemente de su género o especie.

5.6. Comunicación entre Especies

La forma en que esta tesis aborda los tipos de asociaciones establecidas entre miembros de diferentes especies nos permite explorar las limitaciones y posibilidades que existen dentro de las relaciones humanos-animales. La novela de McCaffrey destaca las restricciones impuestas por el género y la estructura narrativa, especialmente en el contexto de los intentos de Catriona de comunicarse con los equinos. Aunque ella escucha sus sonidos y observa sus cuerpos, su capacidad comunicativa permanece limitada, impidiéndole crear alianzas posthumanistas y resistir al antropocentrismo. El análisis arroja luz sobre los desafíos de superar la brecha comunicativa y la influencia de las convenciones narrativas en la representación de las interacciones humanos-animales.

La novela de Haverty presenta un marcado contraste, ya que la comunicación con la oveja es completamente desestimada. Martin, el narrador, habla en nombre de la oveja, desestimando sus intentos de llamar la atención. Esta falta de esfuerzo en escuchar y comprender al otro no humano ejemplifica la limitada imaginación y habilidades

comunicativas del narrador. El análisis enfatiza el fracaso al involucrarse en una comunicación significativa y la forma en que a menudo se silencia a otras especies, así como las consecuencias de tal desprecio dentro de la narrativa. Sirve como un examen crítico de la tendencia humana a dominar y controlar, pasando por alto la importancia del diálogo genuino y la comprensión, incluso dentro de las limitaciones de cada especie.

La novela de Baume ofrece una perspectiva diferente sobre la comunicación, centrándose en la importancia de la imaginación y la comprensión no verbal. El narrador reconoce las limitaciones de las palabras y el conocimiento racional cuando se trata de comprender al perro, One Eye. En lugar de imponer el lenguaje humano e interpretaciones simbólicas, el narrador abraza la imaginación como una herramienta para visualizar las experiencias pasadas del perro. Al rechazar métodos puramente racionales y recurrir a la imaginación, el narrador abre la posibilidad de conexión empática y una comprensión más profunda del otro no humano. Este enfoque contrasta con la narrativa de Haverty, resaltando la importancia de una comunicación genuina que trascienda las barreras del lenguaje y la racionalidad.

Cuando se llevan a cabo estas conclusiones en diálogo, surge una comprensión matizada de la imaginación y la comunicación en las relaciones humanos-animales. El análisis de McCaffrey revela las limitaciones impuestas por el género y la estructura narrativa, ilustrando las dificultades de la comunicación. La exploración de Haverty expone el fracaso al escuchar y entender al otro no humano, destacando las consecuencias de tal negligencia. En contraste, la novela de Baume ofrece una perspectiva que valora la imaginación y la comprensión no verbal como vías para la conexión empática.

La comparación de estas conclusiones pone de manifiesto que las novelas presentan una variedad de perspectivas sobre el tema de la imaginación y la comunicación. Cada narrativa ofrece ideas sobre las complejidades y desafíos de superar la brecha entre humanos y animales. La novela de McCaffrey ejemplifica las limitaciones impuestas por el género literario, la de Haverty expone las consecuencias de descuidar la comunicación genuina, y la de Baume destaca el potencial transformador de la imaginación y la comprensión no verbal. En conjunto, estos análisis contribuyen a una comprensión más amplia de la naturaleza multifacética de las relaciones humanos-animales y la importancia de fomentar una comunicación genuina y una conexión empática. En conclusión, el análisis de estas novelas enriquece nuestra comprensión de la dinámica de la imaginación y la comunicación en las relaciones humanos-animales. Las novelas resaltan las limitaciones impuestas por las convenciones narrativas, las consecuencias de descuidar

la comunicación genuina y el potencial transformador de la imaginación y la comprensión no verbal. A través de un análisis comparativo, hemos examinado las limitaciones y posibilidades retratadas en cada narrativa, proporcionando una exploración integral del tema en diferentes contextos literarios. Estos hallazgos nos instan a reflexionar sobre la importancia de fomentar conexiones empáticas, superar las barreras del lenguaje y desafiar las perspectivas antropocéntricas que a menudo dominan las relaciones humanos-animales. En el futuro, es esencial continuar explorando las complejidades de la comunicación y la imaginación para fomentar relaciones más significativas y equitativas entre humanos y animales.

5.7. Limitaciones y Futuras Investigaciones

Esta tesis presenta una perspectiva única sobre la intrincada cuestión animal dentro de la cultura irlandesa contemporánea y no puede abarcar completamente la amplitud y complejidad de este problema multifacético. La abundancia de obras literarias que exploran la opresión compartida de mujeres y animales no humanos en la Irlanda actual va mucho más allá de los límites de una tesis doctoral o incluso de un proyecto de investigación integral. Obras que emergen constantemente expanden el panorama y intentar escrutar la interacción entre lo "femenino y la especie" en cada obra individual sería una tarea de proporciones monumentales.

Además, es esencial reconocer que esta tesis centró su análisis en escritoras como una elección política intencional, considerando la marginación histórica de las mujeres también en el ámbito literario. Sin embargo, esta elección consciente deja un amplio espacio para futuras investigaciones que exploren cómo escritores varones irlandeses y otras voces marginadas, incluyendo inmigrantes, individuos no heterosexuales y escritores que no son cisgénero, abordan las complejas dinámicas de la cuestión animal. Al ampliar la investigación para abarcar estas diversas perspectivas, se puede lograr una comprensión más completa del tema. A la luz de estas consideraciones, esta investigación presenta una oportunidad para investigaciones subsiguientes que profundicen en el tropo animal tal como es retratado por autores más allá del alcance de esta tesis. Al reconocer que la exclusión de otros autores fue una decisión estratégica para mantener el enfoque y evitar que la tesis se convirtiera en un esfuerzo interminable, se dejan abiertos caminos para futuros análisis que amplíen y enriquezcan nuestra comprensión de la cuestión animal en la literatura irlandesa.

Las conclusiones derivadas del análisis de estos textos, vistas a través de la lente de un ecofeminismo informado por el posthumanismo, revelan una multitud de oportunidades para investigaciones postdoctorales. Esta tesis, como parte de la exploración académica en curso de la figura animal en la literatura irlandesa, se basa en las valiosas contribuciones de investigadores anteriores en este campo. Mirando hacia el futuro, numerosos caminos llaman a una mayor investigación e indagación.

Principalmente, la investigación futura puede embarcarse en un análisis integral de otras novelas irlandesas contemporáneas, expandiendo así los límites de nuestra indagación y enriqueciendo nuestra comprensión de la intrincada interacción entre animales, género y dinámicas de poder. Al ampliar nuestro alcance, podemos adentrarnos más profundamente en las capas multifacéticas de significado incorporadas en estas narrativas.

Además, emprender un examen posthumanista del antropocentrismo y androcentrismo dentro de otras obras de las autoras exploradas en esta tesis, con un enfoque específico en las publicaciones recientes de Sara Baume y la extensa bibliografía de Anne McCaffrey sobre animales, promete enormes posibilidades para una exploración más profunda. Su análisis proporcionaría valiosas perspectivas sobre las perspectivas en evolución de las autoras y sus contribuciones al discurso sobre las relaciones entre humanos y otros animales.

En esencia, esta investigación sirve como una base sólida sobre la cual se pueden construir futuras exploraciones. Enfatiza la continua importancia de escrutar las complejidades de las relaciones humanos-animales y las construcciones de género dentro del ámbito de la literatura irlandesa. La multitud de posibilidades que esperan a los futuros investigadores asegura que el estudio de los animales literarios y su importancia cultural en la Irlanda contemporánea siga siendo un área de investigación cautivadora, fértil y fructífera.

