

**BIOPOLITICS OVER FARM ANIMALS AND SEXUALIZATION OF MEAT: THE
CASE OF NUSRET'S SEXUALIZED PERFORMATIVE ACTS OF BUTCHERING
MEAT**

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Abstract

Biopolitics Over Farm Animals and Sexualization of Meat: The Case of Nusret's Sexualized Performative Acts of Butchering Meat

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This thesis seeks to explore the ways in which human exceptionalism operates by problematizing the sexualization of the body parts of dead farm animals, namely meat, with the premise of going beyond the binary understanding of human and non-human animals division, as well as the binary gender categories of woman and man. The discussions in this thesis are empirically informed by the production and circulation of Nusret's videos and photographs in which he performs sexualized masculine domination over meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals.

This thesis is built upon the investigation of two main questions. The first question this thesis inquires is what Nusret's sexualized performative engagement with meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals in sexualized ways connotes in terms of human and non-human animals relation of power, gender and sexuality. Acknowledging the contributions of the feminist critique on the sexualisation of meat, I show the limitations of ecofeminist theorist Carol Adams' theoretical concept of *absent referent* through which she explains the permissibility of the production and consumption of meat as a "food" and as a sexual object (Adams, 1990, p. 66). I argue that this concept is not applicable to explain and understand the cases in which violent reality behind meat is spectacted. Instead, I suggest that the permissibility of the meat consumption as a food and as a sexualized object lies in biopolitical anthropocentrism. Examining Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals, I argue that he

represents and reinforces socio-culturally and politically accepted normative masculine domination in his interspecies sexualized relation with meat and/or skinned headless bodies of farm animals. I also show that meat that is sexualized is not always associated with a female body, as it is argued by ecofeminist theorists; rather it sometimes refers to a female body and sometimes signifies a phallus.

The second question that this thesis inquires is how the production and circulation of Nusret's videos, and his performative citational repetition visuals on international (social) media reiterate the power relations of species, gender, and sexuality. I argue that viewing the sexualized violent masculine domination over meat, which is imbedded in Nusret's videos, as entertaining and pleasurable – rather than mourning after those farm animals – reveals the *un grievability* of farm animals' lives. Keeping in mind the feminization of mourning, I claim that considering the lives of farm animals not *grievable life* (Butler, 2016), but *deadling life* (Stanescu, 2013) indicates the gender and sexuality aspect of (disavowal of) mourning after farm animals. I also suggest that the circulation of the performative citational repetitive videos of Nusret bolsters the sexualized masculine domination.

Keywords: Sexualization of meat, human exceptionalism, sexuality, performativity, citational repetition

Declaration of Original Research and the Word Count

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 21875 words

Entire manuscript: 24506 words

Signed _____ (*Didem Salgam*)

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*[H]e must put an end to the narcissism on which he relies
in order to imagine that he is different from the other
“animals.” (Fanon, 1967, p. 22)*

*To all nameless and faceless farm animals whose bodies are
violently consumed for the joy of human animals ...*

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

As a self-identified feminist and vegan woman, I have been problematizing androcentrism and anthropocentrism for a couple of years. The sexualization of meat as a scholarly inquiry came to me during the course *Gender, Sexuality and The Non/Human* that I had taken in the first term of my MA education in Gender Studies at the Central European University in 2016. Through this course, I became acquainted with the queer and feminist animal studies which have opened a new window for me to look at the human exceptionalism in general, and sexualization of meat in particular, from a different angle. At about the same time, I came across Nusret's videos and photographs (posts) on social media. Nusret, a self-identified man, is a young butcher and founder-owner of a meat restaurant chain that has branches in Turkey and in the United Arab Emirates. He posts his videos and photographs, in which he performs sexualized acts of butchering, cooking, and serving a meat and/or with a skinned headless body (parts) of farm animals, on his official social media accounts such as Instagram and Twitter, and on his restaurant's official YouTube Channel.¹ (Detail information on Nusret will be provided later in this chapter) This incidence led me to focus on his performatively sexualized engagement with the body parts of (dead) farm animals by probing the sexualization of "meat" regarding the power relations of human animals to non-human animals, gender and sexuality. In this thesis, I use "meat" and "body parts of dead farm

¹ His official Instagram and Twitter accounts are open accounts which means everyone have access to see his posts. His official Instagram and Twitter accounts and his restaurant's official YouTube Channel can be accessed through the following links, https://www.instagram.com/nusr_et/?hl=en https://twitter.com/nusr_ett?lang=en <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9EthulvkOeU-vIFDuDu20w>

animals” interchangeably, because I would like to remember and remind that what is called as “meat” is actually a body part of farm animals who were once alive, but killed and fragmented into pieces for the advances of human animals.

In the following sections, I will first lay out my research questions. Second, I will provide a background information about Nusret by also touching on the socio-economic background of him, and his becoming a transnational phenomenon. Lastly, I will explain the methodology that I adopt in this thesis.

1.1. Description of Research Problems and Question(s)

This thesis is built upon the problematic crux of the production and circulation of Nusret’s videos and photographs in which he performs sexualized violent masculine domination over body parts of dead farm animals, and the consideration of his acts an entertaining and pleasurable by some people. My main objective in this thesis is to problematize the ways in which human exceptionalism generates by focusing on the power that operates over the body parts of farm animals. I question the permissibility and ethical and political implications of first, Nusret’s performing a sexualized masculine domination over meat; second, the production and circulation of both Nusret’s own posts and his imitation videos and photographs, in which people from different countries imitate/repeat the acts of Nusret, as a source of entertainment and pleasure- in terms of human and non-human animal relations of power, gender, and sexuality. I also intend to investigate several minor issues that will contribute the examination of the main research question.

Ecofeminist theories on meat production and consumption focus on the resemblance between the sexualisation of meat and sexual exploitation of women by pointing out that meat is represented in sexualized and feminized ways that it signify a woman’s body (Adams, 1990, 1991, 2004,

2015; Adams & Donovan, 1995; Denys, 2011; Dunayer, 1995, 1995; Halley, 2016). I acknowledge the contributions of these feminist critiques on our understanding of the production, consumption and sexualisation of meat. However, I do not consider the sexualisation of meat simply and only related to the sexual exploitation of women. On the contrary, as I will discuss in the third chapter, meat is sexualized in a way that it sometimes *seems* (my emphasis) to refer to a woman body, and sometimes signifies a phallic figure as we see in the case of Nusret. With that said, I query how Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat can help us to understand interspecies sexuality, as well as sexuality among human animals.

Furthermore, Carol Adams, a leading figure in the vegan/vegetarian ecofeminist theories on meat production and consumption, explains the permissibility of consumption and sexualisation of meat through her theoretical concept of *absent referent*, which refers to disappearance of animals and their disassociation from meat through the intentionally disguised and hidden process of meat production (Adams, 1990, pp. 66–67, 2010, pp. 303–304). I claim that *absent referent* as a theoretical concept is not applicable to understand and explain cases, in which despite the spectacle of violent reality behind meat, people can still enjoy consuming meat both as food and as a sexualized object. Hence, I seek to find the permissibility of acting and viewing the sexualized masculine domination over meat as entertaining and pleasurable by probing the ways in which human exceptionalism operates.

Biopolitical discussion in critical animal studies show that human exceptionalism generates at the expense of and through the instrumentalisation and devaluation of the lives of (some) non-human animals (Stanescu, 2013; Taylor, 2010; Wolfe, 2012). The critical animal studies theorist James Stanescu, remarking the ethical, political and feminized meaning of mourning, states that human

animals consume meat by disavowing see *grievability* of the lives of farm animals (Stanescu, 2012). Following above discussed arguments, I ask how the circulation of Nusret's videos as a source of entertainment and pleasure – by disavowing see the *grievability* of the lives of farm animals and by disavowing mourn after them – can shed a light upon our understanding of the reiteration of power relations of species, gender, and sexuality.

Lastly, as Butler argues regarding the constitution of gender, it is through the citational repetition that acts gain socio-cultural meanings and are naturalized (Butler, 1988, 1993, 1995). However, she also points out the possibility of subverting the naturalness and strength of “original” through the parody (Butler, 1990, pp. 176–177). With this in mind, I query how power relations of human/non-human, gender and sexuality are reiterated through the performative citational repetition of Nusret's acts by different repeaters.

1.2. Who is Nusret?

Nusret, a famous, young, masculine well-groomed man citizen of Turkey, is a butcher and a founder-owner of a steak house chain in Turkey and in United Arab Emirates.² He was born as the fourth child of the working class poor family with five children.³ He had suffered from poverty for years. He dropped out from school after compulsory 5-year primary education because of the financial difficulties, and started to work in different sectors in Istanbul for several years. When he was 12 years old, he ended up working in a butcher shop as a tyro. His wish for becoming a

² He has opened six restaurants in Istanbul, Ankara and Bodrum (very touristic town in the West coast of Turkey) and two restaurants in Dubai and Abu Dhabi since 2010. More information about his restaurants and services can be obtained from the webpage of the restaurant chain, <http://www.nusr-et.com.tr/en/home.aspx#home>

³ The information about Nusret that I provide is obtained from his interviews, and articles about him.

butchery and affinity to meat had started at that times. After working several years, he went to Argentina and then to the US to learn the intricacies of butchering and cooking a steak. His visa application to the US was rejected three times, and he got the visa in his fourth shot. He returned back to Istanbul with the aim of opening his own restaurant. In 2010, through the cooperation with a well-known Turkish businessman Ferit Şahenk, he opened his first restaurant at one of the most prestigious places of Istanbul in 2010.⁴ Since then he has gradually and very significantly increased his wealth and become known because of the quality and high prices of meat he sells in Turkey. Accordingly, his career in butchery has brought him social, economic and symbolic capital; hence an upward mobility in terms of social and economic class.

His past lived experiences – the financial difficulties that he had suffered, his endeavour to develop his butchering skills to become a known good butcher despite (and maybe to overcome) his financial difficulties, and his gaining an international name despite his coming from a working class; therefore, his becoming a somebody – is meaningful in understanding his self-representation of masculinity. It goes without saying that, changes in one's class and social status lead to the reformation of one's *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) through which one portrays one's practices including their practice of masculinities (genders). Besides, income and how it is used and represented has gained more importance through the outcomes of neo-liberalism regarding the representation of masculinity (genders) in Turkey just like many other societies (Özyeğin, 2015). I think Nusret articulates his socially recognition as a result of his successful career in butchery through performing a masculine domination over meat.

⁴ Ferit Şahenk, a highly educated businessman, and the chairman of Doğu Holding in Turkey. He is ranked among the richest persons in Turkey and in world.

He posts his videos and photographs in which he encounters with meat and/or (body parts of) skinned headless farm animals on his Instagram account by putting specific captions for them by also using some Turkish idioms. These captions mostly have speciesist and sexist meanings that connote his superiority, mastery, domination, and his manliness. Interestingly Nusret perceives/represents himself as a meat artist, and the ways in which he selects, butchers, cooks and serves meat as an art of meat. This is his answer to those people who question his “different” and “interesting” style of butchering. He does not hide his odd affinity to meat and farm animals. In one of his interviews, he stated that “Just like how men say *she must be mine* when they see a beautiful woman, I feel in the same way when I see a calf” (my emphasis).⁵ He also says that he has neither time nor space for a romantic relationship with a woman because he gives all his time and passion to meat. Accordingly his statements, alongside his sexualized engagement with meat, show that he has an emotional and/or sexual attraction to meat or farm animals to be consumed as food.

