

# Colonising the Nonhuman Other in Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The rise of new ethical anxieties in the interaction between humans and nonhumans alike has not left human social relations and philosophical frameworks unaffected. One such framework might be ecocriticism, a tool of literary analysis that, while not exceptionally new, is not yet widely applied to contemporary Irish literature. In this article, I explore one instance of the animal trope in the novel *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), written by the Irishwoman Anne Haverty. The novel could explore and denounce how Irish society has not totally rejected colonialism and its anthropocentric foundation; instead, Haverty's fictional Ireland seems to have appropriated the colonising discourse once applied to them and turned it against the nonhuman realm, especially animals, to justify their existence as an independent State. Therefore, the aim of this article is to explore whether, and to what extent, the human protagonist of the novel otherises and reduces the nonhuman protagonist, a ewe, into a symbol of Irish nationality.

*Keywords:* Anne Haverty, ecocriticism, colonialism, Ireland, nonhuman, sheep.

## Resumen

El surgimiento de nuevas ansiedades éticas en la interacción entre humanos y no humanos no ha dejado sin afectar a las relaciones sociales y a los marcos filosóficos. Uno de esos marcos podría ser la ecocrítica, una herramienta de análisis literario que, aunque no es excepcionalmente nueva, aún no se aplica ampliamente a la literatura irlandesa contemporánea. En este artículo, exploro una instancia del tropo animal en la novela *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), escrita por la irlandesa Anne Haverty. La novela podría explorar y denunciar cómo la sociedad irlandesa no ha rechazado totalmente el colonialismo y su fundamento antropocéntrico; en cambio, la Irlanda ficticia de Haverty parece haberse apropiado del discurso colonizador que en su día se les aplicó y lo ha vuelto contra el ámbito no humano, especialmente los animales, para justificar su existencia como Estado independiente. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este artículo es explorar si, y hasta qué punto, el protagonista humano de la novela alteriza y reduce al protagonista no humano, una oveja, a un símbolo de la nacionalidad irlandesa.

*Palabras clave:* Anne Haverty, ecocrítica, colonialismo, Irlanda, no-humano, oveja.

## Introduction

The role of the nonhuman in the construction of national identities, including the Irish one, continues to be debated. Donna L. Potts explains that other-than-human animals

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have traditionally been key to Irish identity, both as a colony and as a Republic. For instance, the wolves and their extinction paralleled the colonisation of the Irish and their loss of linguistic and national identity, showing the strong interconnection between the material and the symbolic exploitation of nonhuman animals on the island. In this sense, Potts argues that the material presence of wolves in Ireland, already extinct in England three hundred years earlier, justified the discursive inferiority of the Irish as “savages” (Potts 147). This way, nonhuman animals have been instrumentalised to animalise and colonise the Irish (Kirkpatrick and Faragó 8). Interestingly, the discursive proximity of the Irish to nonhuman animals was not abandoned with the foundation of the Republic of Ireland. Here, William Butler Yeats collaborated on the Irish Free State coinage design, using the image of a number of other-than-human animals. Although one might be tempted to regard such selection as a symbolic gesture of respect towards the lives of the nonhuman animals inhabiting the island, Potts explains that the choice was most likely sought to justify Ireland’s “mastery over animals” (144). “Irishness” seems, thus, to be deeply entangled in the colonialist-infused anthropocentric relationship between humans and nonhumans.

Given the paramount role of nonhuman animals in Irishness, it is hardly a surprise that one of the most economically important periods in recent years is known as the Celtic Tiger period, a metaphor clearly influenced by other-than-humans as national symbols. This profitable boom took place between 1995 and 2007, and was unprecedented in Irish history. One of the most immediate consequences was the transformation of the country socially, culturally, and economically. However, the rapid commercial growth came at a high price. According to Catherine Conan and Flore Coulouma, Ireland was no longer the “natural” unpolluted setting it used to be or be perceived as. The Celtic Tiger turned Irish landscape into “that of a dilapidated, polluted environment, symbolised with striking effect by the mushrooming ‘ghost states’ that now scar the Irish countryside and the suburban areas” (7). Moreover, the Celtic Tiger highlighted the two dominant views of nature in Ireland. On the one hand, the “peaceful Irish pastoralism,” based on Catholicism, was tinged with Celtic spirituality and the basis for Irish nationalism. On the other, the colonial representation of Irish humans as simian-looking savages, impervious to the “civilizing forces of progress and inhabiting a wilderness” (Conan and Coulouma 8). Although these two visions may clash, they nonetheless share their view of nature as detached from humans, laying the foundations for a discursive superiority of the human species.