A medida que esta tesis doctoral llega a su fin, nos encontramos al borde de un viaje emocionante, anticipando con interés los descubrimientos e ideas que nos esperan en este fascinante campo de investigación. Es evidente que la búsqueda de conocimiento en esta área continuará ofreciendo resultados intrigantes y valiosos. La naturaleza dinámica del tema asegura que siempre habrá nuevas vías para explorar, perspectivas frescas que considerar y profundidades adicionales que sondear. Con cada paso adelante, nos acercamos a desentrañar la riqueza de conocimiento que yace dentro de nosotros, enriqueciendo nuestra comprensión de los animales literarios y su importancia cultural en

la Irlanda contemporánea. Al embarcarnos en este emocionante viaje, permanecemos firmes en nuestro compromiso de avanzar en la erudición y abrazar las posibilidades siempre desplegadas que nos aguardan.

Abstract

This thesis extensively explores the nuanced depiction of the human-animal bond in contemporary Irish literature, with a specific emphasis on works authored by women. The foundational premise of this research lies in recognising literature's potent capacity to interrogate and confront prevailing societal norms, particularly those tethered to androcentrism and anthropocentrism. The selected novels, situated against the backdrop of pivotal periods in Irish history such as the Troubles, the Celtic Tiger, and the 2008 economic crisis, serve as windows into the evolving dynamics between humans and animals.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to conduct a meticulous investigation into the evolution of the human-animal bond within Irish literature. This involves a profound exploration of how women authors shape nonhuman characters and reimagine the intricacies of the human-animal relationship. The theoretical framework is firmly rooted in historical influences, particularly emphasising the echoes of humanism that underlie anthropocentrism and patriarchy. This dissertation is grounded in Rosi Braidotti's understanding of critical posthumanism and Judith Butler's notion of vulnerability, applying these concepts to both humans and other animals. The contextual lens expands to encompass (post)colonial Ireland, weaving in posthumanist ethics—embracing concepts such as companion species, posthumanist alliances, necropolitics, vulnerability, and grievability. A critical focus of the inquiry is on the representation of fictional animals, steering clear of reduction to mere metaphors and challenging implicit cultural biases. Moreover, it delves into the consequences of instrumentalising animals in constructing human identities, with a keen eye on national and gender ontologies, and the intricate interplay of nonhuman instrumentalisation with necropolitics.

The triad of novels chosen for examination amplifies the exploration. Anne McCaffrey's *The Lady*, set in 1970s Ireland, scrutinises the portrayal of horse-crazy girls and their equine companions. It unearths themes of animal exploitation, national identity, and resistance against oppressive discourses. Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger*, unfolding during the Celtic Tiger era, delves into the representation of sheep in the context of Celtic Tiger Ireland. It dissects anthropocentric necroeconomics, dehumanisation, and the symbolism of the sacrificial lamb. Sara Baume's *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*, set in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, unravels the human-animal bond through the friendship

between a man and a one-eyed terrier, exploring companionship, isolation, and posthumanist kinship. The cumulative analysis across these chapters contributes substantively to the comprehension of how animals are depicted in contemporary Irish fiction. The exploration illuminates the intricate relationships between humans and animals, revealing profound implications for identity, power dynamics, and resistance. This research, uniquely centred on women authors, bridges a gap in existing literature, enriching our understanding of the human-animal relationship within the Irish cultural milieu. Concurrently, it underscores the fluid nature of the human-animal bond, emphasising the continuous evolution of our interactions and interpretations with other species.

Resumen en español

Esta tesis explora extensivamente la representación matizada del vínculo humanimal en la literatura irlandesa contemporánea, con un énfasis específico en obras escritas por mujeres. La premisa fundamental de esta investigación radica en reconocer la capacidad potente de la literatura para interrogar y confrontar las normas sociales prevalentes, particularmente aquellas ligadas al androcentrismo y al antropocentrismo. Las novelas seleccionadas, situadas en el contexto de periodos clave en la historia irlandesa como los Problemas, el Tigre Celta y la crisis económica de 2008, sirven como ventanas hacia las dinámicas en evolución entre humanos y animales.

El objetivo principal de esta disertación es llevar a cabo una investigación meticulosa sobre la evolución del vínculo humano-animal en la literatura irlandesa. Esto implica una exploración profunda de cómo las autoras configuran personajes no humanos y reimaginan las complejidades de la relación humano-animal. El marco teórico se basa firmemente en influencias históricas, haciendo hincapié particular en los ecos del humanismo que subyacen al antropocentrismo y al patriarcado. Esta tesis se fundamenta en la comprensión del posthumanismo crítico de Rosi Braidotti y en la noción de vulnerabilidad de Judith Butler, aplicando estos conceptos tanto a humanos como a otros animales. El lente contextual se expande para abarcar la Irlanda (post)colonial, entretejiendo éticas posthumanistas, abrazando conceptos como especies compañeras, alianzas posthumanistas, necropolítica, vulnerabilidad y "llorabilidad." Un enfoque crítico de la investigación se centra en la representación de animales ficticios, evitando la reducción a simples metáforas y desafiando sesgos culturales implícitos. Además, profundiza en las consecuencias de instrumentalizar animales en la construcción de identidades humanas, con un ojo agudo en las ontologías nacionales y de género, y la intrincada interacción de la instrumentalización no humana con la necropolítica.

La tríada de novelas elegidas para el examen amplifica la exploración. *The Lady* de Anne McCaffrey, ambientada en la Irlanda de la década de 1970, examina la representación de chicas apasionadas por los caballos y sus compañeros equinos. Descubre temas de explotación animal, identidad nacional y resistencia contra discursos opresivos. *One Day as a Tiger* de Anne Haverty, que se desarrolla durante la era del Tigre Celta, analiza la representación de las ovejas en el contexto de la Irlanda del Tigre Celta. Disecciona la necroeconomía antropocéntrica, la deshumanización y el simbolismo del cordero sacrificado. *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* de Sara Baume, ambientada en la Irlanda

post-Tigre Celta, desentraña el vínculo humano-animal a través de la amistad entre un hombre y un terrier de un solo ojo, explorando la camaradería, el aislamiento y la parentela posthumanista. El análisis acumulativo a lo largo de estos capítulos contribuye sustancialmente a la comprensión de cómo se representan los animales en la ficción irlandesa contemporánea. La exploración ilumina las intrincadas relaciones entre humanos y animales, revelando profundas implicaciones para la identidad, las dinámicas de poder y la resistencia. Esta investigación, centrada de manera única en autoras mujeres, cubre un vacío en la literatura existente, enriqueciendo nuestra comprensión de la relación humano-animal dentro del entorno cultural irlandés. Al mismo tiempo, destaca la naturaleza fluida del vínculo humano-animal, enfatizando la continua evolución de nuestras interacciones e interpretaciones con otras especies.

WORKS CITED

Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. 1990. Twentieth Anniversary Edition, Continuum, 2010.

Adams, Carol J., and Lori Gruen. *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*. Bloomsbury, 2014.

Adams, William M. "Nature and the Colonial Mind." *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*, edited by William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan, Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2004.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, 1998.

Alaimo, Stacy. *Bodily Natures*. Indiana University Press, 2010.

Alaimo, Stacy, and Susan Hekman. *Material Feminisms*. Indiana University Press, 2008.

Álamo Felices, Francisco Diego, and Ana Isabel Bonachera García. "Análisis de las características literarias en la novela gótica irlandesa (1760-1897). Una aproximación." *Revista Signa*, vol. 25, 2016, pp. 297–324.

Andeweg, Agnes, and Sue Zlosnik. "Introduction." *Gothic Kinship*, edited by Agnes Andeweg and Sue Zlosnik, Manchester University Press, 2013, pp. 1–11.

"Anne Haverty." *Aosdána*, http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie/members/haverty/. Accessed 10 May 2021.

Anolik, Ruth Bienstock. "The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode." *Modern Language Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1 & 2, 2003, pp. 24–43.

Argent, Gala. "Horses, Mourning: Interspecies Embodiment, Belonging, and Bereavement in the Past and Present." *Mourning Animals: Rituals and Practices Surrounding Animal Death*, edited by Margo DeMello, Michigan State University Press, 2016, pp. 21–30.

Armie, Madalina. "Change, Stasis and Celtic Tiger Ireland in the Short Stories of *There Are Little Kingdoms* (2007) by Kevin Barry." *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 17, Mar. 2022, pp. 130–43.