Nusret has been known by many people for a couple of years and is becoming more famous in Turkey in terms of the “quality” meat that he sells, but not due to his videos. He has gained an international fame, especially in the Western countries in 2017 through his sentiment and sexualized engagement with meat. He has become a social phenomenon both in Turkey and in abroad.⁶ Many people around the world including some notable people such as American singer Bruno Mars have started to re-post his photos, videos and the comments related to him on different

⁵ This quote is taken from an article based on his interview that he gave in 2012. The article is accessible through the following link, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/etlerin-efendisi-19579308> The quote is translated by me. The original version is “Erkekler nasıl güzel bir kadın geçerken “Bu benim olsun” der, beğenisini belli eder, ben de bir danayı gördüğümde öyle hissederim...”

⁶ He has 7, 5 million followers on Instagram and 218 thousand followers on Twitter.

social media channels with the hashtag of “SaltBae”.⁷ Initially there was a significant silence around and about Nusret’s sexualized engagement with meat in Turkey. Only after his becoming more and more famous as a result of the circulation of his posts has started to break this silence in Turkey in 2017. Recently a limited number of critiques from animal right advocates, journalists and celebrities were posed against Nusret. Nonetheless not all these critiques explicitly pointed out his sexualizing meat, rather they said what he is doing is inappropriate, perverted. Only one feminist vegan activist explicitly points out the connection between Nusret’s sexualizing meat and the devaluation of (dead or alive) animals and women. In *Meat-Corpse-Nusret (Et-Ceset-Nusret)*, Cansu Özge Özmen states that Nusret’s sexualized dominating engagement with meat and farm animals represents the oppressive attitude toward non-human animals and women, and reinforces the inferior position of animals and women in Turkey.⁸

1.3. Methodological Discussion

The discussions in this thesis are empirically firstly based on Nusret’s posts on his Instagram account and second, his parody videos and photographs that are performatively produced by people from different countries while repeating Nusret’ sexualized acts of butchering, cooking and serving meat in different contexts. I also refer to online articles, and TV shows that mention Nusret and/or share his posts. By adopting a qualitative research method, I employed a content analysis research technique to analyse i) Nusret’s own videos and photographs with their captions and

⁷SaltBae is composed of salt and bae. Bae, which is the abbreviation of baby, is much more used in the sense of “Before Anyone Else”. The Salt part is originated in his salt-adding pose.

⁸ The article was published on the *Hayvanların Aynasında İnsan (Human in the Mirror of Animals)*, a vegan and anti-speciesist activist collective blog, on May 20, 2017. The article can be accessed through the following link, <https://hayvanlarinaynasinda.wordpress.com/2017/05/20/et-ceset-nusret/>

comments under his posts; and ii) the parody videos and photographs of Nusret that are performatively created and posted by different people on social media. I have tried to select the most widely circulated videos of Nusret in which he encounters with meat and/or skinned headless bodies of farm animals in sexualized ways. Regarding the selection process of parody videos and the comments on these posts, I have tried to include parody videos and photographs of Nusret that are produced by people both from Turkey and from other countries.

I have spent a lot of time looking at Nusret's own posts and comments under his posts on his official Instagram account and his restaurant's official YouTube Channel; and parody videos and photographs as well as the comments under those posts that are circulated on social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. I must say, as a self-identified vegan feminist, it was quite a difficult task for me to watch these videos again and again, to read the comments and to write down what I see in these videos. There were times when I felt a disgust at a gut level and anger that pulled me away from my PC and from working on my thesis time to time. But this feeling also has made me keep going and writing this thesis.

During the times when I decided to write my thesis on Nusret's sexualized encounter with meat, he was not famous as much as he is now; at least he was not known in international level. As he has gained more fame in international level, people from different countries have started to performatively produce and post his parody videos and photographs. This broke the silence around his sexualized engagement with meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals. As a result, my initial research scope has been modified and widen in a way that it would probe not only Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat but also the circulation of his own posts and production of parody videos and photographs on international level. Hence all these uncontrollable changes

in the social, ethical and political context of this thesis have affected the writing process of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although the issue of the human animals and non-human animals' relations of power in general and the production and consumption of meat in particular has been debated predominantly on activist level in Turkey, it has not appeared in scholarly discussions in Turkey as much as it has been discussed in the western academic field. Yet, there are still a few scholarly discussions including articles written in Turkish and several notable articles and books translated to Turkish. Among those translated articles and books about the humans' relation to non-human animals, and the production and consumption of meat, there are significant western academic feminists works. For instance, Carol Adams' famous book, titled *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, her article titled, *Ecofeminism and Eating Animal*, and Josephine Donovan's article titled *Animal Rights and Feminist Theory* have been translated into Turkish and published in peer-reviewed journals.

In this chapter, I will first refer to both scholarly and activist discussions on the relations of human animals to non-human animals, the production and consumption of meat, and the sexualisation of meat in Turkey. By doing so, I will be able to provide an insightful picture of the socio-cultural context in Turkey regarding the human animals and non-human animals relations, and the sexualisation of meat. Second, I will review the western scholarly feminist critiques on the production and consumption of meat and the sexualisation of meat. My aim in reviewing the feminist critiques on this issue is first showing the ways in which these feminist discussions contribute to frame my perspective in understanding the sexualisation of meat; and second presenting the limitations of these existing feminist critiques on the production, consumption and

sexualisation of meat. Then I will move on to the biopolitical discussions on (farm) animals to draw the theoretical perspective that I adopt in this thesis. Lastly, I will elaborate the theories of interspecies sexuality and performativity to show the ways in which these theories frame my theoretical lens to understand and explain first the sexualized performative acts of Nusret while butchering, cooking, and serving meat and the production; and second the circulation of Nusret's imitation videos and photographs in which people from different countries performatively repeat Nusret with a difference.

Having reviewed the academic resources in Turkey, I have found very few studies on power relations of human and non-human animals and/or meat consumption, and only one of which was written through a feminist perspective. In *If the First Cultural Material Was a Carrier Bag: Construction of scientific narratives at the intersectionality between masculinity and meat-eating*, Ezgi Burgan probes the ways in which science uses the intertwined relationship between masculinity and meat eating by looking at the issue with a critical feminist lens.⁹ She outlines three scientific narratives -“anthropological narrativization”, “naturalist narrativization” and “Euro-centralist narrativization-”, related to human subject, and she points out the association between meat eating, masculinity and these scientific narratives (Burgan, 2015, p. 43).

Regarding the human animals and non-human animals relations, animal rights is another issue that is scholarly discussed in Turkey. In *Non-Human Animals and Justice*, Ezgi Saritaş focuses on the concept of justice within the framework of animal rights and animal rights movement (Saritaş, 2015). She argues that the notion of rights, as an anthropocentric concept, has been defined based

⁹ This article was published on December 2015, in *the Fe Journal: Feminist Critique*, which is one of leading feminist journals in Turkey.

on the ends and interests of human animals. Therefore, the concept of right is not adequate and applicable for animal rights. She also argues that the focal meaning attributed to the concept of right bolsters the division between human animals and non-human animals. Although this study underlines the cruelty in animal farming (production of meat) by relating it to the law and justice concepts, it does not refer to feminist critiques on meat production and consumption

The discussion on meat production and consumption on activist level is wider than the scholarly discussions in Turkey. Veganism, vegetarianism and ethical values toward non-human animals are highly ranked among the mostly discussed issues. *Veganism: Morals, Politics and Struggle* is the first Turkish book written on veganism and animal exploitation in Turkey.¹⁰ Along the similar lines with the scholarly discussions in international literature, Kalkandelen agrees that the exploitation of animals is related to other discriminatory ideologies such as sexism and racism, yet the authors did not explicitly refer to the idea that meat production and consumption is related to violence against women. She also argues that exploitation of animals, animal right movement and veganism have not been recognized as a political struggle field in Turkey just like the ways in which struggle for women's rights and against heterosexist were not appreciated by leftist men a couple of decades ago in Turkey (Kalkandelen & Başkent, 2013).

In *Gaia* journal, there are several short articles about the exploitation of animals and production and meat consumption and dairy production.¹¹ "Training" and usage of a famous monkey, named

¹⁰ Original title of the book is *Veganizm: Ahlakı, Siyaseti ve Mücadelesi*. Translation is done by me. The book was published as an e-book on September 2013 and it is completely based on the interview between vegan activist Zühal Kalkandelen and Can Başkent.

¹¹ The Gaia Journal is an online journal that publishes articles and news about wide range of issues such as environment, human rights, health and life, and culture and arts. Website of the journal can be accessed through the following link, <https://gaiadergi.com/>

Charli in a Turkish TV series for years, the severe conditions of female cows in dairy farms, eating meat are among the issues that were given place in this journal.¹² In another political and activists websites, there are also few texts that probe the relationship between veganism/vegetarianism and feminism. For instance, there is a collective blog named, *Vegan Feminists: For the liberation of women, animal and nature* which, as stated on their website, aims to uncover the connected oppression and exploitation of women, animal and nature under the interlocking power relations of patriarchy, heterosexism and capitalism.¹³ Henceforth, the existing activist discussions about the power relations of human animals to non-human animals, and meat consumption in activist level in Turkey acknowledge the resemblance between the exploitation of animals for several ends and pleasures of human animals and oppression of women in society.

To my best knowledge, the abovementioned studies are the only scholarly and activist works about human animals and non-human animals relations and meat consumption in Turkey. The issue of sexualisation of meat as a scholarly inquiry has not been discussed in academic level in Turkey. Besides, the quantity of the academic studies and fewness of the issues discussed in these works indicate that there is a significant lack in the concerned literature on Turkey. Hence, as a young transnational academician, who was born and had lived in Turkey for 28 years, I am looking at the issue of the sexualisation of meat in case of Nusret through the lenses of the western academic discussions, by also benefitting my insider position.

¹²The links of the articles respectively, <https://gaiadergi.com/ana-akim-medyanin-kolelestirdigi-yasamlardan-yalnizca-biri-sempanze-carli/> <https://gaiadergi.com/inek-neler-oldugunu-anlayana-kadar-korkudan-agladi/> <https://gaiadergi.com/gida-hakkindaki-gercekler-tabagindaki-yuz/> <https://gaiadergi.com/inek-cocugunu-olduren-otobus-surucusunu-ne-unuttu-ne-affetti/>

¹³ The original Turkish name of the blog is Vegan Feministler: Kadınların, hayvanların ve doğanın özgürlüğü için. The translation is done by me. To access the blog, <http://veganfeministler.blogspot.hu/>

2.1. Feminist Criticism on the Production and Consumption of Meat

Meat production and consumption, which is one of the ways in which non-human animals are exploited by human animals for their diverse ends and pleasures, has been criticized by many feminist and queer scholars for different and sometimes overlapping reasons. Environmental issues, the unproportionate distribution of food in the world because of globalized animal farming, individual and public health problems, and animal right advocacy (or ethical values for non-human animals) are the main concerns of the feminist and queer theorist who go against the production and consumption of meat. Since the core concern of this thesis is the sexualisation of body parts of farm animals, as well as the division between human animals and non-human animals, I will focus on the feminist and queer discussions on the meat production and consumption, and particularly on the sexualisation of meat.

