

# 9 Billion People and 82 Billion Ghosts

## An Unapologetic Manifesto on Meat, Memory, Machines, and the Mutilation of Meaning

### Abstract

This essay examines the intersecting systems of speciesism, consumer capitalism, technological exploitation, and educational conformity through a satirical and philosophical lens. Drawing on Jungian psychology, critical theory, and environmental ethics, it interrogates the modern rituals of mass consumption—particularly factory farming—as symbolic and literal violence. The piece critiques the ways in which obedience is manufactured through education, awareness is numbed by digital media, and the Earth itself is mined to sustain a system that depends on amnesia and denial. At its core, it is a call to memory, resistance, and moral imagination.

In the shimmering meat fog of modern civilization—where humans worship screens, lick plastic-wrapped corpses, and chase status like rats with MBAs—there lies an altar soaked in blood and convenience. Eighty-two billion sentient beings. Per year. Gutted, ground, fried, forgotten.

This isn't dinner. It's ritual. It's industrial liturgy—a sacrament offered to the twin gods of Capital and Appetite. We don't slaughter animals anymore. We process product. And the moral carnage of it all? Quietly labeled "natural" and sold in a value pack with a Disney cow printed on it.

Speciesism, you see, is our favorite shadow. Jung would call it the collective repression of the Other—an archetype buried so deep in the psyche that it now squeals from crates beneath our consciousness. The pig is your guilt. The cow, your compassion. The chicken, your silent scream. You just haven't looked directly at them since childhood. You were taught not to.

Because if you really looked—at the conveyor belts of suffering, the chemicals, the endless loops of sterile birth and mechanized death—you'd see not food but a mirror. And in that mirror? Your own capacity for selective empathy, engineered ignorance, and exquisite rationalization.

If aliens replicated our livestock model for humans, we'd call it a dystopian nightmare. Global war crimes. Netflix Original. But dress the system in nostalgic packaging and patriotic slogans, and boom—we call it "family values." This isn't a

## 9 Billion People and 82 Billion Ghosts

food system. It's a necroeconomy. And it thrives precisely because it's built to make you forget what you're doing, while you're doing it.

And forget you do. Through the miracle of compartmentalization, our species has perfected the art of eating trauma while claiming to love animals. "I love dogs," we say, while gnawing on ribs. "I care about the Earth," we say, while devouring bodies raised in methane-swamped torture prisons.

But it's not your fault, right? You've been conditioned. Trained. Programmed. It started young. Remember the picture books with smiling pigs? The petting zoos? The school trips to the farm where you fed the animals, then learned to call them by other names: bacon, beef, nuggets. That's the magic trick. Rename, reframe, remove. Give the corpse a cute name and watch the conscience dissolve.

But behind the scenes, the real wizards are the pharmaceutical corporations. Because these animals—these bio-machines—are not healthy. How could they be? They live in shit. They breathe ammonia. They exist in a state of chronic terror. So we drug them. Not for healing—no. For efficiency. Keep them upright. Keep them fat. Keep them moving down the line until the bolt hits.

Antibiotics. Growth hormones. Sedatives. The animals become walking chemical equations. And when the bacteria evolve into post-antibiotic superbugs? No problem. The same pharma giants who created the crisis will sell us the antidote—at a profit.

We are manufacturing apocalypse one meatball at a time.

And while this atrocity unfolds, what do we do? We scroll. We meme. We binge. The attention economy is not just a distraction—it's a weapon. You don't need to silence the population anymore. Just flood them with noise. Flashy reels. Outrage headlines. Filler content. You become emotionally anemic. Spiritually flatlined. Intellectually sedated.

The attention economy isn't just breaking your focus—it's eating your soul in 15-second loops. Every moral impulse you have is diluted by a thousand shiny things. Factory farming could be trending one minute and gone the next, buried under a dance challenge and a true crime podcast.