Attridge, Derek. "Molly Bloom and Elizabeth Costello: Coetzee's Female Characters and the Limits of the Sympathetic Imagination." *Reading Coetzee's Women*, edited by Sue Kossew and Melinda Harvey, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 39–55.

Auster, Paul. *Timbuktu*. Picador, 2009.

Bagnold, Enid. *National Velvet*. 1935. Dover Publications, 2013.

Baker, Steve. *Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity, and Representation*. University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Banville, John. *Birchwood*. Pan Macmillan, 2011.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Duke University Press, 2007.

Barr, Rebecca Anne, et al. "Ireland and Masculinities in History: An Introduction." *Ireland and Masculinities in History*, edited by Rebecca Anne Barr et al., Springer International Publishing, 2019, pp. 1–17.

Barros-Del Río, María Amor. "Fragmentation and Vulnerability in Anne Enright´s *The Green Road* (2015): Collateral Casualties of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland." *International Journal of English Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2018, pp. 35–51.

Baume, Sara. "'An Artist, First and Foremost.' An Interview with Sara Baume." Interview by Margarita Estévez-Saá, *Revista de Estudios Irlandeses*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2020, pp. 117-128.

---. "Eat or Be Eaten: An Incomplete Survey of Literary Dogs." *The Stinging Fly*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2015, pp. 1–4.

---. *Spill, Simmer, Falter, Wither*. William Heinemann, 2015.

Beckett, Samuel. *The Expelled and Other Novellas*. Penguin Books, 1980.

Beiert, Barbara Hardy. "The Sympathetic Imagination and the Human—Animal Bond: Fostering Empathy Through Reading Imaginative Literature." *Anthrozoös: A Multidisciplinary Journal of the Interactions of People and Animals*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2008, pp. 213–20.

Berger, John. *About Looking*. Vintage International, 1980.

Berković, Daniel. "Beware of Dogs! The Position and Role of Dogs in Biblical Discourse." *KAIROS - Evangelical Journal of Theology*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2014, pp. 75–84.

Berkowitz, Beth. "Animal Studies and Ancient Judaism." *Currents in Biblical Research*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2019, pp. 80–111.

Bhloscaidh, Fearghal Mac. "Objective Historians, Irrational Fenians and the Bewildered Herd: Revisionist Myth and the Irish Revolution." *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 28, no. 2, May 2020, pp. 204–34.

Black, Jack, et al. "'Success in Britain Comes with an Awful Lot of Small Print': Greg Rusedski and the Precarious Performance of National Identity." *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2020, pp. 1104–23.

Blyth, Mark. *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Boehrer, Bruce. *Shakespeare Among the Animals. Nature and Society in the Drama of Early Modern England.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Borkfelt, Sune. "What's in a Name?—Consequences of Naming Non-Human Animals." *Animals*, vol. 1, 2011, pp. 116–25.

Borsuk, Ímren. "Violence and Security Concerns in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland." *All Azimuth*, no. 2, 2016, pp. 47–62.

Bowen, Elizabeth. *The Last September*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2019.

Boyce, George, and Alan O'Day. "Introduction." *The Making of Modern Irish History. Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy*, edited by George Boyce and Alan O'Day, Routledge, 1996, pp. 1–14.

Bracken, Claire, and Tara Harney-Mahajan. "A Continuum of Irish Women's Writing: Reflections on the Post-Celtic Tiger Era." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2017, pp. 1–12.

Braidotti, Rosi. "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities." *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 36, no. 6, 2018, pp. 31–61.

---. "Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others." *PMLA*, vol. 124, no. 2, 2009, pp. 526–32.

---. "The Politics of Life as Bios/Zoe." *Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Bioscience, and Technology*, edited by Anneke Smelik and Nina Lykke, University of Washington Press, 2008, pp. 177–92.

---. *The Posthuman*. Polity Press, 2013.

"Brigitte Bardot." *Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Brigitte-Bardot. Accessed 9 Sept. 2021.

Brizzi, Mary T. "Narcissism and Romance in McCaffrey's *Restoree*." *Patterns of the Fantastic: Academic Programming at Chicon IV*, edited by Donald M. Hassler, Wildise Press LLC, 1983, pp. 41–58.

Brown, Claire J. "From Working to Winning: The Shifting Symbolic Value of Connemara Ponies in the West of Ireland." *The Meaning of Horses Biosocial Encounters*, edited by Dona Lee David and Anita Maurstad, Routledge, 2016, pp. 69–84.

Brown, Laura. "The Lady, the Lapdog, and Literary Alterity." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2011, pp. 31–45.

Bryden, Mary. "Rats in and around Beckett." *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*, vol. 7, 1998, pp. 317–30.

Buchanan, Jason Matthew. "The Home of the Tiger: Economic Speculation and the Ethics of Habitation." *Studi Irlandesi*, no. 3, 2013, pp. 137–58.

Burghardt, Gordon. "Critical Anthropomorphism, Uncritical Anthropocentrism, and Naïve Nominalism." *Comparative Cognition & Behaviour Reviews*, vol. 2, 2007, pp. 136–38.

Burghardt, Madeline. "Common Frailty, Constructed Oppression: Tensions and Debates on the Subject of Vulnerability." *Disability & Society*, vol. 28, no. 4, June 2013, pp. 556–68.

Burt, Jonathan. *Rat*. Reaktion Books, 2005.

Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* Verso, 2009.

---. "Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance." *Vulnerability in Resistance*, edited by Judith Butler et al., Duke University Press, 2016, pp. 12–27.

Cahalan, James M. "Forging a Tradition: Emily Lawless and the Irish Literary Canon." *Colby Quarterly*, vol. 27, 1991.

Calarco, Matthew. *Thinking Through Animals*. Stanford University Press, 2015.

Carson, Rachel L. *Silent Spring*. 1962. Macat, 2017.

Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. Random House UK, 2016.

Casey, Juanita. *The Horse of Selene*. Dolmen Press, 1985.

"Catherine." *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2017, https://www.etymonline.com/word/catherine#:~:text=fem.,pure%22%20(see%20catharsis). Accessed 20 January 2023.

Chagani, Fayaz. "Can the Postcolonial Animal Speak?" *Society & Animals*, vol. 24, no. 6, Dec. 2016, pp. 619–37.

Charles, Fanning. "'These Traits Endure': The Irish Voice in Recent American Fiction." *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years of Irish-American Fiction*, University Press of Kentucky, 1999, pp. 312–57.

Charles, Nickie. "'Animals Just Love You as You Are': Experiencing Kinship across the Species Barrier." *Sociology*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2014, pp. 715–30.

---. "Post-Human Families? Dog-Human Relations in the Domestic Sphere." *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2016, pp. 1–12.

Cheang, Sarah. "Women, Pets, and Imperialism: The British Pekingese Dog and Nostalgia for Old China." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 45, 2006, pp. 359–87.

Chen, Bi-Ling. "From Britishness to Irishness. Fox Hunting as a Metaphor for Irish Cultural Identity in the Writing of Somerville and Ross." *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1997, pp. 38–53.

Chez, Keridiana W. *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men*. The Ohio State University Press, 2017.

Clark, John James. "The Slave Whisperer Rides the Frontier: Horseface Minstrelsy." *Animals and Agency. An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Sarah E. McFarland and Ryan Hediger, Brill, 2009, pp. 157–82.

Coetzee, J. M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

Collier, Ivy D. "More than a Bag of Bones: A History of Animal Burials." *Mourning Animals: Rituals and Practices Surrounding Animal Death*, edited by Margo DeMello, Michigan State University Press, 2016, pp. 3–10.

Conan, Catherine, and Flore Coulouma. "Introduction." *Études Irlandaises*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2019, pp. 7–15.

Constitution of Ireland. Article 41.

Copson, Andrew. "What Is Humanism?" *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism*, edited by Andrew Copson and Anthony C. Grayling, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2015, pp. 1–33.

"Cornanagh Townland." *Townlands*. https://www.townlands.ie/mayo/kilmaine/robeen/newbrook/cornanagh/. Accessed 10 Oct. 2023.