The issue of the sexualization of meat has been predominantly discussed from an ecofeminist perspective among feminist scholars. Ecofeminist researchers who deal with this topic have followed the arguments of activist ecofeminist theorist Carol Adams by utilizing her theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Carol J. Adams, has gone against the meat production and consumption, and violence against non-human animals since the first publication of her well-known book, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, in 1990. Adams states that the exploitation of factory animals is closely and structurally related to the violence against women, especially in the form of pornography and prostitution (Adams, 1990). Adams' arguments have formed a theoretical, ethical, and political ground for scholarly studies in the field of feminist discussions on meat production and consumption and violence against non-human

animals. Adams explains meat production and consumption and the sexualisation of meat through her theoretical concept of *absent referent*. It refers to the ways in which non-human animals who/that were once alive become absent when they are objectified, slaughtered, fragmented and transformed into pieces of meat, to be consumed as food (Adams, 1990, p. 66).

Adams explained three ways in which non-human animals are turned into absent referents (1990, pp. 66–67, 2010, pp. 303–304). First, animals become literally absent when they are transformed into a piece of meat. Second, animals become absent referent on linguistic level: other terms rather than “animal” are used while talking and referring to pieces of killed non-human animals’ bodies to be consumed. For instance, instead of “animal”, or “dead animal”, *meat as a mass term* is used by meat/corpse eaters to forget that what they are eating is a dead animal (Adams, 2015, p. 27). Lastly, non-human animals become absent referent through the usage of metaphors that are directly related to animals to describe the experiences of human animals. To put in a nutshell, it is *absent referent* that separates meat eaters from non-human animals that they eat, and disassociates meat on one’s plate and animal who/that was once alive. Hence, *absent referent* implies the separateness between non-human animals – alive being – and meat – the end product – due to the cruel (hidden) farming, slaughtering, butchering and fragmenting process.

Through the concept of *absent referent* Carol Adams links the process of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption of animals to the sexual violence against women, particularly pornography and prostitution (Adams, 1990, 2004). Regarding the sexualisation of non-human animals and meat, Adams claims that sexualized and feminized women image is an *absent referent* in many media representations and advertisement of meat (Adams, 1990, 2004, 2010). To illustrate her argument, she suggests that there are erotic connotations in the images of the

slaughtering animals, and in these connotations women are the *absent referent* (p. 68). Adams also points out that meat advertisements and popular culture affirm the interconnection between the oppression of women and animals in the context of the United States (Adams, 1990, pp. 13–14). In other words, in advertisements animal bodies and meat to be consumed as food are presented in such ways that they are femininized and sexualized. Hence, sexualisation of body parts of dead non-human animals to be consumed as food by human meat eaters is associated with the idea that both meat and female body are to be consumed for pleasure and joy. This is done through “dominance, subordination, degradation, power and submission” (Denys, 2011, p. 46).

In a similar line with Adams’s arguments, many other scholars also have acknowledged the interconnection between the production and consumption of meat and oppression of women in society (Ali, 2015; Brown, 2016; Denys, 2011; Halley, 2016). For instance, in *Muslims and Meat Eating: Vegetarianism, Gender and Identity*, Kecia Ali, focusing on a Muslim community in the US, argues that there is a parallelism between subordination of non-human animals and that of women (Ali, 2015, p. 276). She also states that properly covered female bodies and properly slaughtered animals are integral signifiers of Muslim identity that sustains hierarchal and patriarchal dominance of men over women and animals.¹⁴ Hence, the argument that the oppression of animals by humans and the subordination of women to men also applies to and is acknowledged in non-western contexts.

¹⁴ Animals that are categorized as halal (such as cows, sheep, camel, chicken, goats) by the Islamic laws, must be slaughtered according to the Islamic rules. The butcher must be pubescent (preferably man) Muslim and must say “in the name of God – bismillah” before slaughtering.

While animal flesh (meat) to be consumed as food is associated with woman and femininity, butchering and meat eating are linked to masculinity, virility and manhood (Adams, 1990, 2004; Brown, 2016; Halley, 2016; Luke, 2007; Rothgerber, 2012). In *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals* Brian Luke examines hunting, religious sacrifice, meat production, and vivisection in order to reveal the connection between meat and masculinity. He argues that the association of meat with men and masculinity originated in hunting, which is mostly accepted as a heterosexual man's activity (Luke, 2007, p. 99). He states that hunting supports the "predatory heterosexuality" image in the western context (Luke, 2007, p. 82). In a similar line, by looking at the hunting activities of the Men's Ministries in the US and Australia context Joseph Gelfer points out that hunting, butchering, and eating meat is highly associated with manhood and construction of masculinity; in fact, those men who cannot butcher are emasculated (Gelfer, 2013, p. 85). Accordingly butchering and eating meat stand as a crucial component of the constitution of masculine manhood.

So far, I have laid out the feminist critiques and discussions on the meat production and consumption, and the sexualisation of meat that are in line with the ecofeminist Carol Adams' thesis. Now, I turn to the feminist and queer critiques against Carol Adams' argument about the interconnection between the exploitation of non-human animals (especially for meat production and consumption) and violence against women, especially pornography and prostitution. Then, I will explain the limitations of the theoretical and conceptual framework of Carol Adams, specifically her concept of *absent referent*, to understand the ways in which Nusret exercises a sexualized dominance over meat and the usage of his videos as a source of entertainment.

In *Sex, Work, Meat: the feminist politics of veganism*, Carrie Hamilton acknowledges the importance of Adams' work but challenges her argument about the relatedness of violence against animals and violence against women through pornography and prostitution (Hamilton, 2016). Hamilton states that Adams' theorization of the comparison of violence against *other-than-human* and violence against women is theoretically and evidentially weak for the following reasons. First, Adam's thesis is based on the binary construction of woman and man categories: "men are consumers of flesh—literal and representational—while women and animals are objectified and consumed" (2016, p. 115). Second, Adam's work is anti-pornography and anti-sex work; therefore it silences and excludes sex workers as subjects by also disregarding their agencies in diverse conditions (2016, pp. 116–118). Lastly, Hamilton finds Adams' theory inadequate to analyze and understand the particularity of experiences of diverse species under different contexts because Adams tries to understand experiences of animals through that of women in the context of the United States (2016, p. 116).

Similar to Hamilton, Maneesha Deckha in *Toward a Postcolonial, Posthumanist Feminist Theory: Centralizing Race and Culture in Feminist Work on Nonhuman Animals*, criticizes the vegetarian ecofeminist analysis of the oppression and exploitation of non-human animals since they take women as a homogenous and undifferentiated social category (read as "universal woman of White western feminist theory"), and focus on gender as a primary unit of analysis by leaving other social categories and power relations such as race and culture out (Deckha, 2012, p. 529-530). She states Western based theories on human and non-human animals relations which primarily focus on gender category fail to see that meat eating does not necessarily always form the hegemonic masculinity. Hence, she argues for the inclusion and acknowledgement of race and culture power relations into the analysis of oppression of animals (Deckha, 2007, 2012).

Hitherto, I have provided the feminist critiques on meat production and consumption by also remarking the association between meat, meat eating, femininity and masculinity, as well as the counter arguments to these perspectives. The existing studies on the meat production and consumption provide a critical insight to examine the link between gender, sexuality and meat, particularly the close association between butchering, meat-eating and masculinity. I benefit from these studies to understand and explain the ways in which Nusret represents his masculinity through his sexualized encounter with meat. However, in my thesis I will not adopt the theoretical and conceptual framework of Carol Adams, specifically *absent referent*, to analyse the ways in which Nusret's sexualized performative acts of butchering, cooking, and serving meat and the usage of his videos as a source of entertainment. I think the concept of *absent referent* is not applicable to explain the cases in which humans sexualize the body parts of dead non-human animals and consume meat as a food although they witness and/or involve in the whole cruel and bloody process of slaughtering and fragmenting. The case of Nusret is one of those cases that cannot be understood and explained through the concept of *absent referent*. Because, Nusret witnesses and involves in the whole process of feeding, slaughtering, fragmenting the non-human animals who/that are to be killed, and to be consumed as food. Besides his posts also show these processes, thus viewer of these posts also can see the spectacle of butchering behind the meat. Accordingly, despite the spectacle of butchering, some people use these videos as a source of entertainment and pleasure. That is to say, I think there is a need for another theoretical and conceptual tool to understand and explain the cases such as Nusret's case in which the referent between meat and the non-human animals exists. I think this can be grasped through the queries of biopolitics over farm animals. This is why I aim to go beyond the feminist critiques on meat production and consumption and deploy biopolitics theories to examine the sexualized engagement

of Nusret with the body parts of dead farm animals. So, now I turn to biopolitical discussions on non-human animals.

2.2. Biopolitical Discussion on Animals and Meat Consumption

The distinction between human animals and non-human animals (human exceptionalism, anthropocentrism) has been central to the discussions of biopolitics (Stanescu, 2013, p. 135). Biopolitics (one of the central concepts of power theories) was developed by Michel Foucault. For Foucault, biopolitics, which is a new technology of power that emerged at the end of eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century, is “the right to make live and to let die” (Foucault, 2003, p. 241). Unlike the right of sovereign power, which is “the right to take life or let live”, biopolitics objects to foster the life of alive humans as population (Foucault, 2003, p. 241).

The concept was initially developed to analyse the operations of power among humans but not between species. Power relation of human animals to non-human animals has been discussed by modifying different theoretical and conceptual frameworks by various authors. To my best knowledge, the most common used ones are as follows: Agamben’s *bare life*, Butler’s *precarious life*, Walter Benjamin’s *mere life* and Balibar’s *disposable life*. Importantly none of these theorists developed their conceptual tools to discuss human and animal relations of power, but biopolitics *over* and *of* the lives of human beings in different socio-political and historical contexts. Nonetheless, critical animal studies have adopted and incorporated the biopolitics theories for the discussions of animal studies to examine the relation between humans and non-human animals.¹⁵

¹⁵ Providing the full and complete list of the biopolitics discussions in animal studies is not feasible, yet I would like to refer to those I have come across throughout the ongoing work of my thesis. Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*;

Stanescu argues that, despite the fruitfulness of biopolitical theories on animals, they are not sufficient to grasp the realities and horrors of factory farms and meat production and consumption, because these theories are exclusively based on the fears and horrors of human animals (Stanescu, 2013, p. 136). Thanatopolitics over humans is also different than that over animals because slaughtering and butchering of farm animals is not just killing them as it is in the case of humans, but rather it is ending a life to produce corpses to be consumed as food by humans (Stanescu, 2013, p. 153). In other words, in the case of thanatopolitics over humans, corpses of humans are disposed, whereas in the case of thanatopolitics over farm animals, killing is the technique for the production of meat as a commodity to be sold, bought, cooked, served and eaten. In fact, in the case of Nusret, lives of farm animals are not simply reduced to pieces of meat, a commodity, to be consumed as food by humans, but body parts of those dead farm animals are butchered and fragmented in sexualized ways and used as a source of entertainment. Accordingly criticizing the inefficiency of the existing biopolitical concepts to understand the cases of animals in factory farms, Stanescu suggests another concept, *deading life*, for a better analysis of animals in factory farms (Stanescu, 2013, p. 148). *Deading life* “is a thought of life that is not life, life that is not living. It is a sense of life meant as pure production, pure use-value” (Stanescu, 2013, p. 151). This

Chrulaw, *Managing Love and Death at the Zoo: The Biopolitics of Endangered Species Preservation*; Clark, *Ecological Biopower, Environmental Violence Against Animals, and the “Greening” of the Factory Farm*; Cole, *From “Animal Machines” to “Happy Meat”? Foucault’s Ideas of Disciplinary and Pastoral Power Applied to “Animal-Centred” Welfare Discourse*; Holloway et al., *Biopower, Genetics and Livestock Breeding: (re)constituting animal populations and heterogeneous biosocial collectivities*; Stanescu, *Species Trouble: Judith Butler, Mourning, and the Precarious Lives of Animals*; Stanescu, *Beyond Biopolitics: Animal Studies, Factory Farms, and the Advent of Deading Life*; Taylor, *Foucault and Critical Animal Studies: Genealogies of Agricultural Power*; Taylor, *Foucault and the Ethics of Eating*; Wadiwel, *Cows and Sovereignty: Biopower and Animal Life*; Wolfe, *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*

leads me to consider the following question: which (human and non-human) animals do deserve political and ethical treatment during their life and after death?