It is becoming commonplace to acknowledge that the Republic of Ireland has embarked on a series of new cultural, economic, and political debates. One such debate could be the use of the figure of nonhuman animals, analysed in the fields of ecocriticism and animal studies. Greg Garrard attempts to define ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” in the seminal work *Ecocriticism* (3). However, Garrard’s definition is too broad to convey a specific branch of ecocriticism. Although this might be an issue, it could also be a strength. Serpil Oppermann argues that “ecocriticism’s heterogeneity has become its identifying epithet” (154), making any definition circumstantial at best. Within Garrard’s general definition,

Val Plumwood focuses on a critique against the western rationalist schema that systematically naturalises and thus justifies the domination and exploitation of apparently non-rational entities (*Environmental Culture* 26). In this sense, Potts argues that ecocriticism demands a deconstruction of western morality, “because it is rooted in various kinds of subordination—of women to men, of the colonized to the colonizers, and of animals to humans” (155). Esther Alloun states that Plumwood’s critique of power and dualism can be applied to Critical Animal Studies (CAS), grounding animal advocacy by “embracing the more-than-human world at large” (153) and foregrounding non-hierarchical intersectionality (158). In both ecocriticism and CAS, the humanist hyperseparation of the human and other animal species could then be challenged under what Cary Wolfe understands to be a posthumanist<sup>2</sup> take (7). Consequently, Plumwood’s critique on dualisms, framed by ecocriticism and focusing on other-than-human animals, might become a powerful instrument to unpacking how the figure of the animal has been discursively constructed and used in contemporary Ireland.

Attention to nonhuman animals has not been confined to the academic world. The preoccupation of the Irish population with the nonhumans inhabiting the island has grown in recent decades as the climate crisis has deepened its effects on humans and more-than-humans alike (Smyth 163). In the case of twenty-first century fiction, we can find Irish women writers:

deploying the landscape and the natural not only as a gesture of resistance to the masculinity regulation of female energies, but also as a self-consciously elaborated stage for the performance of Irish identity, so closely associated with the countryside. Violence inevitably erupts into the text, whether literary or visually, when utilizing the animal located in an Irish topography, a really “unnatural” cultural construct, shaped by a history of conflict and suffering. (O’Connor 136)

With the current debate on the animal trope, the analysis of nonhuman animals in literature written by Irish women during the so-called Celtic Tiger might shed some light on present constructions of Irishness. This paper approaches Anne Haverty’s novel, *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), using the instrument of ecocriticism, whose power resides precisely in its heterogeneity. *One Day as a Tiger* explores the relationship between an Irish man, Martin, and a ewe, Missy, in a fictional rural Ireland during the 1990s. The main issue at play in the novel is, I contend, the anxiety raised by the lack of total rejection of the colonising processes on the island. After publishing *Constance Markievicz: An Independent Life*<sup>3</sup> in 1989, Haverty published her first novel, *One Day as a Tiger*, in 1997.<sup>4</sup> And yet, her writing has barely been analysed from an academic perspective (see Maureen O’Connor’s 2010 book, *The Female and the Species*, and Gerry Smyth’s 2000 essay, “Shite and Sheep: An Ecocritical Perspective on Two Recent Irish Novels”). The narration of the novel is enacted by its protagonist, Martin Hawkins, who abandons a promising career as

<sup>2</sup> Posthumanism here is understood as a post-anthropocentric and zoe-centred philosophy in which the human(ist) subject ceases to be the focus of study and the human/nonhuman hierarchy is rejected (Braidotti 194).

<sup>3</sup> A Biography of Constance Georgina Markievicz, a committed socialist, feminist, and Irish nationalist Anglo-Irish woman. This might show Haverty’s interest in Irish issues, both past and present.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Haverty’s arrival in Ireland’s literary stage was eventful. *One Day as a Tiger* won the Rooney Prize and was shortlisted for the 1997 Whitbread First Novel Award (Magan).

an academic historian at Trinity College and returns to a 1990s Fansha, Tipperary, where he was born and raised. The character's return is at least partially motivated by the traumatic and violent death of his parents in a car accident. This way, the text juxtaposes the Celtic Tiger boom and the death of the protagonist's parents from the very beginning of the novel.