Cornwall, Andrea. "Introduction: Masculinities under Neoliberalism." *Masculinities under Neoliberalism*, edited by Andrea Cornwall et al., Zed Books, 2016, pp. 1–28.

Coulter, Stephen, and Anne Mullin. "Resilience and Vulnerability in the Midst of Sociopolitical Violence in Northern Ireland: One Family's Experience of a Paramilitary Style Assault." *Journal of Family Issues*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2012, pp. 99–111.

Courtenay, W. H. "Construction of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men's Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health." *Soc Sci Med*, vol. 50, no. 10, 2000, pp. 1385–401.

Craig, Patricia. "Irish Fiction in Three Acts (Act I)." *Irish Pages*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2018, pp. 186–97.

Crutzen, Paul J., and Eugene F. Stoermer. "The 'Anthropocene' (2000)." *The Future of Nature*, edited by Libby Robin et al., Yale University Press, 2013, pp. 479–90.

Cullingford, Elizabeth. "Virgins and Mothers: Sinead O'Connor, Neil Jordan, and *The Butcher Boy*." *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 15, Mar. 2002, pp. 185–210.

Daimler, Morgan. *Pagan Portals - Brigid: Meeting the Celtic Goddess of Poetry, Forge, and Healing Well*. John Hunt Publishing, 2016.

Dashper, Katherine. "Beyond the Binary: Gender Integration in British Equestrian Sport." *Gender and Equestrian Sport*, edited by Miriam Adelman and Jorge Knijnik, Springer, 2013, pp. 37–54.

---. "Strong, Active Women: (Re)Doing Rural Femininity through Equestrian Sport and Leisure." *Ethnography*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2015, pp. 350–68.

David, Dona Lee, and Anita Maurstad. *The Meaning of Horses Biosocial Encounters*. Routledge, 2016.

Deep Hollow Ranch. "How Long Does a Horse Live? (7 Factors Affect Horse Longevity)." *Deephollow Ranch*, https://www.deephollowranch.com/horse-lifespan/. Accessed 10 Sept. 2022.

del Castillo Bravo, Marta. "El Capitalismo Como Construcción Cultural." *Capitalismo Gore*, edited by Sayak Valencia, Melusina, 2010.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. 1981. Translated by Daniel W. Smith, Continuum, 2003.

DeLoughrey, Elizabeth, and George B. Handley. "Introduction." *Postcolonial Ecologies*, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 3–42.

DeMello, Margo. *Animals and Society*. Columbia University Press, 2012.

---. "Foreword." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, Macmillan Palgrave, 2015, pp. x–xii.

---, "Introduction." *Mourning Animals: Rituals and Practices Surrounding Animal Death*. Michigan State University Press, 2016, pp. xvii-xxvi.

Denise. "Horseback Riding in Ireland." *Vagabond: Small-Group Tours of Ireland*, 26 May 2020, https://vagabondtoursofireland.com/blog/horseback-riding-in-ireland. Accessed 12 June 2023.

Derrida, Jacques. *Positions*. 1972. Translated by Bass Alan, The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

---. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Translated by David Wills, edited by Marie-Louise Mallet, Fordham University Press, 2008.

Despard, Charlotte. *Theosophy and the Women's Movement*. Theosophical Publishing Society, 1913.

Dhuibhne, Éilís Ní. "'The Old Woman as Hare'. Structure and Meaning in an Irish Legend." *Folklore*, vol. 104, no. 1/2, 1/2, 1993, pp. 77–85.

Díaz, Estela, and Oscar Horta. "Defending Equality for Animals. The Antispeciesist Movement in Spain and the Spanish-Speaking World." *Spanish Thinking About Animals*, edited by Margarita Carretero González, Michigan State University Press, 2020, pp. 167–84.

Dillane, Aileen. "Nostalgic Songlines and the Performance of Irish Identity." *Béaloideas*, vol. 81, 2013, pp. 18–36.

Dillon, Eilís. *The Island of Horses*. NYR Children's Collection, 2004.

Dillon, Emma, et al. "Teagasc National Farm Survey: The Sustainability of Small Farming in Ireland." *EAGASC*, 2015.

Dingley, James. *Durkheim and National Identity in Ireland: Applying the Sociology of Knowledge and Religion*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Diver, Cara. *Marital Violence in Post-Independence Ireland, 1992-1996*. Manchester University Press, 2019.

Donnelly, James S. Jr. "Big House Burnings in County Cork during the Irish Revolution, 1920–21." *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2012, pp. 141–97.

Donoghue, Emma. *Room*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

Donovan, Gerard. *Julius Winsome*. The Overlook Press, 2006.

Dorré, Gina M. *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse*. Routledge, 2016.

Downes, Martin J., et al. "The Spatial Distribution of Pet Dogs and Pet Cats on the Island of Ireland." *BMC Veterinary Research*, vol. 7:28, 2011, pp. 1–8.

Du Maurier, Daphne. *Rebecca*. 1938. Virago Modern Classics, 2018.

Dubino, Jeanne. "Mad Dogs and Irishmen: Dogs, Dracula, and the Colonial Irish Other." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó, Macmillan Palgrave, 2015, pp. 199–213.

Eberstadt, Mary, et al. "Elephants, Dogs, and Us." *The New Atlantis*, no. 43, 2014, pp. 3–7.

Edgeworth, Maria. *Castle Rackrent*. 1800. Oxford University Press, 2009.

---. *The Absentee*. 1812. Penguin Classics, 2000.

Emmett, Robert S., and David Nye. *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction*. The MIT Press, 2017.

Englehart, Deirdre Sheridan. "A Story to Tell: The Culture of Storytelling and Folklore in Ireland." *Childhood Education*, vol. 87, no. 6, 2011, pp. 409–14.

English, Bridget. *Laying Out the Bones: Death and Dying in the Modern Irish Novel*. Syracuse University Press, 2017.

Enright, Anne. *The Gathering*. Jonathan Cape, 2007.

Enright, Máiréad, and Emilie Cloatre. "Transformative Illegality: How Condoms 'Became Legal' in Ireland, 1991–1993." *Feminist Legal Studies*, vol. 26, pp. 261-284, 2018.

Estévez-Saá, Margarita. "Recent Contributions to the Irish Novel by Sara Baume, Anna Burns and Eleanor O'Reilly: On Language, Words and Wordlessness." *Oceánide,* vol. 13, 2020, pp. 85–94.

Estévez-Saá, Margarita, and María Lorenzo-Modia. "The Ethics and Aesthetics of Eco-Caring: Contemporary Debates on Ecofeminism(s)." *Women's Studies*, vol. 47, 2018, pp. 1–24.

Fagan, Brian. *The Intimate Bond: How Animals Shaped Human History*. Bloomsbury Press, 2015.

Fahey, Tony. "Small Bang? The Impact of Divorce Legislation on Marital Breakdown in Ireland." *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2012, pp. 242–58.

Feldman, Yael S. "'Not as Sheep Led to Slaughter'? On Trauma, Selective Memory, and the Making of Historical Consciousness." *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2013, pp. 139–69.

Ferrando, Francesca. "Posthuman Feminist Ethics: Unveiling Ontological Radical Healing." *Bloomsbury Handbook of Posthumanism*, edited by Mads Rosendahl Thomsen and Jacob Wamberg, Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 141–60.

---. "Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms. Differences and Relations." *Existenz*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2013, pp. 24–33.

Ferrari, Arianna. "Animal Enhancement: Technovisionary Paternalism and the Colonisation of Nature." *Inquiring Into Animal Enhancement*, edited by Simone Bateman et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 13–33.

Fitzpatrick, Lisa. "The Vulnerable Body on Stage: Reading Interpersonal Violence in Rape as Metaphor." *The Body in Pain in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Fionnuala Dillane et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 183–98.

Flannery, Eóin. "Ireland and Ecocriticism: An Introduction." *The Journal of Ecocriticism*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2013, pp. 1–8.

Fogarty, Anne. "The Colonization of Language: Narrative Strategy in A View of the Present State of Ireland and *The Faerie Queene,* Book VI." *Spenser and Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Patricia Coughlan, Cork University Press, 1989, pp. 75–108.