In *Species Trouble: Judith Butler, Mourning, and the Precarious Lives of Animals*, Stanescu argues that humans mourn after some beings, some human animals, but not after all non-human animals. Rather, as he says, we, humans, cut them, put them into the grocery shelves, sell them, buy them, cook them, and eat them (Stanescu, 2012, p. 568). Here I take what Stanescu states in his article further, and I claim that, it is not just about and limited to not mourning after animals, and to eating them, but we also use the body parts of dead animals for several kinds of our pleasure and entertainment, as it can be seen in the videos of Nusret. Body parts of dead farm animals are butchered, cooked, and served in sexualized ways; in fact, this spectacle of sexualized butchering, cooking, and serving meat is deployed as tool for sexual advances of humans: Nusret represents and reinforces his dominant masculinity through his sexualized butchering acts. His sexualized performative acts of fragmenting body parts of dead farm animals are re-presented as a source of entertainment through the circulation of his videos. What is being done to those nameless and faceless animals is considered entertaining and pleasurable by some people. People who do not value the lives of farm animals and who refuse to mourn after them (Stanescu, 2012, p. 568). Moreover, seeing animals as a source of piece of a meat to be possessed and used for the ends and *pleasure* (my insertion) of human animals is an objectification of animals which leads to (the legitimization of) the exploitation of and violence against animals (Cochrane, 2010, p. 120).

To my best knowledge, moreover, most of the biopolitical discussions in animal studies have focused on the *living* non-human animals: how power regulates the lives and bodies of them to foster the human exceptionalism at the expense of their lives. However, the domination and

exercise of power over non-human animals does not only operate while they are living, but also, as I just mentioned above, their dead bodies continue to be subject to several forms of power mechanisms and domination after they are killed, especially after being slaughtered for meat production and consumption. Concretely speaking, their dead bodies are hooked, butchered, fragmented, transformed, sold, shelved, frozen, bought, cooked, and eaten by and for human animals. The sexualisation of meat, the very subject of this thesis, is one of the ways in which power regulates the bodies of dead non-human animals, even after they are killed. This is directly and closely linked to human exceptionalism which is one of the main discussions in biopolitics.

2.3. Interspecies Sexuality

Interspecies, which refers to “relationships *between* different forms of biosocial life and their political effects,” points the articulation and transgression of human and non-human binaries (Livingston & Puar, 2011, p. 3). Accepting the biological differences between human animals and non-human animals interspecies as a concept probes the ontological boundaries between them that put species in hierarchies which also allows the exploitation of non-human animals (Livingston & Puar, 2011, p. 9). Following this logic, I aim to go beyond the anthropocentric and androcentric understanding of sexuality in examining the sexualized performative acts of Nusret while butchering, cooking and serving meat. Since Nusret engages with the body parts of dead farm animals, I consider this interspecies sexuality an interlocking of zoosexuality and necrosexuality.

There are several terms that are used to describe human’s sexual attraction and relationship with animals such as zoophilia, zooplism, zoerasty, zooeratia, zoosexuality, bestiality, bestiosexuality (Aggrawal, 2011; Beetz, 2008; Shir-Vertesh, 2013). In several studies, moreover, the concepts of necrozoophilia or necrobstantiality are used to refer to human’s sexual activities with

dead non-human animals (Aggrawal, 2009, p. 316, 2011, p. 74; Griffiths, 2012; Marjanić, 2009, p. 208). In my thesis, I will use the concept of zoosexuality, which was proposed by the sexologist Hani Miletski in 2002, since it refers to emotional attraction to and relation of human animals to non-human animals in addition to sexual relation between them (as cited in Beetz, 2008, p. 203).

In *Rethinking Bestiality: Towards a concept of interspecies sexual assault*, Piers Beirne argues that any kind of sexual relation of humans with non-human animals should be named as *interspecies sexual assault* because of three main reasons (Beirne, 1997, p. 319). First, all sexual relations with animals are based on coercion due to the domination and property relations; thus, unequal power relations between human and non-human animals. In this regard, he also argues that commodification is one of the most prevailing feature of interspecies sexuality between human and non-human animals (Beirne, 1997, p. 329). Second, sexual relations of human animals to non-human animals mostly cause physical harm, pain and even death to non-human animals. Third, non-human animals are not able to show their consent to human animals even if they seem to enjoy it, because human and non-human animals have different ways of communication (Beirne, 1997, pp. 324–326). Beirne also states that interspecies sexuality with non-human animals should not be understood only as genital based sexuality, on the contrary, “all sexual advances by humans to animals” including but not limited with kissing, fondling, touching should be understood as interspecies sexual assault (Beirne, 1997, p. 326). Similar to Beirne, in *Bestiality and Zoophilia: A Discussion of Sexual Contact with Animals* Andrea Beetz highlights the diversity of sexual contact between human animals and non-human animals. Just like the variety of sexualities between humans, sexual relation of humans to non-human animals can be in different forms such as masturbation in the presence of animals, masturbation of animals, touching to animals and their genital organs, kissing, and making animal to lick oneself (Beetz, 2008, p. 207).

In *A New Classification of Zoophilia*, Anil Aggrawal outlines ten types of sexual relationship between human animals and non-human animals. A *fetishistic zoophilia*, one of ten forms of zoophilia, is characterized as one's preserving the body parts of animals such as fur as a fetish object (Aggrawal, 2011, p. 75). He states that physical contact with the preserved part of (dead) animal arouses sexual and erotic feelings for fetishistic zoophiles. Aggrawal, moreover in *A Classification of Necrophilia*, classifies necrophilia into ten groups and he defines fetishistic necrophilia as cutting a body part of a dead body such as finger, breast, hair to use for their later fetishistic, erotic and sexual stimulations (Aggrawal, 2009, p. 318). To illustrate his argument, Aggrawal provides a case from the study of Randall et al. (1990) in which the tongue of a dead deer was utilised as a tool for masturbation (as cited in Aggrawal, 2011, p. 75).

I adopt Aggrawal's concept of *fetishistic necrophilia* and apply it to the sexualisation of the body parts of dead farm animals by transgressing the boundary between human animals and non-human animals, as we see in the case of Nusret. Because, I think the ways in which Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat, – cutting, preserving and commodifying the body parts of dead farm animals – well suits the definition of *fetishistic necrophilia*. I will also consider *fetishistic necrophilia* together with *fetishistic zoophilia* to understand Nusret's performative acts with meat in sexualized ways. I prefer to use the concept of zoosexuality instead of other terms such as zoophilia. Thus, I modify these concepts and suggest using fetishistic necrozoosexuality to refer to, to understand, and to explain Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat – a body part of dead farm animals.

Furthermore, sexual and emotional attraction and relation to non-human animals are considered immoral, unnatural and sinful (Beetz, 2008; Beirne, 1997; Shir-Vertesh, 2013). However, in

contemporary societies, sexual and emotional affinity to non-human animals entered in study field of science, and psychiatry, (Beirne, 1997; Shir-Vertesh, 2013; Wadiwel, 2017), which leads to “pathologization” and “abnormalization” of zoosexuality rather than considering it immoral (Wadiwel, 2017, p. 296). The idea that interspecies sexuality violates natural order and animal rights is the reason for its abnormalization and pathologization.

Yet, there are also views which suggest that interspecies sexual and emotional affinity is pathologized and abnormalized because it is considered a threat to historically constructed anthropocentrism as it blurs the dividing line between human animals and non-human animals (Shir-Vertesh, 2013, p. 169). In interspecies sexual and emotional affinity, non-human animals become object of love and desire that potentially subverts the ontological boundaries between human animals and non-human animals.

Nonetheless, interspecies sexuality with non-human animals is argued to be understood within the frame of social, ethical and political context of the human animals and non-human animals relations which is by definition based on domination and property, thus unequal power relations (Beirne, 1997, p. 329; Wadiwel, 2017, p. 292). It goes without saying that, the relation of Nusret to those farm animals in his own barn or their skinned headless bodies or their fragmented body parts (meat) is a relation based on property and domination. As a self-identified vegan-feminist, I consider Nusret’s relation to these farm animals and meat is an exploitative relation because he exercises sovereign power *over* the lives and bodies of those farm animals by claiming the right to kill them, to commodify their dead bodies, and to exercise a sexualized masculine domination over their fragmented bodies. Besides, as I will discuss in the Chapter 3 in detail, Nusret uses meat as a tool for representing and reinforcing his masculinity; and sexualized dominance of Nusret over

meat is considered as entertaining by some people. Accordingly, within this social, ethical, political, and economic context of relationship, in which body parts of dead farm animals are dominated and used for sexual and entertainment ends, any kind of zoosexuality and/or fetishistic necrozoosexuality of Nusret with those farm animals and meat cannot subvert, but bolster the anthropocentrism/human exceptionalism. Hence, in defining the sexualisation of meat and skinned/headless bodies of farm animals as a fetishistic necrozoosexuality, I will consider Nusret's interspecies sexualized performative acts of butchering, cooking, and serving meat as one of the ways that reinforces human exceptionalism.

2.4. Performativity Theories

The concept of performativity is used to refer to both gender performance and theatrical performance which “are complex and distinctions not easily drawn” (Butler, 1988, p. 527). Although, as Butler argues, gender performance and theatrical performance are not the same and do not have same implications, they should not be put in binary oppositions but rather should be considered in a continuum relation (as cited in Hollywood, 2002, p. 94). In my thesis, I will use performativity in its both meanings – gender performance and theatrical performance – to examine first, the ways in which Nusret constitutes and presents his masculine identity and second, the parody videos and photographs of Nusret that are produced by various repeaters who repeat the acts of Nusret with difference through citational performativity. I will also benefit from performativity theory in the sense of theatrical performance in examining Nusret's videos as “food porn” to understand how and why those videos have a continuing appeal.

Butler states that sex is a normative, regulatory and “ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time” within the matrix of heterosexuality (Butler, 1993, p. 1). The materialization of sex

as an ideal construct is realized through gender performativity. Butler argues that gender is not something inherent in one's sexed body and is expressed through one's intentional acts. On the contrary, gender is constituted through the repetition of the stylized "set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1990, p. 33), which contribute to matrix of heterosexuality. This also means that gender does not have an ontological basis prior to or independent from the previous acts (Butler, 1990, p. 136). Hence, gender performance should not be understood as a single act that one performs, or decides to perform in one way, rather it should be considered as the materialization of a body through which "reiterative and citational practice" carry cultural meanings that are historically attained (Butler, 1993, p. 2). It is this performative repetition of the stylized acts in a mundane way that produces the idea that gender (femininity and masculinity) is natural.