In Haverty's fictional Fansha, the narrator seeks rural traditions and Irish "authenticity." However, the fields are fertilised and most farms are full of sheep modified with human DNA. In this sense, the novel is built around the irony of his search, which will bring him no "authenticity" or "essence." That the protagonist was a historian working on the revision of Irish history—and that revisionist historians often highlight the tension between traditional Irish nationalism as a response to British colonialism and contemporary economic aspirations (White 91)—might suggest a strong connection between the history of Ireland as a colony, the construction of the Free Irish State, and the Celtic Tiger through the protagonist and narrator of the novel. Conversely, readers have access to one of the modified ewes, whom Martin turns into the main nonhuman character in the novel (Haverty 24). The choice of species for the other-than-human character is hardly accidental; during the Celtic Tiger period, sheep were a sector in crisis as the Irish left small farms and looked for employment in the cities (Dillon et al. 29). Sheep were thus at the centre of the crisis operating behind the apparent economic boom brought by the Celtic Tiger period. The close interaction between the human and the nonhuman protagonist is therefore the perfect vehicle for analysing the interspecies relationship in Haverty's fictional postcolonial Republic of Ireland. In order to provide fruitful results, the analysis of Haverty's writing will be framed within Plumwood's grasp of ecological culture and William J. Adams's understanding of the colonial mind.

Plumwood contends in her seminal work *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* that models of colonisation can be notably apt to analyse anthropocentrism in western societies if we regard the "earth others as *other nations*" (100). Modern western societies are constructed under a centrist paradigm rooted in the dualism between the centric Self and the peripheral Other. Here, Plumwood argues reason is "the characteristic which sums up and is common to the privileged side of all these contrasts and whose absence characterises the Other" (101). In this vein, the British geographer specialised in conservation, Adams, criticises the "colonial mind," which shaped British colonies, including Ireland. Such "mindset" would defend the superiority of the human species over all other species, setting "nature" as the Other to be controlled and reshaped through strategies such as (re)naming and physical control under the colonial mind (Adams 24). Considering that colonised peoples were often animalised and thus otherised, it is not surprising to observe that the Irish were similarly categorised as not quite animals but not quite humans either, that is, as a kind of human/nonhuman hybrid, by colonial discourse. According to Kathryn Kirkpatrick, the occupation of the Irish was grounded in the construction of a discursive proximity between humans and other-than-humans—including animals—inhabiting Ireland (Kirkpatrick 26). Such colonial and anthropocentric practice has not gone unnoticed. For instance, Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley argue that the fields of postcolonialism and

ecocriticism can work together in the analysis of the connections between the anthropocentric exploitation of nature as well as the colonial exploitation of humans, synchronising the utilisation of colonised peoples, lands, and nonhuman animals (38). In other words, to analyse postcolonial texts such as Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* from an ecocritical perspective might illustrate how contemporary Irish humans construct and interact with nonhuman animals. One reason why the Irish might be in the middle of a (re)negotiation of their Irishness and their interaction with other animals is that, even today, their discursive animalisation has not ceased. They have been subjected to the heroic yet problematic term Celtic Tiger and the not so heroic P.I.I.G.S after the economic crisis of 2008 (DeMello xi). Plumwood argues one effect of this dichotomist perspective is the subsequent hierarchy in which "it is appropriate that the coloniser impose his own value, agency, and meaning, and that the colonised be made to serve the coloniser as a means to his means" (Plumwood 106). In order to ideologically justify the creation of an independent State, Ireland might have appropriated their former coloniser's processes to otherise the nonhuman. This paper is thus to explore whether the human character of Martin represents the coloniser Self and the ewe, Missy, the colonised Other. Moreover, I aim to discern whether Missy, as a colonised entity, represents the hybridity of Irish identity—past and present, rural and high-tech, Celtic and Christian.

### Mirroring the Colonisation Process

Plumwood explains that, within colonising ideology, the Self is embodied by those who represent "reason." The Self would be the "male elite," unconcerned with the corporeal sphere of labour or materiality (20). These representatives belong to the highest spheres of the anthropocentric hierarchy, defending abstract thinking against corporeality, conceived as inferior. One can, of course, find a long list of jobs that could respond to this paradigm, especially in hard sciences and social sciences. And yet, the "rationalist" job *par excellence* could be that of the academic historian, focused on discerning which sources will be accepted and included in official History. This is precisely the occupation of the main character of the novel, Martin, until the beginning of the novel (Haverty 1). Therefore, readers spot a character who could potentially embody the values of the colonising agenda that proposes reason and abstract thought as the justification for the establishment of an anthropocentric hierarchy and the subsequent colonisation of the Other, human or not. More importantly, this protagonist is also the narrator of the novel. He explicitly controls the discourse of the novel, already performing as a historian.