---. "Uncanny Families: Neo-Gothic Motifs and the Theme of Social Change in Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction." *Irish University Review*, vol. 30, no. 1 Special Issue: Contemporary Irish Fiction, 2000, pp. 59–81.

Foley, Deirdre. "'Their Proper Place': Women, Work and the Marriage Bar in Independent Ireland, c. 1924–1973." *Social History*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2022, pp. 60–84.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Routledge, 2001.

Fox, Rebekah. "Animal Behaviours, Post-Human Lives: Everyday Negotiations of the Animal–Human Divide in Pet-Keeping." *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 7, no. 14, 2006, pp. 525–37.

Franklin, Sarah. *Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy*. Duke University Press, 2007.

Fraser, Evan. "Social Vulnerability and Ecological Fragility: Building Bridges Between Social and Natural Sciences Using the Irish Potato Famine as a Case Study." *Ecology and Society*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2003, pp. 1–10.

Fuller, Michael J. K. *Re-reading the Saints: A New Hagiography of the Virgin Martyrs*, Hillenbrand Books, 2008.

Gaard, Greta. "Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism." *Feminist Formations*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2, Summer 2011, pp. 26–53.

---. *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Temple University Press, 2010.

Gargano, James W. "The Question of Poe's Narrators." *College English*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1963, pp. 177–81.

Ging, Debbie. "All-Consuming Images: New Gender Formations in Post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland." *Transforming Ireland: Challenges, Critiques, Resources*, edited by Debbie Ging, Michael Cronin, and Peadar Kirby, Manchester University Press, 2009, pp. 141–68.

---. "Family Guys: Detonating the Irish Nuclear Family." *Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013, pp. 79–104.

Gore-Jones, Lydia. "Animals, Humans, Angels and God: Animal Symbolism in the Historiography of the 'Animal Apocalypse' of 1 Enoch." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2015, pp. 268–87.

Green, Miranda. *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*. Routledge, 1992.

Gregory, Augusta. *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.

Haas, Robert. "A James Joyce Bestiary: Animal Symbolism in *Ulysses*." *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2014 2014, pp. 31–39.

Halley, Jean O'Malley. *Horse Crazy: Girls and the Lives of Horses*. The University of Georgia Press, 2019.

Hanisch, Carol. "The Personal Is Political." *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, edited by Barbara A. Crow, NYU Press, 2000, pp. 113–16.

Hanks, Patricia, and Flavia Hodges. "Healey." *Oxford Dictionary of Surnames*, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Hansen, Jim. *Terror and Irish Modernism: The Gothic Tradition from Burke to Beckett*. State University of New York Press, 2009.

Haraway, Donna. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin." *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 6, 2015, pp. 159–65.

---. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988, pp. 575–99.

---. *Staying with the Trouble*. Duke University Press, 2016.

---. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.

---. *When Species Meet*. University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Haskaj, Fatmir. "From Biopower to Necroeconomies: Neoliberalism, Biopower and Death Economies." *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 44, no. 10, 2018, pp. 1148–68.

Haverty, Anne. *A Break in the Journey: Poems*. New Island, 2018.

---. *Constance Markievicz: An Independent Life*. Pandora, 1988.

---. *One Day as a Tiger*. Vintage, 1997.

---. *The Beauty of the Moon*. Chatto & Windus, 1999.

---. *The Far Side of a Kiss*. Chatto & Windus, 2000.

---. *The Free and Easy*. Chatto & Windus, 2006.

Hayes, Alan. "Afterword: Irish Literary Feminisms, 1970-2020." *Look! It's A Woman Writer!*, edited by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Arlen House, 2021, pp. 312–49.

Hayles, N. Katherine. "Wrestling with Transhumanism." *H+/-: Transhumanism and Its Critics*, edited by Gregory R. Hansell, Xlibris Corporation, 2011, pp. 215–26.

Herbrechter, Stefan, et al. *Palgrave Handbook of Critical Posthumanism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

Hirst, Kaitlynn Hanna. *Women and Horses: Three Centuries of Patriarchal Control in British and American Literature*. 2014. The University of Montana.

Hobson, Barbara. "Recognition Struggles in Universalistic and Gender Distinctive Frames: Sweden and Ireland." *Recognition Struggles and Social Movements: Contested Identities, Agency and Power*, edited by Barbara Hobson, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 64–92.

Homans, Margaret. *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing*. Book News, Inc., 1986.

Hopkin, Alannah. *Dogs of Inishere*. Dalkey Archive Press, 2017.

"Horse Breaking." *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam, 1913.

Howe, Stephen. "Colonized and Colonizers: Ireland in the British Empire." *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History*, edited by Alvin Jackson, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 65–82.

---. "Questioning the (Bad) Question: 'Was Ireland a Colony?'" *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 142, 2008, pp. 138–52.

Howell, Philip. "The Trouble with Liminanimals." *Parallax*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2019, pp. 395–411.

"Https://Www.Behindthename.Com/Name/Caitri10ona." *Behind the Name*, https://www.behindthename.com/name/catriona. Accessed 21 September 2022.

IrishCentral Staff. "Shock as Documentary Shows 6,000 Greyhounds Killed Each Year in Ireland." *IrishCentral.Com*, 23 June 2019, https://www.irishcentral.com/news/greyhound-cruelty-ireland. Accessed 22 September 2022.

Irvine, Leslie, and Laurent Cilia. "More-than-human Families: Pets, People, and Practices in Multispecies Households." *Sociology Compass*, vol. 11, 2017, pp. 1–13.

Islekel, Ege Selin. "Gender in Necropolitics: Race, Sexuality, and Gendered Death." *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 17, no. 5, 2022, pp. 1–9.

Jackson, Moana. "Colonization as Myth-Making." *Being Indigenous: Perspectives on Activism, Culture, Language and Identity*, edited by Neyooxet Greymorning, Routledge, 2018, pp. 89–101.

Jacobson, Chris, and Anne Stephens. "Cross-Cultural Approaches to Environmental Research and Management: A Response to the Dualisms Inherent in Western Science?" *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2009, pp. 150–62.

James, Erin, Cajetan Iheka, and Juan Ignacio Oliva. "The Postcolonial Nonhuman. An Introduction." *Ecozon@ European Journal of Literature Culture and Environment*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022, pp. 1–5.

Jamison, A. "'Hunters in Red Coats': The Irish New Girl in Edith Somerville's 'Little Red Riding-Hood in Kerry' (1934)." *Irish Women Writers at the Turn of the 20th Century: Alternative Histories, New Narratives*, edited by Kathyrn Laing and Sinéad Mooney, Edward Everett Root, 2020, pp. 74–85.

Johnston, Jennifer. *Fool's Sanctuary*. Viking Adult, 1987.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Classic Books, 2022.

Kafka, Franz. "Investigations of a Dog." *Metamorphosis And Other Stories.* Translated by Bertolt Brecht, Penguin Classics, 1990.

Karlsson, Fredrik. "Critical Anthropomorphism and Animal Ethics." *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*, vol. 25, 2012, pp. 707–20.

Keane, Mary Beth. "'I Am so Sick of Irish-Americans Wishing for an Old Country They've Heard about in Stories." *The Irish Times*, 30 Aug. 2019, pp. 1–9.

Kelly, Maeve. *Orange Horses*. Tramp Press, 2017.

Kelly, Mary. "Writing the Colonial Past in Postcolonial Ireland: An Anglo-Irish Response." *Historical Geography*, vol. 41, 2013, pp. 137–55.

Kennedy, Sinéad. "Irish Women and the Celtic Tiger Economy." *The End of Irish History?*, edited by Colin Coulter and Steve Coleman, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 95–109.

Khair, Tabish. "The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness." *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*, edited by Tabish Khair, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009, pp. 3–18.

Kilgallon, Ellena. "The Fight for Equestrian Equality: History of the Side Saddle." *Entity*, 14 Feb. 2017, https://www.entitymag.com/equestrian-equality-history-side-saddle/. Accessed 8 Sep. 2022.

Killeen, Jarlath. "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*." *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760–1890*, edited by Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 168–88.