Further, there is no prior subject ("I" or "We") who performs the "stylized acts", rather, it is the citational repetition of the "stylized acts" that enables the constitution of a subject (Butler, 1988, p. 528). This also implies that there is no femininity or masculinity prior to performance (Butler, 1988, p. 519), but they come at stake through performative repetition of acts meanings of which socially and historically established. A body as a materiality is materializing the possibilities among many possibilities and is reproducing a historical and social situation (Butler, 1988, p. 521). Given that, if gender is a performative citational repetition of the stylized acts, then, citational performance has potential to lead in two possible ways. It can both repeat the same with difference and differ from what is repeated; hence it has a potential to subvert what is considered as natural.

Butler discusses theatricality in gender performativity through the queer politics. Gender performances are governed and sanctioned by social and political regulatory mechanism, but such

regulatory mechanisms do not always apply to gender performances in a theatrical context (Butler, 1988, p. 527). Unlike gender performativity, gender performance in theatrical contexts has the potential and possibility to subvert the naturalness of genders through repetition of such acts in subversive ways. Butler also argues that theatricality in gender performativity should not be conceived as “self-display or self-creation” (Butler, 1993, p. 232). In other words, what the performance that is put on stage by the performer or a repeater is consequence of historically and socially constituted mundane ways of performing genders. Hence, a gender performance is theatrical only to the extent that the historical meanings behind the acts, which are put on a stage, remain dissimulated. Butler gives the example of drag to show how reiterated performances have potential and possibility for gender subversion

A speech as an act also has a performative force. Addressing J. L. Austin’s book titled *How to Do Things with Words*, Butler states that “things might be done with words” (Butler, 1995, p. 197). That is to say, words and/or statements do not only say something or describe a situation, but they can also do something, perform an act. Uttering a statement does not simply mean that the speaker performed the act of speaking but rather and more importantly the uttered statement carries out an action. Rather than only signifying a thing, Austin argues that context in which a word or statement is uttered is crucial for such statements to do something or to perform an action (as cited in Hollywood, 2002, p. 101), which implies that in Austinian sense not all statements have the effect of enactment.

Through discussing hate speech and the injury it gives, Butler probes where the power of naming to effect, to give injury comes from: whether it is the power of the speaker to give injury through uttering a word or it is the power of the word uttered by a speaker. That is to say, it is the power

of utterer or that of the uttered word to injure someone or a group at the moment that word is uttered (Butler, 1995, p. 203). Emphasising the historicity of the uttered word, she states that every time when a subject utters a word or performs to name something, that subject actually cites a word meaning of which is constituted through citational repetitions in its historicity. This implies that it is not simply the power of the utterer to enact an injury, yet the utterer is the injurer as that person cites performatively (Butler, 1995, p. 203). This also alludes that interpellation has a potential for the possibility of deconstruction through citational repetition in a subverting way. Regarding interpellation, Butler gives the example of doctors pronouncing “It’s a girl” when they receive the baby (Butler, 1993, p. 232, 1995, p. 205). The statement of “It’s a girl” is not a description of what doctors see, but an interpellation that starts the process of “girling” (gendering) of that material body which will continue for years (Butler, 1993, pp. 7–8). Butler also argues that naming in interpellation is about setting boundaries and repeating the socio-historically constructed norms (Butler, 1993, p. 8).

With that said, I will elaborate the ways in which Nusret represents his masculinity while butchering, cooking, and serving meat through the insight of gender performance because he practices “stylized acts” which are socio-culturally attained the meaning of masculinity through the course of history in the context of Turkey. I will also read both Nusret’s performative acts of butchering, cooking, and serving meat in sexualized ways, and the production and circulation of Nusret’s parody videos by different repeaters through “repetition with a difference” as a performativity in a theatrical sense. As central to the idea in performativity in theatrical sense, both Nusret and his repeaters think and decide how to act before performing. Lastly, I will examine the captions of Nusret’s videos and photographs as a language performativity and interpellation. As I

will elaborate in the third chapter, through the captions that he writes on his posts, as well as the lyrics of the songs on his videos, Nusret instrumentalizes words for the enactment of actions.

2.4.1. Performativity in cooking videos as a food porn

Nusret's videos can be considered cooking videos because he shows how to butcher and to cook a meat as a sexualized spectacle. Watching cooking videos without actually cooking oneself is called "food porn." Food porn is argued to have a performative aspect because what is at stake in food porn is not what is being cooked but, who and how is preparing, cooking, and presenting food by using which kitchen tools (Cruz, 2013; McBride, 2010). This performative dimension of food porn makes the genre appeal to audience in the same way that sexual porn does, because, as in the sex porn, audience enjoy watching acts of cooking and serving that they do not (or cannot) actually apply in their own kitchens (Chan, 2003; Cruz, 2013, p. 332; McBride, 2010, p. 38; Oren, 2013, p. 24). However, "porn" in food porn does not directly refers to sex, rather more to the increasing importance of aesthetic and visuality as spectacle (Oren, 2013, p. 34, n. 14). The performance of advanced cooking techniques that is almost impossible to apply by audience, which makes appeal those videos to audience, is apparent in the case of Nusret. In fact, under his posts, there are comments that indicate the admirations to Nusret's advanced techniques and skills of cutting meat, which attempted to be imitated by his repeaters.

Cooking videos are also considered a space where chefs can represent their gender and sexual identities while cooking as a spectacle (Cruz, 2013). In fact, it is said that chefs have become the new rock 'n' roll stars who perform in their cooking shows (as cited in Probyn, 2000, p. 67). The representing of gender and sexual identities by chefs while cooking in coking videos, which can

also appeal to audiences, is imbedded in the case of Nusret. As I will discuss in the third chapter, Nusret represents his masculinity while butchering and cooking in sexualized ways.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER, SEXUALITY, DOMINANCE AND MEAT

In this chapter, I will focus on Nusret's videos, photographs (posts) and the captions that he writes for these posts on his Instagram account to scrutinize the ways in which Nusret encounters with the body parts of dead farm animals that/who "were once alive but who have been slaughtered for the parts of their body" by and for human animals in terms of the relation of humans to non-human animals, gender and sexuality (Stanescu, 2012, p. 568). While doing so, I will ask the following questions. What kind of sexuality does emerge when Nusret encounters with meat? How does Nusret treat meat in ways that it sometimes seems to be associated with a female body and sometimes refers to phallus? How does Nusret represent and bolster his masculinity while he is performatively butchering, cooking and serving the body parts of dead farm animals? And, what do the captions of his posts connote (in relation to the context of the videos) regarding the power relations of species, sexuality, and gender?

3.1. Sexualized Dominance over Meat

Nusret's engagement with skinned headless bodies of farm animals or pieces of meat in sexualized ways is an interspecies encounter. This interspecies sexualized encounter takes place between two beings of different species: a human animal and body parts of dead farm animal, in this case sheep/lamb and/or cow/calf. Nusret also posts videos and photographs in which he either encounters with an alive cow/calf and/or sheep/lamb in sexualized ways or writes captions to his posts that have certain connotations regarding gender and sexuality. For instance, in one of his videos on his Instagram account, Nusret gives a massage to a living cow who/that stands eating dry fodder in a barn. The caption of that video is "Is there a happy ending too, she said.

[#kobe#beef#happyend](#)".¹⁶ This caption apparently assumes that the cow to whom/that Nusret is giving a massage is asking for a happy ending from Nusret. A 'happy ending' massage ends with a sexual contact or a form of sexual pleasure that is given by the masseur to the one who is being massaged. The ways in which we perceive sexuality between human and non-human animals are framed by how we perceive sexuality, what we consider as sex-related acts, and socio-political context of our relationship with non-human animals (Wadiwel, 2017, p. 292). Sexual and erotic meanings of the happy ending massage and the ways in which Nusret touches the alive cow as if he is giving a massage allude to the possibility of a sexuality, between himself and the cow, which can be named as zoosexuality. In this interspecies sexual interaction, moreover, Nusret stands as the party who is able to give a sexual pleasure while the cow is represented as one who is demanding that sexual pleasure or sexual contact with him by asking "Is there a happy ending too...?" However, although Nusret has posted several videos and photographs in which he engages with a living sheep or cow that explicitly or implicitly connotes sexuality either through his performances or the captions he writes for the posts, in my thesis I will focus on his sexualized encounter with the body parts of dead farm animals.

I have underlined that the encounter of Nusret with meat is a sexualized interspecies encounter between an alive human animal and a body parts of *dead* (skinned and mostly fragmented) farm animal. Yet, this encounter is not only simply an interspecies encounter but also a sexualized encounter with (body parts of) a necro. Accordingly, a critical analysis of sexuality that emerges at Nusret's encounter with the body parts of dead farm animals needs to be considered through the

¹⁶The video is accessible through the following link https://www.instagram.com/p/BOMBuW_DGas/?taken-by=nusr_et

concepts of interspecies sexuality and necrosexuality. I have chosen three videos and a photograph of Nusret from his Instagram account to analyse the encounter of Nusret with a meat, while also considering their captions, regarding the interlocking of gender, sexuality and the power relations between human animals and non-human animals.

The first video that I am going to examine was posted on October 28, 2016 with the caption of “Here I came like a lamb, s/he said”.^{17 18} It seems that the video was recorded in a kitchen, most probably in one of his restaurants. In the video, we see Nusret wearing black sunglasses and a lower body part of a dead skinned farm animal (most probably a sheep or a lamb) on a bench. There is a lollo rosso, which looks like a wig or a pubic hair, between the legs of the dead skinned sheep. On the background of the video, a famous Turkish song named *Kuzu Kuzu (Like a Lamb)* is played. Nusret does not utter any word, rather he keeps his silence throughout the video. He starts with moving the legs of dead sheep toward himself as if they were dancing and then he is smacking on the thighs of the sheep. The smacking sound is heard. As he is cutting the lower half of the sheep, he throws the lollo rosso away with a single and a sharp gesture; and then he starts cutting between the legs of the sheep. He is constantly using very decisive gestures that seem very aggressive and dominating especially when he “opens” the legs by pushing them down each to its own side and cuts the part in between and removes it. He throws the pieces aside in a seemingly careless way. He then cuts a part of the upper layer of the tissue on one thigh, again in very decisive

¹⁷ This video has been seen 7,697,253 times and it has 27, 128 comments both in Turkish in other languages. The video is accessible through the following link, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BMG-THGg1or/>

¹⁸ The translation from Turkish to English is done by me. The original title is “İşte kuzu kuzu geldim”

way. He quickly rolls a long part of the tissue around his finger in one gesture and then throws it through the camera again in a careless way.