The colonial period witnessed a distinctive pattern of engagement with nature. Adams explains that the European Enlightenment and the fundamental Cartesian dualism between humans and nature justified and promoted the destructive and utilitarian view of the feasibility of exploiting nature for economic gain (Adams 22). The profiteering on the environment was further supported by rationalist anthropocentrism, able to create a radical dichotomy that sharply separates human Self and nonhuman Other (Plumwood 107). This could be slightly problematised by the introduction of an explicitly hybrid character in Haverty's novel, Missy. Missy is a sheep who has been genetically altered with

human DNA (Haverty 23), and who performs as the co-protagonist of the novel. The choice of the not-quite-other-than-human species in the novel is hardly coincidental. Sheep may constitute one of the most relevant nonhuman animals in colonialism. Lucy Neave briefly mentions how sheep were not only a source of wool and capital but also a symbol of the “progress” of the colonisers and their colony. In this sense, Neave explains sheep have become “unwitting agents of colonial violence,” in that they have unwillingly aided the colonising invasion and occupation. Neave states that sheep were a means used by white settlers to “displace responsibility for the fate of indigenous people onto their cattle, and sheep” (Neave 128–29). Through the otherisation of sheep, the animalisation of the Irish by the British was discursively justified. Thus, the interaction of a number of human characters and the ewe in Haverty’s fiction can be the perfect vehicle to explore whether colonial processes, if any, are still at work in Ireland.

The human protagonist meets the sheep, Missy, at the Institute, the factory where genetically modified sheep are created and sold to Irish farmers in Haverty’s Celtic Tiger Ireland. These sheep are, as cattle often are, unnamed. They are devoid of any kind of name and are treated as numbered goods to be sold and bought. However, the narrator explains that one of these sheep stands out from the rest. With apparent spontaneity, he decides to buy her after naming her “Missy” (Haverty 24). Although readers might be tempted to regard this naming as an attempt to provide her with a proper name and the potential ethical implications thereafter, William J. Adams states that “colonialism promoted the naming and classification of both people and places, as well as nature, in each case with the aim of control” (24). In other words, the naming of the ewe would respond to a colonial mindset, more interested in controlling her ontology than in building inter-species bridges. Moreover, the implications of “Missy” cannot be easily avoided. 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 readily categorised as “female” and “young.” She becomes a “girl” under his command, anthropomorphising her only to cast her as a young female human instead of as a young female ewe. His interpretation of Missy as a girl is meant to emphasise her youth in comparison to himself. The ewe is interpreted as younger than the human character not only through her name, but also through several descriptions of the nonhuman character, always provided by the narrator. For instance, he explains that “she learned to trust me to depend on me” and that he talked to her “as you would talk to a young child” (Haverty 46). Likewise, in Irish nationalist accounts of the landscape, it “came to be personified as Mother Ireland associated Irish women with passivity, and to this the Catholicism added the figure of the Virgin Mary, imposing humility, chastity and obedience of Irish women” (O’Connor 137). Consequently, despite the ewe’s hybridity and thus lack of “purity,” she is nonetheless conceived as a mirror to the stereotypes of Irish “womanhood” and female “purity,” promoting a dangerous hierarchy in which the fictional ewe is clearly deemed inferior and dependent on him, the adult *rational* Irishman.

Apart from its more direct meaning, “Missy” is not a term free of problematic connotations. The positive sense is rather “affectionate,” which could precisely lead to a loving relational kinship between humans and nonhumans, able to create a kinship

between species (Haraway 162). Whilst it is true that at the beginning of the novel the protagonist treats her "affectionately," that is, attending to her needs and trying to imagine her thoughts (Haverty 45, 47), he despises her soon enough. The transition from an, albeit weak, attempt to regard her materiality to a total disregard of her physically is gradual but undeniable. He hates her physical presence in his house (Haverty 132), he forces drugs on her to sleep (Haverty 232), and he finally murders her with no guilt whatsoever (Haverty 261). The use of "Missy" seems then to suggest not affection but something more similar to "disparaging" or distaste, more and more evident as the novel advances. Martin seems to have an ever-worse attitude towards the ewe, no longer pretending to feel any fondness towards the ewe by the end of the novel. Hence, Missy has been symbolically named and classified by the coloniser Self as female, young, and, consequently, unworthy of individuality.