---. *The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kimpton, Bettina. *Cu Chulainn's Death: A Critical Edition of Brislech Mor Maige Muirthemne with Introduction, Translation, Textual Notes and Vocabulary*. National University of Ireland, 2009.

Kingsley, Frances E. *His Letters and Memories of His Life*, edited by Charles Kingsley, vol. 3, MacMillan, 1901.

Kirkpatrick, Kathryn. "Introduction: Othering the Animal, Othering the Nation." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 1–10.

---. "Quick Red Foxes: Irish Women Write the Hunt." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó, Macmillan Palgrave, 2015, pp. 26–41.

Kreilkamp, Vera. "The Novel of the Big House." *The Cambridge Companion to The Irish Novel*, edited by John Wilson Foster, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 60–77.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. "Humanism." *Minerva*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1978, pp. 586–95.

Lambert, David. "Master-Horse-Slave: Mobility, Race and Power in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Caribbean." *Slavery and Abolition*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2015, pp. 618–41.

Laoire, Caitríona Ní. "'You're Not a Man at All!': Masculinity, Responsibility, and Staying on the Land in Contemporary Ireland." *Irish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 2, Dec. 2005, pp. 94–114.

Laughlin, Jim Mac. "'Pestilence on Their Backs, Famine in Their Stomachs': The Racial Construction of Irishness and the Irish in Victorian Britain." *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity*, edited by Colin Graham and Richard Kirkland, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999, pp. 50–76.

Lecomte, Héloïse. "'Curiously Mundane Hallucinations': Monstrous Nightmares and Spectral Fears in John Banville's *The Sea* and Anne Enright's *The Gathering*." *Imaginaires*, no. 23, 23, Sept. 2021, pp. 131–44.

Levine, Herbert J. "'Freeing the Swans': Yeats's Exorcism of Maud Gonne." *ELH*, vol. 48, no. 2, 1981, pp. 411–26.

London, Jack. *White Fang*. MacMillan, 1906.

Lönngren, Ann-Sofie. "Metaphor, Metonymy, More-than-Anthropocentric. The Animal That Therefore I Read (and Follow)." *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, edited by Susan McHugh et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 37–50.

Lovelock, James. *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. Oxford University Press, 1979.

Lozano García, Alberto. "'There Has Been a Celtic Tiger of Fiction': An Interview with Claire Kilroy." *Estudios Irlandeses*, vol. 13, 2018, pp. 158–64.

MacAvoy, R. A. *The Grey Horse*. Bantam Books, 1987.

MacKillop, James. *Fionn Mac Cumhaill: Celtic Myth in English Literature*. Syracuse University Press, 1985.

Madden, Ed. "'Gently, Not Gay': Proximity, Sexuality, and Irish Masculinity at the End of the Twentieth Century." *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 69–87.

Magan, Manchán. *Manchan Magan's Three Dogs, Banshee Fingers and Other Irish Words for Nature*. Gill Books, 2021.

Mahon, Evelyn. "Ireland: A Private Patriarchy?" *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, vol. 26, no. 8, Aug. 1994, pp. 1277–96.

Marchant, Jennifer Esther Robertson. *Beauty and the Beast: The Relationships Between Female Protagonists and Animals in Children's and Adolescent Novels Written by Women*. 2003. Illinois State University.

Maude, Ulrika. "Pavlov's Dogs and Other Animals in Samuel Beckett." *Beckett and Animals*, edited by Mary Bryden, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 82–93.

Maurer, Sara L. "Disowning to Own: Maria Edgeworth and the Illegitimacy of National Ownership." *Criticism*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2002, pp. 363–88.

Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture*. Translated by Libby Meintjes, vol. 15, no. 1, 2003, pp. 11–40.

---. *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press, 2019.

McAleese, Dermot. *The Celtic Tiger: Origins and Prospects*. 2000, p. 5.

McBride, Eimear. *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing*. 2013. Simon and Schuster, 2015.

McCabe, Patrick. *The Butcher Boy*. Picador, 1992.

McCaffrey, Anne. *Black Horses for the King*. Random House Children's Publishers UK, 1998.

---. *Dragonflight*. Ballantine Books, 1968.

---. *Dragonsong*. Atheneum Books, 1976.

---. "Freedom of the Race." *Science Fiction Plus*, vol. October, 1953.

---. *If Wishes Were Horses*. Penguin Publishing Group, 1998.

---. *Restoree*. Del Rey, 1987.

---. *Ring of Fear*. Borgo Press, 1971.

---. *The Carradyne Touch*. McDonald, 1988.

---. *The Lady: A Novel*. Ballantine, 1988.

---. *The Ship Who Sang*. Corgi Books, 1966.

McCaffrey, Lawrence J. *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*. The Catholic University of American Press.

McClintock, Anne. "No Longer in a Future Heaven." *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, Minneapolis University Press, 1997, pp. 89–112.

McCormick, Finbar. *Exchange of Livestock in Early Christian Ireland, AD 450-1150*.

---. "The Dog in Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland." *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1991, pp. 7–9.

---. "The Horse in Early Ireland." *Anthropozoologica*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1, 2007, pp. 85–104.

McDonald, Rónán. "The Irish Revival and Modernism." *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*, edited by Joe Cleary, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 51–62.

McGarry, Fearghal. *The Rising. Ireland: Easter 1916*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

McGlynn, Mary M. *Broken Irelands: Literary Form in Post-Crash Irish Fiction*. Syracuse University Press, 2022.

McHugh, Susan. *Dog*. Reaktion Books, 2004.

---. "Literary Animal Agents." *PMLA*, vol. 124, no. 2, Mar. 2009, pp. 487–95.

McMinn, Joseph. "Contemporary Novels on the 'Troubles'." *Etudes Irlandaises*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1980, pp. 113–21.

Meaney, Gerardine. "The Sons of Cuchulainn: Violence, the Family, and the Irish Canon." *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 41, no. 1 & 2, 2006, pp. 242–61.

Mensa. "About Us." *Mensa International*, www.mensa.org/. Accessed 16 Feb. 2022.

Mianowski, Marie. *Post Celtic Tiger Landscapes in Irish Fiction*. Taylor & Francis, 2016.

Miller, Kerby A. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. Oxford University Press, 1985.

Mission - Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society - LMU Munich. https://www.carsoncenter.uni-muenchen.de/about_rcc/mission/index.html. Accessed 22 Nov. 2022.

"Missy." *Online Etymology Dictionary*, https://www.etymonline.com/word/missy. Accessed 16 Oct. 2023.

Mitchell, Jane. "Reclaiming the Monster: Abjection and Subversion in the Marital Gothic Novel." *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2018, pp. 53–72.

Morgan, John H. "Ethnoconsciousness and Political Powerlessness: Boston's Irish." *Social Science*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1978, pp. 159–67.

Mostafa, Maha Mohamed Hosny. "The Animal Turn in Fiction: An Animal-Centric Analysis of a Dog's Purpose and Anthill." *International Journal of English and Literature*, vol. 6, no. 9, Sept. 2015, pp. 150–62.

Muhammad, Dr Anmar Ahmad. "Biblical Apostle Judas Iscariot. A Critical Evaluation of His Integrity." *Al Qalam*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1, Nov. 2019, pp. 39–61.

Munkwitz, Erica. "'The Master Is the Mistress': Women and Fox Hunting as Sports Coaching in Britain." *Sport in History*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2017, pp. 395–422.

---. "Vixens of Venery: Women, Sport, and Fox-Hunting in Britain, 1860-1914." *Critical Survey*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2012, pp. 74–87.

Murphy, Raymond. *Rationality and Nature: A Sociological Inquiry into a Changing Relationship*. Avalon Publishing, 1994.

Nakamura, Tetsuko. "Introduction: The Big House as a Problematic Space in Irish Fiction." *Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 22, 2007, pp. 3–6.

Nath, Dipika. "To Abandon the Colonial Animal': 'Race,' Animals, and the Feral Child in Kipling's Mowgli Stories." *Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Sarah E. McFarland and Hediger Ryan, Brill, 2009, pp. 251–78.