Figure 1: Still Cuts from Nusret's Video with the Caption, "Here I came like a lamb, s/he said"



Throughout his performance, his facial expression always suggests a self-accomplished feeling and he thus appears quite self-confident. I think his facial expression, joining with his aggressive and dominant gestures, is associated with masculinity. The legs and crotch, the dancing with the legs the removal of the wig or pubic hair seem as “undressing” or unravelling, be it of clothes or hair. Pushing legs of dead sheep aside in an aggressive and careless way reminds an aggressive and possibly coercive beginning of preparing for sexual penetration. Hence, the body part of a slaughtered, skinned farm animal – sheep – is represented as an object of sex through Nusret’s sexualized performance of butchering it. The ways in which Nusret treats body parts of dead farm animal implies that he is the dominant and powerful party of this sexualized encounter. Nusret’s performative sexualized dominance over the lower body parts of dead and skinned sheep in this video evokes that meat is associated with a human. In fact, from an ecofeminist vegan/vegetarian theoretical perspective, it could be argued that the lower body part of dead and skinned sheep is associated with female human. However, I would argue that in the video it is not explicitly clear

to which gender is referred because such acts of sexualized domination can also be signifier of homoerotic relation.

Further, his smacking the thighs of the dead sheep explicitly indicates an act of violence. This violence should not be simply read as violence against meat or body parts of dead farm animal. Rather it can be argued that this violence takes place in a sexualized encounter between a human who performatively represents normative masculinity and with a body part of dead animal. Accordingly, this sexualized violent masculinity shows that masculine power and domination is exercised not only over/between human beings but also over non-human animals.

The caption of the video and the lyrics of the song in the video moreover have significant connotations in terms of the power relations between human animal (Nusret) and non-human animal (dead skinned body part of sheep). The caption of the video is coming from the song that is played on the background of the video. The name of that song - *Kuzu Kuzu (Like a Lamb)* is a Turkish phrase which refers to being or doing something quiet(ly), without uttering a word, by obeying, and as submissively. The lyric of the song is as follow:

*“... And now I came like a lamb
Threw myself on your knee in the way you wish
This time, I set my pride on fire
I burnt it and came to you*

*Throw me or kiss me
But first listen and look at my eyes
Believe, this time
I got the picture, know that, I repented ...”¹⁹*

¹⁹ The lyrics of the song was translated by me. The original lyrics of the song is: İşte kuzu kuzu geldim. Dilediğince kapandım dizlerine. Bu kez gururumu ateşe verdim, yaktım da geldim. İster at, ister öp beni. Ama önce dinle, bak gözlerime. İnan bu defa, anladım durumu, bil tövbeler ettim.

The title, as well as the name of the song, indicate the existence of a docile being in Nusret's sexualized encounter with meat. Nusret's sexualized performance with meat suggests that the song is uttered by the lower body parts of that sheep. Accordingly, the docile being in that encounter is apparently the lower body part of that sheep. A docility, in the case of Nusret, is produced through the utilization of two things. First, through the performative sexualized acts of Nusret over body parts of dead farm animal. Second, through the cultural and symbolic meanings that are transferred via the song in and the caption of the video.

Furthermore, the lyrics of the song also implies that the lower body part, as a docile being, is willingly subordinated her/himself to Nusret by leaving her/his pride aside as explicitly indicated through the song. In this regard, Carol Adams argues that meat and (body parts of dead) animals are represented as if they want to be sexually desired (Adams, 2004, pp. 109–112). The lower body part of sheep is represented as if s/he desires to be sexually dominated by Nusret. The submissiveness and docility is linked with the normative femininity; therefore, the lower body part of sheep is attributed a normative femininity through the performative sexualized and dominating acts of Nusret and through the hidden meanings in the song. An implicit normative femininity of one party in one hand, and masculine domination of a man (as he represents himself) on other hand are significant indicators of heteronormativity. Hence, I argue that the sexuality that emerges in the performative sexualized butchering acts of Nusret falls within the boundaries of heteronormatively defined sexuality that takes place between two different species. Further analytical interpretation would be that culturally, socially and politically accepted heteronormativity is represented in and through interspecies sexuality in the context of Turkey. This shows that representation of such sexuality does not only take place in power relations among humans but also in interspecies power relations.

The second video that I have chosen was posted on February 5, 2017 with the caption of “I love you baby, s/he said. #salt #saltlife #saltbae”.²⁰ This video seems to be recorded in one of his restaurants. On the background of the video, Frankie Valli’s *I love you baby* is played in the first part of the video; and we see Nusret again wearing black sunglasses, a wooden roundtable on which a dead skinned headless non-human animal, most probably a sheep, lies. There is a bunch of red roses emplaced in the anus of dead skinned headless sheep. Nusret starts with holding the forelegs of the sheep pulling her/him toward himself. He takes her/him into his arms by holding forelegs of the sheep with his one hand and winding through the thighs of the sheep with his other arm. He makes the movement of couple-dancing with the sheep in accord with the rhythm of the song, while taking steps backward and forward while holding the body of dead sheep in his arms. After putting the sheep on the table in a decisive way, he picks the red roses from the anus of the sheep, smells it, and throws it toward to camera in a seemingly careless and decisive way. Then, he slowly takes a sauce into his palm from a plate, slowly pours it through the body of the sheep starting from bottom to the top.

Figure 2: Still Cuts from Nusret’s Video with the Caption, “I love you baby, s/he said. #salt #saltlife #saltbae”



²⁰ This video has been viewed 11 094 934 times and it has 46 023 comments both in Turkish and in other languages. The video is accessible through the following link https://www.instagram.com/p/BQIbjS3j4yD/?taken-by=nusr_et

After spreading the sauce with his hands over the back and legs of the sheep in an erotic way, he starts massaging to the sheep by using his both hands. Then, he cuts half of sheep's neck with an aggressive gesture, salts the body with his famous movement called "SaltBae", then he puts the whole body of the sheep on fire.

In the second video, the skinned headless body of a farm animal is explicitly feminized by Nusret through erotic signifiers such as the bunch of red rose emplaced in the anus, acts of couple-dancing, application of sauce as a massage oil and massaging. These also give the impression that Nusret is sexually engaging with a *human* (my emphasis) who is an object of desire for Nusret. I emphasized the notion of "human" to underline that it would be wrong to assume that this skinned headless body of dead sheep is associated with a woman body. Because his sexualized performative acts with that body can be also homoerotic signifiers. In these mentioned terms, the second video supports the findings of the first video in terms of the explicit feminization of meat.

On the other hand, some findings of the second video complicate that of the first video. In the second video, rather than a fragmented body part of a dead farm animal (or a piece of meat), Nusret performs his sexualized acts with the *whole* dead, skinned, and headless sheep. It is apparently and easily recognized that dead body belongs to a sheep who/which was once alive because of Nusret's spectacle of butchering, fragmenting, and cooking it. This implies that it is not simply the sexualization of a piece of meat by human, reasons of which can be explained through the concept of *absent referent*. *Absent referent*, suggested by an ecofeminist activist theorist, refers to the disappearance of non-human animals when they are objectified, slaughtered, fragmented and transformed into pieces of meat, and which enables humans to consume and sexualize meat (Adams, 1990, p. 66). However, Nusret's sexualized performative acts of butchering and cooking

meat cannot be explained with the concept of *absent referent*, because the animal is not absent, it is not fragmented. In fact, it is not even a meat but a skinned, headless *whole* body of a farm animal that was once alive. Hence, the permissibility of Nusret's sexualized acts of butchering and cooking meat (skinned and headless body of sheep in this particular video) should be sought in the *biopolitical anthropocentrism*, which allows the objectification and devaluation of non-human animals (Puar, 2015, p. 59). Anthropocentrism allows humans to claim a right to power and dominate some human animals and non-human animals, because certain groups of humans have been put in a central position and other humans and animals are positioned in relation to that central position. Particularly speaking, the white, heterosexual, masculine and able-bodied human man is located in a superior position in relation to women, people of colour, queers, *disabled people* (my insertion), and animals (Gruen, 2007, p. 336).

Similar to the first video, the caption of the second video, as well as the song played in it, have considerable connotations regarding the relation between human and farm animals, gender and sexuality. As cited above, the video is posted with caption, *I love you baby, s/he said*, which is originated in the song played on the background of the video. The caption of the video, alongside the song and Nusret's acts with the body of dead skinned headless sheep suggests that the dead sheep is in love with Nusret and is sexually available for him which is here implied by the erotic signifiers. In return, Nusret performs a sexualized dominance over dead skinned sheep through his masculine and somehow aggressive mimics and acts while giving massage and cutting its neck.

Furthermore, Nusret has posted several videos and photographs through which he implies that he considers body parts of dead farm animals not simply piece of meat, but his object of desire and/or object of love. To illustrate my argument, I have chosen a photograph from his Instagram account.

The photograph was posted with the caption of “For us, each day is Valentine’s day ♥ happyvalentine's day 🍴” on February 14, 2016, the Valentine’s Day.^{21 22} The photograph seems to be taken in either a slaughterhouse or a cold room because there are many slaughtered skinned bloody and headless cows and/or sheep who/that are hooked, and there is blood on the floor. Nusret, wearing a white apron and again black sunglasses, is standing in the middle of those hooked, dead, skinned, bloody, and headless cows and/or sheep, and he is holding a dead skinned headless body of cow/sheep in his arms by enfolding his arms on the body.

Figure 3: A Photograph of Nusret with the Caption, “For us, each day is Valentine’s Day ♥ happyvalentine's day 🍴”



The combination of the photograph’s caption with the photograph itself suggests that Nusret represents the dead skinned headless bloody body of cow or sheep as his partner or beloved one with whom he celebrates the Valentine’s Day. That is to say, Nusret bears an emotional, romantic, and maybe sexual affection to the body parts of dead skinned farm animal, which can be named

²¹ This photograph was liked by 16 885 people and it has 1 961 comments in Turkish and in other languages. The photograph is accessible through the following link, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BBwIKjHMHyL/>

²² The title was translated by me. The original title is “Bize hergun sevgilliler gunu ♥happyvalentine's day 🍴”

fetishistic necrozoophilia. Besides, in one of his interviews, he told that when he sees a calf he feels like men seeing a beautiful woman.²³

As seen in the above analysed videos and photograph, Nusret constitutes his sexualised masculine dominance over the body parts of dead farm animals (and/or pieces of meat) not only through his repetitive bodily performances but also through the captions of his posts and songs in his videos. Nusret, keeping his muteness, does not utter a word, but makes the captions and songs to say something in relation to context of his posts. In fact, the captions and songs do not only say meaningful things or describe the contents of his posts, but he also instrumentalizes the words for the enactment of certain actions. For instance, in the last photograph the possibilities of interspecies sexuality between Nusret and skinned headless body of sheep is implied more through the words in the caption of the photograph rather than through Nusret's sexualized performative acts in his videos which are again supported by captions. By writing "For us, each day is Valentine's day ..." on the photograph's caption, Nusret performatively names his relation to meat. In this sense, despite his muteness in his videos, the captions of his posts well illustrate how "things might be done with words" through the instrumentalization of words (Butler, 1995, p. 197). In this case, the thing getting done with words is naming the (body parts of dead) animals as dominated, submissive, consumable, while positioning himself as masculine, dominant subject who has control over body parts of dead non-human animals.