Raymond Murphy argues that thought since the Enlightenment has been 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" (Murphy 12). Consequently, the acquisition of colonies was accompanied by, and partially enabled by, a profound belief in the possibility of restructuring nature and re-ordering it to serve human needs and desires (Adams 23). The restructuring of nature in Haverty's novel can be spotted in the genetically modified sheep. Missy is a hybrid who blends human and sheep DNA. 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 Donna Haraway advocates for (162-163). 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). However, that does not seem to be the situation readers find in the novel. If the protagonist and narrator did not regard his and Missy's humanness superior to her sheepness, a non-anthropocentric and relational connection could be established between the two characters indeed. When the narrator reflects on her hybridity, he insists on the importance of Missy being "semi-human" but not semi-sheep for, in his own words:

Did 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. (Haverty 98-99; my emphasis)

The same human DNA the narrator regards as making Missy worthy of his attention *cannot* be "female." He is unable to even imagine that the human side of Missy could be "female," even though nothing is said in this regard by her seller. He is so obsessed with this idea of the human DNA being "male" that he fantasises about this "father" and names him "Harold" (Haverty 125). Whilst Missy is named to convey the picture of a "young girl," the father conveys the image of a strong and adventurous man able to go anywhere without having to worry about his kinship. Such construction of a male human/female nonhuman dichotomy, continuously ignoring the material reality of her hybridity, might echo how British colonisers systematically feminised and otherised the colonised Other (DeLoughrey and Handley 27). This might also remind readers of Plumwood's argument

regarding how 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). The mother of the nonhuman protagonist, on the other hand, is barely mentioned and she remains unnamed throughout the novel. The narrator only state that she rejected Miss because she was forced to give birth at the age of two, too young to become a mother even according to her seller (Haverty 24-25). The narrator may insist not only on the defence of the human/nonhuman dualism in Missy but also of gender dichotomies in which the human and superior side would be male, whereas the nonhuman and inferior side would be female. According to Plumwood, this separation is necessary to avoid the main characteristic of the coloniser Self, reason, to be polluted by the inferior Other’s irrational femininity (105). If the coloniser accepted any kind of hybridity or transgression of the boundaries in the coloniser Self/colonised Other, his ontological superiority and actions would be questioned. One of the discursive instruments often used by the coloniser Self to control the colonised Other is mythmaking. According to Moana Jackson, myths help to “justify the status quo by masking the reality or extent of dispossession that shaped the past and present. The myths become an exercise of absolution for the colonizer, and the basis for ongoing denial of the rights of the colonized” (89). The more-than-human character of Missy undergoes a double process of mystification: Irish and Christian folklore, both deeply connected with past and present Ireland. Missy is first directly introduced as a “mythic creature” (Haverty 78). She is likewise described as a creature with no agency whatsoever who depends on the narrator to be “release[d] from her woolly cage and her wrong-shaped skull” (Haverty 99). He elaborates upon the mythical dimension of the ewe character by 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” (Haverty 81). Such excerpt may subtly resemble the hare and other shape-changing characters central in Irish Celtic folklore.<sup>5</sup> According to Potts, the use of such trope could reinforce the Celtic past and its perception of nature as fluid without “fixity in the identity of species” (170). However, as explained in the paragraph above, the hybridity of the nonhuman protagonist is only acknowledged to reinforce a gendered dichotomy. Moreover, there is not one instance in which the ewe “becomes” human apart from her already altered DNA.

Missy is not only constructed as a myth through subtle references to Irish folklore, but also Christian folklore, as she is said to be “The Lamb of God” (Haverty 109). On one occasion, the narrator is bathing her, and he affirms she does not smell like a regular sheep, but as “clouds of incense that the priest swings” (Haverty 102). Instead of smelling like an organic being, she is reduced to a mythical smell that, if the human protagonist really smelled, it would be originated by the shampoo used to clean her, not from her own body. The incense is clearly reminiscent of Christian churches and rituals, in which it is central, and usually used by the priest in charge of the service. The cleaning of the ewe could thus be read not only as her mythification and consequent denial of her material

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<sup>5</sup> See Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s “The Old Woman as Hare: Structure and Meaning in an Irish Legend.”



dimension but also as a means to justify Martin's superiority as her "priest." The mythification of Missy likewise romanticises her. As Adams explains, rationalism justifies capitalism to destroy nature, which is paradoxically turned into a precious romantic construction that further justifies its exploitation (29). Thus, the male historian is narrating and romanticising Missy as a myth instead of as a material sentient being with actual needs and agency. Missy is not only materially otherised and colonised by the naming process, but also by mythification and romanticisation. Therefore, the narrator ends up embodying the British colonising agenda, controlling the ewe's ontology and ethically justifying her oppression as the colonised Other.