Neave, Lucy. "'The Distance Between Them': Sheep, Women, and Violence in Evie Wyld's *All Birds, Singing* and Barbara Baynton's *Busch Studies*." *Antipodes*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2016, pp. 125–36.

Negra, Diane, and Anthony P. McIntyre. "Ireland Inc.: The Corporatization of Affective Life in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2020, pp. 60–80.

Norris, Claire. "The Big House: Space, Place, and Identity in Irish Fiction." *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2004, pp. 107–21.

Ó Gráda, Cormac. "Is the Celtic Tiger a Paper Tiger?" *ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary*, vol. Spring, 2002, pp. 51–62.

Obert, Julia C. "Mothers and Others in Edna O'Brien's The Country Girls." *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2012, pp. 283–97.

O'Brien, Edna. *Mother Ireland*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976.

O'Connell, Helen. "Animal Welfare in Post-Union Ireland." *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2015, pp. 34–52.

O'Connor, Brian. "Greyhound Racing Needs Culture Change to Address Dog Cruelty." *The Irish Times*, Nov. 2015.

O'Connor, Maureen. "Animals and Animality in Irish Fiction." *A History of Irish Literature and the Environment*, Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 298–316.

---. "Irish Animal Studies at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century." *Routledge International Handbook of Irish Studies*, edited by Renée Fox et al., Routledge, 2020, pp. 362–69.

---. *The Female and the Species*. Verlag Peter Lang, 2010.

O'Connor, Ralph. "Monsters of the Tribe: Berserk Fury, Shapeshifting and Social Dysfunction in Táin Bó Cúailnge, Egils Saga and Hrólfs Saga Kraka." *Kings and Warriors in Early North-West Europe*, edited by Jan Erik Rekdal and Charles Doherty, Four Courts Press, 2016, pp. 180–236.

O'Flynn, Micheal, et al. "Scapegoating During a Time of Crisis: A Critique of Post- Celtic Tiger Ireland." *Sociology*, vol. 48, no. 5, 2014, pp. 921–37.

Ohlmeyer, Jane. "Ireland, India and the British Empire." *Studies in People's History*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2015, pp. 169–88.

"Origins." *The Irish War*. https://www.theirishwar.com/history/irish-war-of-independence/. Accessed 11 Oct. 2022.

O'Riordan, Maeve. "Gender and the Ascendancy: The Families Who Owned, and Lost, the Island of Ireland, 1852–1922." *Gender and History: Ireland, 1852-1922*, edited by Jyoti Atwal et al., Routledge, 2022, pp. 37–48.

O'Riordan, Maeve. "'We … Galloped Hard and Straight over Some Big Stone Gaps': Freedom of the Hunt for Elite Women in Ireland, 1860-1914." *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1, June 2021.

O'Rourke, Maeve. "Ireland's Magdalene Laundries and the State's Duty to Protect." *Hibernian Law Journal*, vol. 10, 2011, pp. 200–37.

Ortiz Robles, Mario. *Literature and Animal Studies*. Routledge, 2016.

Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Stanford University Press, 1974, pp. 68–87.

O'Sullivan, E. N., et al. "Characteristics of 234 Dog Bite Incidents in Ireland during 2004 and 2005." *Veterinary Record*, vol. 163, 2008, pp. 37–42.

"Over 6,500 Horses Were Slaughtered in Ireland for Human Consumption Last Year." *The Journal*, 12 Apr. 2019, https://www.thejournal.ie/over-6000-horses-slaughtered-for-human-consumption-last-year-4589882-Apr2019/#:~:text=MORE%20THAN%206%2C500%20horses%20in,by%20the%20Department%20of%20Agriculture.&text=The%20horses%20included%20in%20these,the%20continent%20for%20human%20consumption. Accessed 13 Jan. 2022.

Oxford Reference. "Worthing." *Dictionary of American Family Names*, https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195081374.001.0001/acref-9780195081374-e-68969?rskey=b9tFwB&result=1. Accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

Palacios-González, Manuela, et al. "The Woman & the Animal Trope." *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 15, vol. 2, 2020, pp. 129–46.

Paraschiv, Paul Mihai. "Making Kin: Posthuman Identity in *One Day as a Tiger* and Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Besides Ourselves*." *Studia UBB Philologia*, vol. LXVII, no. 2, 2022, pp. 155–68.

Pašeta, Senia. "Feminist Political Thought and Activism in Revolutionary Ireland, c. 1880–1918." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 27, Dec. 2017, pp. 193–209.

Patten, Eve. "Contemporary Irish Fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to The Irish Novel*, edited by John Wilson Foster, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 259–75.

Patterson, Charles. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*. Lantern Books, 2002.

Patterson, Nerys T. *Cattle Lords and Clansmen: The Social Structure of Early Ireland*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.

Pikli, Natália. "Hybrid Creatures in Context: Centaurs, Hobbyhorses and Sexualised Women (*Hamlet, King Lear, The Two Noble Kinsmen*)." *Shakespeare et Le Monde Animal*, vol. 38, 2020, pp. 1–19.

Plumwood, Val. "Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics." *Ethics and the Environment*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1996, pp. 119–52.

---. "Decolonizing Relationships with Nature." *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Postcolonial Era*, Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003, pp. 51–78.

---. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. Routledge, 2002.

---. "The Concept of a Cultural Landscape: Nature, Culture and Agency in the Land." *Ethics and the Environment*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2, Fall-Winter 2006, pp. 115–50.

Poloczek, Katarzyna. "Identity as Becoming: Polymorphic Female Identities in the Poetry of Boland, Meehan and Ní Dhomhnaill." *Liminal Borderlands in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Irene Gilsenan Nordin and Elin Holmsten, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 131–50.

Potts, Donna L. *Contemporary Irish Writing and Environmentalism*. Macmillan Palgrave, 2018.

---. "Underneath the Wave: Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Mermaids, and the Irish Otherworld." *East Meets West*, edited by Reiko Aiura and J. U. Jacobs, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, pp. 132–43.

Pramaggiore, Maria. "Animal Afterlives: Equine Legacies in Irish Visual Culture." *Modernist Afterlives in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Paige Reynolds, Anthem Press, 2016, pp. 141–52.

---. "The Celtic Tiger's Equine Imaginary." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 214–30.

Puleo, Alicia H. "That Obscure Object of Desire." *Spanish Thinking About Animals*. Translated by Margarita Carretero-González, edited by Margarita Carretero-González, Michigan State University Press, 2020, pp. 115–27.

Rennhak, Katharina. "At the Intersection of Gender Studies and Narratology. Contemporary Irish Women Writing Men." *DIEGESIS*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1, Dec. 2021, pp. 30–48.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. 1966. Penguin Books, 2011.

Richards, Abbie. "View: Golf Has Grown into an 'Ecological Villain.'" *Euronews*, 17 July 2022, https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/07/17/golf-is-a-giant-board-game-damaging-the-planet-time-for-it-to-go. Accessed 4 Jan. 2023.

Riechmann, Jorge. "Foreword." *Spanish Thinking about Animals,* edited by Margarita Carretero-González and translated by Margarita Carretero-González, 2020, pp. ix-xxviii.

Rivera Izquierdo, Ángela. "A 'New Irish Woman' Emerges: Subverting Femininity in Maeve Kelly's *A Life of Her Own*." *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 12, 2017, pp. 104–14.

Roberts, Robin. *Anne McCaffrey: A Life with Dragons*. University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

Robles Elong, Iñaki, and María Ruiz Carreras. "Necropolítica Fágica y La Vida En El Habeas Viscus: El Matadero Como Espacio de Excepción y La Agencia de Los Otros Animales En Los Lugares Invivibles de La Existencia." *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos Animales*, vol. 6, no. 1, Aug. 2019, pp. 52–69.

Ryan, Donal. *The Spinning Heart*. Steerforth, 2014.

Ryder, Michael Lawson. *Sheep & Man*. Duckworth Overlook, 2007.

Scharff, R. F. "On the Breeds of Dogs Peculiar to Ireland and Their Origin." *The Irish Naturalists' Journal*, vol. 33, no. 8, 1924, pp. 77–88.