Issues discussed above lead me to three concluding arguments. First, the interlocking of violence, domination, submissiveness, and masculinity is imbedded in the sexualized performative

²³ The interview can be accessed through the following link, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/etlerin-efendisi-19579308>

domination of Nusret with the body parts of dead farm animals. Second, Nusret represents and reproduces the culturally, socially, and politically accepted ways of performing a hegemonic masculinity through his sexualized and masculine dominance over meat. Last, the representation and reproduction of the culturally, socially, and politically accepted hegemonic masculinity is actualised through interspecies necrozoosexuality but not through a sexuality between human beings, regardless of their genders. It is in fact, beyond or outside the frame of assumed human sexuality. I believe it might connote that there is no as such human sexuality separated from other beings. Another question to be explored remains. What does it mean to sexually encounter with a dead animal or with their body parts? I will return to this question in the later part of this chapter. Now, I turn to the discussion of how Nusret performs and foster his masculinity in and through his sexualized encounter with meat.

3.2. Meat as a Tool for Representing Hegemonic Masculinity

The existing literature has shown that butchering and eating meat are associated with masculinity and virility (Adams, 1990, 2004; Brown, 2016; Gelfer, 2013; Gruen, 2007; Halley, 2016; Luke, 2007; Rothgerber, 2012). Accordingly, Nusret's skills in butchering meat or even a whole skinned headless bodies of farm animals already represents and contributes to his masculinity. Yet, there are other ways in which Nusret represents his masculinity. On his Instagram account Nusret also posts his own photographs and videos in which he openly represents some parts of his naked body while doing physical exercises. As seen in these posts he has a fit and muscular body, which is associated with the "desirable" and "ideal" masculine man body image in many contemporary

societies, and as well as in Turkey.²⁴ He is also well-groomed in terms of his clothes, hair style, and his accessories such as watches and sun glasses that he almost always wears regardless of indoor or outdoor and day or night time as seen in his posts. He also has several photographs in which he smokes a cigar but not an ordinary cigarette especially while wearing a suit, which is considered representative of masculinity and high social class. Considering his physical appearance – muscular body, dressing, his aggressive and masculine manners that he performs in his videos and photographs – and his economic class, it seems that the masculinity that Nusret performs is a “hegemonic masculinity” in the social context of Turkey.

One must keep in mind that “hegemonic masculinities” emerge in particular cultural and historical context and they can change through the course of history (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, pp. 832–833). In contemporary Turkey, hegemonic masculinity is associated with toughness, aggressiveness, physical strength, having a good income, authority, and seriousness (Özbay, 2016, pp. 84–85). Yet, occupying a hegemonic masculinity position within the gender order is not enough to sustain that position. On the contrary, it needs to be reproduced and reinforced through diverse set of acts, speeches and representations because gender identities in general, and hegemonic masculinity in this particular instance are “instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” gestures and behaviours (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Given this, I think, Nusret performatively represents and reinforces his masculinity through his non-speaking, aggressive, masculine, violent and sexualized performative acts of butchering, cooking, and serving meat in addition to his modern fashion based physical appearance.

²⁴ See as an example, https://www.instagram.com/p/BK2qiMzDMzq/?taken-by=nusr_et

As I argued earlier in this chapter, through his non-speaking sexualized performances with meat and through the utilization of the songs time to time, meat (and sometimes skinned headless body of farm animal) becomes a puppet of Nusret. A puppet that Nusret deploys as a mean for representing and reinforcing his masculinity, which is a socio-culturally and politically accepted masculinity in Turkey. However, I do not mean that Nusret represents and reinforces his masculinity through the femininization of meat, because, as I have argued before, the meat with whom/that Nusret encounters does not simply signify a female body. In fact, such an argument would be misleading. I will discuss this issue whether meat signifies a female body or a phallic figure in the next sub-section in more detail.

3.3. What is Meat? A Female Body or a Phallic Figure

The existing literature on the sexualization of meat (body parts of dead farm animals) has argued that meat is represented in sexualized and femininized ways that signify a female body (Adams, 1990, 2004, 2010; Denys, 2011; Hamilton, 2016). In other words, meat to be consumed as food is associated with a female body exploited for sexual pleasures of men. However, I think this argument is not applicable for the case of Nusret, because he engages with the body parts of dead skinned farm animals in sexualized ways that it does not only signify female body but also it sometimes is represented as a phallic figure. To illustrate my argument, I will analyze a video of Nusret in which meat seems to represent a phallus.

This video was posted on September 7, 2016 with the caption, “You are tantalizing, s/he said”^{25 26}. In the video, we see Nusret again wearing black sunglasses in kitchen, most likely in one of his restaurants. Nusret starts with sharpening a knife with a steel, which is considered as a manly task, at least in the context of Turkey. He continues with cutting off small pieces from the piece of boneless, somewhat large and longish meat. He cuts small parts from the meat and leaves them aside in a decisive way. He removes the upper and whitish layer of the meat slowly and with discontinuous cutting movements, and rolls this long part of the tissue around his finger quickly in one gesture and then throws it on the bench in a careless and and aggressive way. By cutting off small pieces and “cleaning” off the white tissues from that piece of meat, Nusret gives the meat the shape of a straight, long and somewhat large figure which seems like a huge penis. Then, he covers the meat with his hand from the somehow center of the meat, turns his body to camera and waves the meat to camera while coming close to the camera.

Figure 4: Still Cuts from Nusret’s Video with the Caption, “You are tantalising, s/he said”



²⁵ The video has been seen 3 226 705 times and it has 7 072 comments in Turkish and other languages. The video is accessible through the following link, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BKDroh9AEjm/>

²⁶ The title of the video is translated to English by me. The original title of the video is “Gösteriyorsun Ama vermiyorsun dedi” which is a commonly used idiom in Turkish. It is mostly used for the case in which someone pretends in ways as if they would have sexual and physical interaction, but do not.

After grilling the meat, he takes it from the grill by holding it from its very point, and takes it closer to the mouth of a woman who appears at that part of the video. She keeps her mouth open to try to get the meat into her mouth but Nusret continuously pulls the meat toward and away from her mouth, so that she cannot take the meat into her mouth. His facial expression suggests that he gets some sort of enjoyment, in fact a sexual pleasure as implied by the ways he looks at the woman and the mimics of his lips.

The ways in which Nusret performs butchering and cooking meat and serving it to a woman in this video indicate that the meat symbolically signifies a phallus but not a female body. Nusret treats the piece of meat as if it is a penis and uses it to play with a woman by putting his masculinity forward. Both his talents in butchering a meat in sexualized ways, and the ways in which he plays with woman imply that he is the one who is in the charge to decide whether she will get what she wants or not.

Furthermore, in considering the ways in which Nusret deploys the piece of meat as a phallic figure, there are two possible ways of explaining Nusret's relation to the piece of meat in this video. First, the piece of meat stands for himself, his manliness in triad relationship between Nusret, the woman and the piece of meat. Accordingly, I claim that rather than simply signifying a phallic figure, the piece of meat becomes an extension of Nusret's body, through which again he represents his manliness and sexuality. Second, in the last part of the video when Nusret plays with the woman in a sexually explicit way by pulling the meat toward and away from the woman's mouth, hence by tantalising as if he is going to let her take the meat into her mouth, he uses the meat as if it is a sex toy. Consequently, the meat turns out to be a mediation for sexual play between two human beings between whom there is gender-based hierarchal power relation.

In either way, whether the piece of meat becomes an extension of Nusret's material body or a mediation of sex playing, and whether it signifies a female body or a phallic figure, the critical problem is the usage of a piece of meat, which belongs to a farm animal who/that was once an alive being, for pleasures and ends of human animals and by human animals, including but limited to meat consumption and the sexualisation of meat. What is at stake in the case of Nusret is re/presentation and reproduction of androcentrism and anthropocentrism, which are interlocked to each other. Because Nusret as a human who represents a normative hegemonic masculinity occupies a dominant position in his relation to meat and to the woman through exercising a masculine dominance over piece of meat (and therefore, over farm animal) and over the woman.

3.4. Sexualisation of Meat as Interspecies/Necro Sexuality

Livingston and Puar highlight the importance of interspecies discussion as it helps to examine and understand the ontological, ethical and political ground of the exploitative relation of human animals to non-human animals (Livingston & Puar, 2011, p. 9). It is critical to probe the interspecies sexual relation of Nusret with meat (or body parts of skinned headless bodies of farm animals) to understand the ontological and ethical ground of that relation.

No doubt what is seen in the videos and photographs is not a dead body in its normative meaning, rather fragmented, butchered and therefore deformed parts of animal bodies. By a body in its normative meaning, I mean a body with organs, with head, with face and with its bodily form. That the meat or skinned headless bodies of sheep/cow are not in the form of normative body does not mean that there is not a necrosexuality in the case of Nusret. Because necrosexuality "is like all sexualities, not a singular, predictable, or repeatable form of sexuality" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 342). Accordingly, in order to see the necrosexuality in the sexualization of meat and skinned

headless bodies of cow/sheep it is necessary to go beyond normative understanding of body and sexuality.

Throughout this chapter, I have remarked that Nusret's sexualized encounter with meat is not simply an interspecies sexuality but it is sexuality with body parts of *dead* farm animal which makes it a fetishistic necrozoosexuality. I see it as a fetishistic necrozoosexuality simply because Nusret cuts, preserves and commodifies body parts of farm animals that/who are under his possession for the advance of his sexuality such as representing his masculinity (Aggrawal, 2009, 2011). In this subsection, I will discuss the fetishistic necrozoosexuality in Nusret's engagement with meat that is sexualized either through his performative acts and/or through the utilization of captions and songs to understand the human/non- human relations of power around sexuality.

As I argued before, the ways in which he touches, cuts, marines, cooks, and serves the meat, his facial expressions and as well as the statements in the captions and songs evoke certain connotations that are related to sexual pleasure in the ways we understand sexuality. There are several comments under Nusret's posts such as "he is having sex with a corpse, what kind of sexual fantasy does he have, he is fucking meat" which I think support my argument. Nonetheless, there is a considerable public silence around his sexualized engagement with either meat or alive cow/sheep, despite the fact that zoosexuality and necrosexuality are considered sinful and immoral in Turkey. Recently, a famous actor and TV host, Okan Bayülgen, in Turkey, tweeted a post on his official twitter account about Nusret. Okan Bayülgen criticized Nusret by writing:

"fondling a lamb on his lap, slapping dead animals, various torments to meat of animals that are slaughtered with many prayers. Our children are watching those videos. I consider this show/performance deviant and immoral. Those who pay and eat at

Nusret's place, who make news about him and advertising agency are party to this deformity."²⁷

Okan Bayülgen as a public name blames Nusret for his disrespectfulness to “food” but he does not explicitly point out the issue of zoosexuality and necrosexuality even if he thinks it is a deviant and immoral spectacle that challenges socio-cultural values in Turkey. The general public silence about Nusret’s sexualized engagement with meat and alive cows/sheep and as well as Okan Bayülgen’s not referring to zoo/necrosexuality while criticizing him is not only related to what is considered sexual: “how humans see their own sexuality, what is natural in sex acts, and which acts might be seen as bestial and intolerable” (Wadiwel, 2017, p. 297). This is also because the fact that it is a sexuality, or more properly sexualized power relation, between two different species – alive human and body parts of dead animal – which makes it difficult to publicly name and accept its existence in society since it challenges sexual taboos (Beirne, 1997). With that said, I argue that disavowing Nusret’s sexualized dominance over meat as interspecies sexuality in the form of necrozoosexuality is related to that the fragmentation of farm animal bodies into pieces of meat obscures the fact that what is sexualized is a body parts of dead farm animals. However, these parts are not considered as a body part of past living being but instead just “food” to be possessed and consumed by humans, which gives humans the permissibility of exercising a sexualized domination over them.