The dynamics of domination over the nonhuman character are likewise physically established at the beginning of the novel, when both characters have just met. After the narrator buys her, he is helped by his brother, Pierce, to force her into the van along with other purchased sheep. She is so desperate that she was "pinning to the point of despair for the fellow [sheepman] at the Institute" as an attempt to escape (Haverty 45). One could argue that this beginning, which might resemble an "eviction" from the farm, reproducing how colonised humans have been systematically expelled from their lands by colonisers (Adams 42), was necessary and that their interaction will differ after this initial moment. Yet, there are several instances in which she is physically dominated and forced to act not for her own benefit, but for Martin's. One of the most striking examples could be spotted in an almost pastoral scene featuring the narrator and the ewe. The male character explains that Missy seems to love staying outside the house, isolated from other modified sheep, in "contemplation" of the flowers (Haverty 81). This peaceful and pastoral-like scene is interrupted when he decides so, perhaps responding to the common critique to the pastoral as focused on how the environment affects the human rather than the other way around (Huggan and Tiffin 29). In this sense, the text presents a scene focused on Missy that is explicitly and violently interrupted by the human character, showing how the human affects the nonhuman; in this case, a ewe. Despite Missy's complaints, who "whimpered softly" at the change of place, he locks her in the house. The reason is not that she could be negatively affected by staying outdoors, as no threat is mentioned, but rather that he wants to go to the bar with other men to drink. In the narrator's own words, he "had to keep with [his] usual habits" (Haverty 82). The reason then for the violent interruption of the ewe's scene is that he does not want to leave her free while he cannot control her.

The physical domination of Missy is further elaborated through the use of medication. Being convinced by another male farmer in the village, the narrator tries to dose Ivomec, a medicine to deworm nonhumans, to Missy. As she resists it and glares at him "more in anger than in terror," he feels "outrage" and he "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" (Haverty 68; my emphasis). Moreover, after she pukes it up, he wants to "teach her some lesson" for disobeying him as the dominant—human and male—Self. Given that he can see the terror in Missy's eyes and the vocabulary used to describe the dosing is especially violent—"prised," "stuck," and, more significantly, "shot"—, this scene could suggest a total lack sympathy towards the ewe. The cruel description of this

scene, narrated by the very human who performs it, may likewise indicate that he is mostly interested in asserting his superiority as the human and male Self; when the nonhuman resists, he grows angry and forces the ewe protagonist as if it were a battle he *has to win* and the nonhuman entity, the enemy to be defeated (Haverty 69).

The physical domination of the nonhuman protagonist is also supported by the hierarchical presentation of the human protagonist as her “guardian” or, as he narrates, “[l]ike a patriarch” who indulges her with chocolate treats whenever he sees it appropriate, always “for [her] own good” (Haverty 100-101). The narrator presents himself as a fatherly figure who “knows better” than the more-than-human herself. Just like the Other’s independent agency and value is downgraded or denied (Plumwood 105), the nonhuman protagonist cannot help but heavily rely on the human protagonist. She is so dependant that the main character holds no doubts that she will always forgive any abuse because “she had no one else, good or bad, to depend on, or to forgive” (Haverty 71). He has left no space for Missy to know other humans or other-than-humans. Actually, he acknowledges that “[s]he had little choice, I admit, but to love me” (Haverty 99). The narrator controls the ewe, justified by her otherness as nonhuman and non-male; that is, as “irrational.” Therefore, one cannot but argue that the relationship between the two protagonists is presented as unequal, reproducing the coloniser Self in control of the colonised Other. After having colonised the ewe in abstract terms as “Missy” and a myth, the protagonist shifts the mistreatment of the ewe to the material in order to assert his superiority over the female nonhuman through beatings and isolation to prevent any kind of revolt.