Meanwhile, your own capacity to feel deeply is being throttled. You are no longer a person. You are a data node, an engagement metric. The machine doesn't want

## 9 Billion People and 82 Billion Ghosts

you to understand. It wants you to consume. You could protest, but you're late for your sponsored meditation app. You could care, but there's a 12-part docuseries on serial killers who eat bacon too.

And when you try to pull yourself out of the algorithmic swamp and seek wisdom? You land in a university—where ideas are supposed to roam free and challenge power. But instead, you find something else: obedience training for the professionally anxious.

You arrive idealistic. You leave credentialed. And somewhere in between, your soul gets formatted. You learn to follow rubrics. You master deadlines. You become fluent in citation while forgetting how to listen to your inner compass.

Creativity is filed under “extracurricular.” Uncertainty is treated like a virus. Ambiguity is a problem to be solved, not explored. You were born with questions that pulsed like wild stars—and by graduation, you've learned to fear them. The system doesn't want thinkers. It wants replicators. It wants a great memory for facts and a terrible memory for wonder. Intelligence becomes a trivia contest. Genius becomes a standardized score. And curiosity? Just another thing you're told to monetize.

We teach children how to pass exams, not how to endure the unknowable. We churn out minds terrified of contradiction, allergic to mystery. Ambiguity now triggers panic attacks. Paradox now gets flagged as an error. A civilization that cannot bear uncertainty is a civilization that will trade its soul for control—and control always arrives dressed as conformity.

Academia teaches you to question authority—gently. To critique systems—politely. To speak truth to power—on PowerPoint. If you deviate too far? You become a liability. You don't get tenure. You don't get published. You don't get fed.

And then you graduate into the real horror show: late-stage capitalism, where every moment is a transaction and every person is a potential threat to your position. Capitalism doesn't just pit people against each other—it disassembles community and sells the parts. Your co-worker is a rival. Your neighbor is competition. Your worth is measured by your output. Your dreams? Please submit them in spreadsheet form.

## 9 Billion People and 82 Billion Ghosts

Under capitalism, isolation isn't a side effect—it's a feature. You're easier to manage alone. Easier to manipulate when desperate. Easier to blame when you collapse. And so we drift—atomized, exhausted, and docile—too busy fighting each other for scraps to ever notice who owns the table.

And all of this technological horror show runs on something, right? Enter the mining industry, quietly bulldozing the sacred into raw material so we can stream more junk to our hollowed-out psyches. Pristine forests? Strip-mined for lithium. Indigenous lands? Sacrificed to servers. The Earth's marrow pulled out to feed the data centers that keep your algorithm running smooth.

We're not just eating the animals—we're eating the future. We sacrifice mountains for server racks. Rivers for microchips. Every click you make has a carbon footprint and a moral shadow. And what are we building with all this stolen Earth? A digital panopticon. A pleasure prison. A predictive brain-hacking matrix where every feeling is monetized and every desire is shaped.

The technocrats want your neurodata. They want to predict your cravings before you feel them. To manipulate your preferences before you know them. And they're building the infrastructure to do it on the bones of ecosystems that once held spirit, memory, and mystery.

And through it all, the factory farms keep humming. The pigs scream. The chickens rot. The cows weep for their stolen calves. And we—the architects of this grotesque machinery—keep smiling, chewing, scrolling, and numbing ourselves into extinction.

Because we're not monsters. No, we're something far worse: we are willfully unconscious. We have built a civilization on forgetting. We sacrifice awareness to maintain appetite. We choose comfort over coherence. And we do it with full hearts and empty eyes.

But the shadow remains. Buried deep in your psyche is the part that knows. The part that remembers. The part that shudders when a child asks, "Why do we hurt animals?" That's your Jungian inheritance. That's your soul scratching at the walls of your moral prison.

# 9 Billion People and 82 Billion Ghosts

You can ignore it. You can drown it. You can meme it into submission. But it's not going away. It's whispering now. It's warning you. Because the system doesn't need your cruelty. It just needs your silence.

Break it.

Refuse. Remember. Revolt.

Because until we do, every bite is a betrayal. And the planet bleeds quietly beneath our plates.

Richard Dobson

Clara Futura World