Schildgen, Brenda Deen. "'No Bounds to the Sympathetic Imagination' in J. M. Coetzee's Elizabeth Costello." *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2005, pp. 323–36.

Scholtmeijer, Marian. "The Power of Otherness: Animals in Women's Fiction." *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, edited by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, 1995, pp. 240–73.

Scott, Shelly R. "The Racehorse as Protagonist: Agency, Independence, and Improvisation." *Animals and Agency. An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Sarah E. McFarland, and Hediger Ryan, Brill, 2009, pp. 45–66.

Seager, Joni. "Rachel Carson Was Right - Then, and Now." *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, edited by Sherilyn MacGregor, Routledge, 2017, pp. 27–42.

Sewell, Anna. *Black Beauty*. Jarold & Sons, 1877.

Seymor, Alex. *The Complete Owners Guide from Puppy to Old Age: Shih Tzu*. CWP Publishing, 2014.

Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, And Survival in India*. Kali for Women & Zed Books Ltd., 1989.

Sian Tully de Lope, Cassandra. *The Hero of Hibernia: Masculinity in 20th and 21st Century Irish Literature through Corpus Stylistics*. University of Extremadura, Doctoral Thesis, 2021.

Singleton, Ellen. "Romancing the Horse: Adventure and Femininity in Juvenile Equine Fiction for Girls." *Gender and Equestrian Sport: Riding Around the World*, edited by Miriam Adelman and Jorge Knijnik, Springer, 2013, pp. 91–111.

Singleton, John. "Death and Dwelling in Sarah Baume's Grave Houses." *The Graveyard in Literature: Liminality and Social Critique*, edited by Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021, pp. 204–18.

Smyth, Gerry. "Irish National Identity after the Celtic Tiger." *Estudios Irlandeses*, vol. 7, 2012, pp. 132–37.

Somerville, Edith, and Martin Ross. *Some Experiences of an Irish R M*. Horse's Mouth, 2021.

Spenser, Edmund. *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. Library of Alexandria, 1934.

Sperry, Amanda. "Dennis O'Driscoll's Beef with the Celtic Tiger." *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Kathryn Kirkpatrick and Borbála Faragó, Macmillan Palgrave, 2015, pp. 42–54.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak." *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271–316.

Steele, Karen. *Women, Press, and Politics During the Irish Revival*. Syracuse University Press, 2007.

Steffen, Will, et al. "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society Association*, no. 369, 2011, pp. 842–67.

Stenner, Rachel. "Sheep, Beasts, and Knights: Fugitive Alterity in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* Book VI, and *The Shepheardes Calender*." *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, edited by Susan McHugh et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 167–80.

Steward, Animal. "Animal Agency." *Inquiry*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2009, pp. 217–31.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula, a Tale*. Archibald Constable and Company, 1897.

Storey, Michael L. *Representing the Troubles in Irish Short Fiction*. The Catholic University of American Press, 2004.

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. 1726. Penguin, 2008.

Sydora, Laura. "'Everyone Wants a Bit of Me': Historicizing Motherhood in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*." *Women's Studies*, vol. 44, 2015, pp. 239–63.

Synge, J. M. *The Playboy of the Western World*. 1907. Book Jungler, 2008.

Szucs, Orsolya. "Collaborative Co-Existence: Human-Animal Bodies and Nature in Sara Baume's *Spill, Simmer, Falter, Wither*." *Philologia*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1, 2020, pp. 65–75.

Takakuwa, Haruko. "'Happy England': An Anglo-Irish Vision in *The Absentee* and *Ormond*." *Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 16, 2001, pp. 108–17.

Thompson, William. *Appeal of One Half the Human Race Women Against the Pretensions of the Other Half Men to Retain Them in Political and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery*. Cork University Press, 1997.

Trevor, William. *The Story of Lucy Gault*. 2002. Penguin UK, 2011.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Dominance and Affection. The Making of Pets*. Yale University Press, 1984.

Turton-Turner, Pamela. "The Porn Illusion: The Infantilized Woman in Popular Print Media." *International Journal of the Image*, vol. 3, no. 3, July 2013, pp. 17–26.

Tyler, Tom. "The Exception and the Norm: Dimensions of Anthropocentrism." *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, edited by Susan McHugh et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 15–36.

Tylor, Chloë. "Foucault and Critical Animal Studies: Genealogies of Agricultural Power." *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 8, no. 6, 2013, pp. 539-551.

Ulloa, Carolina. "'Alight and Burnt to the Ground': Fire as a Metaphor of Rewriting in *Dubliners, 100* and *Spill Simmer Falter Wither*." *Rewriting Traditions: Contemporary Irish Fiction*, edited by Aurora Piñeiro, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2021, pp. 99–130.

"Ulster Cycle." *Britannica*, 2013, https://www.britannica.com/art/Ulster-cycle. Accessed 14 Jul. 2023.

Valencia, Sayak. "Necropolitics, Postmortem/ Transmortem Politics, and Transfeminisms in the Sexual Economies of Death." *Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Translated by Olga Arnaiz Zhuravleva, vol. 6, no. 2, 2019, pp. 180–95.

Veevers, Jean E. "The Social Meanings of Pets: Alternative Roles for Companion Animals." *Pets and the Family*, edited by Marvin B. Sussman, Routledge, 1985.

Vint, Sherryl. "'Without the Right Words It's Hard to Retain Clarity': Speculative Fiction and Animal Narrative." *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, edited by Susan McHugh et al., Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 499–512.

Walby, Sylvia. "Theorizing Patriarchy." *Sociology*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1989, pp. 213–34.

Walker, Tom. "Yeats's MacNeice." *Irish Studies: Geographies and Genders*, edited by Marti D. Lee and Ed Madden, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp. 160–72.

Waran, Natalie Kay, et al. "Training Methods and Horse Welfare." *The Welfare of Horses*, edited by Natalie Waran, Springer Netherlands, 2007, pp. 151–80.

Waugh, Evelyn. *Modern Classics Brideshead Revisited*. Penguin UK, 2000.

Weekes, Ann Owens. "Figuring the Mother in Contemporary Irish Fiction." *Contemporary Irish Fiction: Themes, Tropes, Theories*, edited by Liam Harte and Michael Parker, Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000, pp. 100–24.

---. *Unveiling Treasures: The Attic Guide to the Published Works of Irish Women Literary Writers Drama, Fiction, Poetry*. Attic Press, 1993.

Weiss, Deborah. "The Formation of Social Class and the Reformation of Ireland: Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1–19.

White, Timothy J. "Materialism and the Loss of Sovereignty: Ireland in the Celtic Tiger and After." *Studi Irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*, no. 3, 2013, pp. 89–113.

Whitehead, Stephen M., and Frank J. Barrett. "The Sociology of Masculinity." *The Masculinities Reader*, edited by Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barret, Polity Press, 2001, pp. 1–26.

Williams, Mark. *Ireland's Immortals: A History of the Gods of Irish Myth*. Princeton University Press, 2016.

Wintle, Sarah. "Horses, Bikes and Automobiles: New Woman on the Move." *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms*, edited by Willis Chris Richardson Angelique, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 66–78.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Wohlgemut, Esther. "Maria Edgeworth and the Question of National Identity." *Studies in English Literature*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1999, pp. 645–58.

Wolfe, Cary. *What Is Posthumanism?* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

---. "Introduction." *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, pp. ix–xxiii.

Woodfield, Stephanie. *Celtic Lore & Spellcraft of the Dark Goddess: Invoking the Morrigan*. Llewellyn Worldwide, 2011.

Woulfe, Patrick. "Daibhéid." *Sloinnte Gaedheal Is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames*, Ulster Historical Foundation, 1906 2014.

Wrenn, Corey Lee. "Beehives on the Border: Liminal Humans and Other Animals at Skellig Michael." *Irish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 29, no. 2, Aug. 2021, pp. 137–59.

Yeats, William Butler. *On Baile's Strand*. 1905. Wentworth Press, 2016.

Zamir, Tzachi. "Literary Works and Animal Ethics." *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*, edited by Tom L. Beauchamp and Raymond G. Frey, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 1057–82.