### **Instrumentalisation of the Colonised Other**

As argued in previous paragraphs, Missy is otherised and symbolically colonised, entitling the coloniser Self, Martin, to exploit her. Plumwood argues that nature as a resource is the subordinated Other in systems of economic centrism, such as the Celtic Tiger period, when the novel is set. In economically-centred systems, the coloniser/colonised dualism can be interpreted as the owner/owned division, in which the Self is entitled to own the otherised property (110). In Haverty’s fictional Celtic Tiger Ireland, ewes are key elements in creating a genetically altered sheep market. Missy is first introduced as one of the “new” sheep, who are regularly sold to male Irish farmers. Their modification is not aimed at reducing their suffering in the intensive farms around the island, but to make them more resistant to sickness. This resistance would benefit their human owner: the fewer the number of sick sheep, the greater the economic profit (Haverty 23). The economic exploitation of ewes could be observed in the factory where they are sold. The ewes that are forced to give birth to more sheep are so young that “That young, they’re inclined to reject them [children]. Don’t know what they’re meant to be doing with them. Only young ones themselves” (Haverty 24). Despite their early age, the factory ewes are forced to get pregnant, to breed and produce properties to be sold for their owner’s economic benefit. Perhaps mirroring the colonial justification for exploiting nature, in which “nature allows the best possible use of resources,” an idea progressively

exported to Ireland (Adams 22), farmers and the commercial system in the novel's fictional Ireland justify the exploitation of ewe.

Unlike most modified sheep, the protagonist ewe is, according to her seller, totally useless. The narrator's brother, an experienced farmer, strongly agrees on how buying Missy is economically wasteful (Haverty 25). Nonetheless, she becomes a useful instrument for the human protagonist to achieve his major goal throughout the novel: to get closer to his sister-in-law, Etti. Etti is a regular visitor to the narrator's house, always on the pretext of checking on Missy. At the beginning, both the protagonist and Etti pay attention to the ewe—the protagonist fetches the food the ewe enjoys and Etti pets her when she visits. However, they gradually ignore her the more time they spend together (Haverty 110). Missy's instrumentalisation for this end proves somehow finally successful by the end of the novel when they flee to France. The elopement occurs just after Etti suggests taking Missy to a sanctuary in France, run by a woman named Brigitte Bardot<sup>6</sup> (Haverty 219), in a clear reference to the French activist. The narrator and his sister-in-law decide to take Missy to the sanctuary immediately, following Etti's urge to go "now" (Haverty 219), without telling Etti's husband, Pierce. Although the two human characters insist that the trip to France is not an elopement, but a mission to get Missy to safety, they nonetheless pretend to be a young married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins (Haverty 227). Although one could argue that such a pretense is only for functional purposes, the narrator happily emphasises how they looked "like a young pair at the commencement of their holidays" (Haverty 224). Tellingly, Missy is not mentioned in their description during the journey. Being the male coloniser means to deny the Other's agency, social organisation, and independence of ends, and so to subsume them under the coloniser's ends (Plumwood 105); thus, the human protagonist denies Missy any kind of independence or desire for any end. The narrator simply subsumes her for his own end: to get closer to Etti and justify their guiltless elopement. However, the narrator's plan of elopement is not flawless. If the human characters want to avoid facing the reality of what they are actually doing, that is, eloping and cheating the narrator's brother, Missy must be present to operate as a shield against their moral transgression. Consequently, they are in charge of taking care of the ewe. They, however, dose her sleeping pills so that she does not bother them in their nuptial-like bliss. The first time she is drugged, the narrator fears her death but, as he says, not because he would be saddened by her death, but because if she died "there would be no reason than to drive to Provence in search of Brigitte Bardot" (228-229). The nonhuman character thus seems to be presented as the colonised Other, who is useful insofar as they fulfil the function the coloniser, Martin in Haverty's text, imposes on them (Plumwood 110). Hence, Missy is reduced to the colonised Other,

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<sup>6</sup> This extratextual reference might point to the Foundation Brigitte Bardot. It was established in 1987 to fight for animal rights ('Foundation Organization')A controversial figure, as she has made racist, anti-islam and arguably homophobic comments, she is nonetheless an ongoing widely-known symbol in popular imagery easily spotted by most readers. The intention behind such a reference in Haverty's text might be to highlight how, while the narrator instrumentalises a sheep, activists are fighting for animal rights, efforts crystallising in animal refuges such as the one the character of Etti mentions.

justified by her otherness as nonhuman and non-male, turned into a buffer to avoid the consequences of the moral offence of her coloniser and owner.

The elopement comes to a sudden end when Pierce, Etti's husband Martin's brother, dies in a car accident while driving to France to "fetch [them] back" (Haverty 258). As if mirroring the death of the human protagonist's parents in a car accident, which motivates his return to the village, the sudden death of Pierce puts an end to their elopement, and the illusion provided by the ewe is dispelled. Thus, the two human characters must return to the village to attend the funeral. Taking Missy to the sanctuary would prevent them from attending the funeral of the human character in time. Likewise, since Pierce is already dead and nothing can now shield the eloped couple from the reality of their actions, Missy becomes useless to them. Instead of saving Missy and bringing her to the sanctuary, the nonhuman character receives a deathly dose, ironically echoing the death of Pierce and perhaps the death of the protagonist's parents. The narrator mindfully overdoses and leaves her corpse "under a tree and covered [...] with sheaves of grass," as if this were to cover her and avoid her being eaten by a "voracious farm dog or [a] bird of prey" (Haverty 261). The nonhuman animal character of Missy is first instrumentalised to justify the elopement of the two human characters, only to be disposed of once her function for the humans has expired. Given that the colonised Other can be classified as a "resource" or "waste" depending on the utility to the owner (Plumwood 111), Missy seems to be finally categorised as waste at the end of the novel, reaffirming her "wastefulness" as a failed modified ewe, already suggested at the beginning of the novel. Her utility to her coloniser and owner as a disposable resource is over, and so she is disposed of with no guilt or ethical consequences for her coloniser whatsoever.

Moreover, the murder of the ewe is purposely performed in a way that no physical blood is visible. However, a sacrifice has been made anyway; only this time by an Irishman. Timothy J. White has argued how Ireland shifted from a nationalist community with a strong interest in their Celtic past to a neoliberal consumerism society in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger period (White 91). This way, the text could suggest that the other-than-human in contemporary Ireland is sacrificed during the Celtic Tiger period; this time not by the British, but by the Irish, who are turning the colonising discourse against nonhuman animals and destroying their past, Celtic or Christian, in favour of neoliberalism and capitalism. In this sense, Missy as an "almost" human and "almost" sheep animal may be an echo of contemporary Irishness, as a hybrid identity slowly ignored until the "market" or new Irishness as embodied by Martin sacrifices her. The protagonist, as an Irishman, first colonises and then sacrifices an otherised entity, who might symbolise Irish past, after provoking the death of his brother, who could likewise represent Irish farmers and, implicitly, Irish rural past as well. The foreign coloniser no longer needs to perform the sacrifice; the coloniser-turned-Irish performs it themselves for the market.

## Conclusions

Haverty's novel *One Day as a Tiger* engages in dialogue with the colonial past of the Republic of Ireland. Through the constant interaction between an Irishman and a ewe, the text offers some insightful reflections on how Celtic Tiger Ireland is coming to terms with its status as a former British settlement. Sheep—symbols of both colonial and Celtic Tiger Ireland—Tiger—are revealed in this article as a useful vehicle to explore the role of nonhuman animals in contemporary Ireland. The protagonist ewe is first classified through her name, only to be readily catalogued as the Other in terms of species, gender, and even myth. Physically dominated by the Irishman, the sheep is treated as property to be exploited by the coloniser, Martin, until her usefulness is exhausted. Here, she will be sacrificed, as if mirroring how the British used to sacrifice Irish culture and traditions. This way, the colonial practices seem to turn away from humans inhabiting Ireland and against its nonhuman inhabitants.

This critique does not offer the reader much optimism; however, it does present a warning against the abusive treatment of nonhuman animals in past and contemporary Ireland. Haverty's novel alerts its readers, especially the Irish audience, against mirroring and replicating the colonisation process once applied to them against nonhumans in the Celtic Tiger. Haverty's fictional Ireland is almost a vision of the future and a warning to Irish people of the dangers of falling for the lure of anthropocentrism and rationalism to embrace colonial discourse. The text warns against the murder of Irish past and present, symbolised in the slaughter of the ewe: past, as it is a clear reference to Christian and Celtic shape-shifting myths, and present, as she embodies the constant modernisation and technification of Ireland. Tellingly, just like the shape-shifting legends that imply that the only hope for salvation is radical transformation and that attempts to reject such fluidity only doom its citizens (Potts 170), the text implies that the narrator rejects the blurring of boundaries and, consequently, condemns Ireland under the Celtic Tiger period. To quote Plumwood: "as the human centred-culture of our modern form of rationalism grows steadily more and more remote and self-enclosed, it loses the capacity to imagine or detect its danger" (100), and so this may be the case for contemporary humans inhabiting Ireland.

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