²⁷A new about his tweet is available in Turkish through the following link, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/okan-bayulgenden-nusrete-sapkin-ve-ahlaksiz,401743>. The translation of his post is done by me. The original explanation is "*Kucağında kuzu okşama, ölü hayvanları tokatlama, İslam'da binbir dua ile kesilen hayvan etine türlü eziyetler. Bu videoları çocuklarınız izliyor. Ben bu şovu sapkın ve ahlaksız buluyorum. Bu Nusret'e para yatıran da, yiyen de, reklam ajansı da, haberini yapan da bu çirkinliğe ortak oluyor.*"

All in all, in this chapter I have stated that Nusret's sexualized performative engagement with meat is an interspecies necro sexuality: fetishistic necrozoosexuality. Through this interspecies sexuality, he represents and reinforces socio-culturally and politically accepted hegemonic masculinity. As distinct from the ecofeminist critiques on meat consumption, I have showed that sexualized meat does not necessarily signify woman even if it is attained a normative femininity. I have also showed the limitations of Carol Adam's concept of *absent referent* by arguing that some people can still consume and enjoy the sexualization of meat despite the spectacle of fragmentation and butchering of meat. This sheds a light upon our understanding of the permissibility of production and consumption of meat not just as food but as a sexualized object within the frame of androcentrism and anthropocentrism. This leads me to probe the ways in which human exceptionalism operates that it allows human animals to view sexualized dominance over meat as entertaining and pleasurable, which will be the quest of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CIRCULATION OF NUSRET'S VIDEOS AS PERFORMATIVE

My objective in this chapter is first to query the circulation of Nusret's videos in which Nusret performs a sexualized dominance over meat on social media and on TV entertainment shows in Turkey and on an international level regarding the power relations of human animals, and non-human animals, gender, and sexuality. In doing so, I aim to give answers to the following questions. Why/how is it that some people consider Nusret's sexualized violent dominance over meat as a source of entertainment and pleasure despite the spectacted butchering? What is it that makes some people disavow to see cruelty in what Nusret is doing with body parts of dead farm animals? After whom/what do people mourn? What does mourning ethically and politically mean? Why is that some lives of some (non)human animals are more valuable and are worth to mourn after? Keeping these questions in mind, in the first part of this chapter, I will argue that human exceptionalism operates in a way that it makes some people to view Nusret's violent masculine domination over meat in a sexualized way as entertaining and pleasurable and to disavow seeing the cruelty in meat production and mourning after factory animals. Related to this point, I will claim that the usage of the sexualized violent dominance over meat as a source of entertainment devalues farm animals and bolsters human exceptionalism in the way it operates.

In the second part of this chapter, I aim to examine the parody videos of Nusret that are produced by people from different countries while performing various bodily activities including but not limited to cooking, putting a make-up, cutting hair, shaving, dancing, playing cards, feeding pets, and diapering. I will try to show the ways in which sexualized violent masculine domination that is imbedded in Nusret's performative acts are reproduced through the "repetition with a difference"

by different repeaters in different contexts. Additionally, there are numerous photographs in which people perform Nusret's salt-adding pose, namely "SaltBae," which is now accepted as his signature, in various contexts. I will also elaborate on the socio-cultural and political meanings of performing the "SaltBae" that it has gained as a result of "repetition with a difference," My goal in discussing the parody videos of Nusret and of the imitation photographs of his signature, "SaltBae", in different contexts is to question the ethical and political implications of these performative citations of Nusret in terms of the power relations of gender and sexuality among humans and between human and non-human animals.

4.1. Meat as a Source of Entertainment and Pleasure

As Nusret has been gaining more fame on international level, increasing number of people have started to follow him on his social media accounts and to re-post his posts on social media. There are also entertaining TV shows both in Turkey and in the US, in which hosts referred to Nusret and gave place to his videos. To my best knowledge, *Beyaz Show (White Show)*, *Survivor*, and *Beyaz Futbol (White Football)* are the Turkish TV shows, and *Late Late Show* is the American TV show that referred to Nusret's videos. Through the circulation of his posts, his sexualized performative engagement with meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals have been viewed by countless people. Having looked at the comments under his own posts and re-posts, and the context of the TV shows that gave place to Nusret's posts, I can confidently say that affirming, admiring, in fact even "joyful" reactions are much more than harshly criticizing reactions toward Nusret. That is to say, the general pattern of the reactions to Nusret's sexualized performative acts with meat and with skinned headless dead farm animals clearly shows that his show is viewed as an entertaining and pleasurable. For instance, under his video, captioned "*I love you baby, s/he*

said. #salt #saltlife #saltbae” (See Figure-2 in Chapter-3), some of the comments are as follow: “I wish I was that meat (*Keşke o et ben olsaydım*)”, That animal wasn’t loved in this way in its life (*Hayvan hayatında böyle sevgi görmedi*)”, “Let me your meat Nusret, cut me, savage me (*Etin olayım Nusret, kes beni, parçala beni*) “I laugh whenever I watch this (*Ne zaman izlesem güliyorum*)”, “Harder daddy”, “The way he strokes that piece of meat tho!! Makes me feel some type of way 😊”.²⁸

Another instance of the re-presentation of violent masculinity imbedded in Nusret’s videos as desirable and pleasurable was taken place on an American entertainment TV Show titled, *The Late Late Show* on the American Channel CBS.²⁹ The host of the show, English comedian and television host James Corden, gave a place to Nusret’s videos in one of the episodes broadcasted on January 9, 2017. He explicitly shared his adoration to Nusret regarding “his meat skills.”³⁰ Referring to Nusret’s sexualized engagement with meat, Corden stated that it might had been the most erotic thing that he had ever seen. In fact, Corden indicated that Nusret might be the Christian Grey of the meat. Christian Grey is the main character in the movie titled, *50 Shades of Grey*. In the movie, Christian Grey seduces a woman with BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Submission and Sadomasochism), but it is quite problematic because it is not a very consensual BDSM relationship. Accordingly, the very common point between Christian Grey and Nusret is their exercising domination over another being through performing a violent masculinity. Additionally,

²⁸The comments in Turkish are translated by me and original versions are provided in brackets. The video is accessible through the following link, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQIbjS3j4yD/>

²⁹ The information regarding The Late Late Show is obtained from the official website of the show. <http://www.cbs.com/shows/late-late-show/about/>

³⁰ The video clip of the show is accessible through the following link, <http://www.cbs.com/shows/late-late-show/video/0B8EAE4F-3CE7-4EB1-01CF-868DCDD25E70/admiring-the-hot-turkish-butcher/>

addressing Nusret, Corden told that "...he likes it raw..." which has a couple meanings. Raw means rough, edgy and painful, but also it can mean sex without a condom. The next clip just after Corden told this is Nusret's spanking lower body part of a skinned dead sheep/cow, which shows, Corden implies rough, edgy and painful. Later, Corden also stated that "He is so impressive, even I would turn gay for him." Apparently, what makes Nusret impressive and attractive is his violent masculine sexualized domination over meat because Corden shared these parts of Nusret's videos. Corden perceives and re-presents violent masculinity as attractive, pleasurable, and desirable for all genders. What is more, while he was mentioning about Nusret and sharing clips from his videos, the show's music band members and the audience are laughing.

Having provided these instances, I believe it is important to question the circulation of Nusret's videos on social media and on TV entertainment shows as a source of entertainment and pleasure not only because the entertaining aspect in the circulation of Nusret's posts helps us to understand how human exceptionalism operates in a way that re-produces divisions between human animals and non-human animals and, maybe more critically among non-human animals by putting them hierarchal relations on the basis of their social, ethical, and economic relation to humans. It also reveals the gender and sexuality aspect in the act of mourning and grieving. In the following subsections, I will discuss these issues in more detail by supporting my arguments with examples.

4.1.1. Double-dealing in human exceptionalism

Human exceptionalism has been constructed and cultivated by generations through various biopolitical discourses and practices. The human subject is not a priori or pre-existing position, rather it has been constructed through the instrumentalisation of animals by humans in various ways (Taylor, 2010, p. 75). Although human exceptionalism generates at the expense of and as

opposed to non-human animals (Wolfe, 2012), it is not something that puts a clear cut division between human animals and non-human animals. On the contrary, it operates through including and excluding some human animals and some non-human animals by ranking them in hierarchies based on species, race, gender and sex (Livingston & Puar, 2011, p. 4). That is to say, the lives of some human and non-human animals are more valuable than that of others. To illustrate this argument, I would like to share my recent anecdote. During the times when I was thinking on and writing this thesis, I came across a photograph of a small grave that was posted a friend of mine on Facebook. The grave belongs to her companion dog, *Mina*, and her companion cat, *Misel* who had passed recently at that time. On the white headstone of the grave, their names, the date of their birth and death were written just like in the way that is done for humans. My friend had mourned after her companion animals with whom she had shared a life for long years and had developed a social and ethical connectedness with them. The lives of *Mina* and *Misel*, non-human animals, were *grievable life* at least for my friend because she had apparently apprehended their life as “lose-able or injurable” life (Butler, 2016, p. 1). Having seen this photograph, I could not help myself and ask: what is the difference between *Mina* and *Misel*, – companion animal – and the nameless, but numbered farm animals whose fragmented dead bodies are used by Nusret and many other people as a source of entertainment and pleasure? Why is that lives of specific non-human animals are worth to mourn after but not that of some others? Why/how is it that fragmented bodies of farm animals (meat) can be used as a source of entertainment as we see in the case of Nusret?

Under the videos of Nusret in which he engages with skinned, headless unfragmented animal bodies in sexualized ways, there are comments that also support my argument. Those comments question what animal this skinned headless body of animals belongs to; and the mostly asked question is whether it was a skinned dead body of a *dog* (my emphasis) over whom Nusret

performs a sexualized masculine domination. Apparently, the question of whose dead body is dominated in sexualized ways creates anxiety more than (or but not) that of what is being done. That is to say, it is not appropriate and acceptable to treat a dead dog in that way, but it is acceptable in fact entertaining to treat a skinned headless and fragmented bodies of farm animals. Accordingly, these instances indicate that humans (can) mourn after specific non-human animals, but not after farm animals. Then the question to be probed is what makes the lives of farms animals ungrievable life?

Grievability of a life is based on whether that life is “produced according to norms that qualify it as a life or, indeed, as part of life” (Butler, 2016, p. 3). The lives of nameless and faceless farm animals who are slaughtered, butchered, fragmented into pieces of meat that are used in the videos of Nusret, and who have become a source of entertainment through the circulation of his posts are apparently not *grievable life*. Their life is *a deadling life* which means their lives, like all farm animals, are produced not to make live but to be killed to produce meat to be used and consumed by human animals (Stanescu, 2013, p. 151). That is to say, their life is not produced for a qualified livable life in an ethical and social connection with other species, rather their life is produced for their material bodies to be killed and consumed. A life produced to be killed and consumed as a mass product by definition is not a *grievable life* at all. Accordingly, value of those farm animals, whose body parts are deployed not only as a source of food but as a source of sexual advances and as an entertaining in Nusret’s case is framed within the economic relations of power, but not through social, political and ethical values and connections. Absence of such social, political and ethical values and connections with those farm animals whose fragmented bodies are used in the videos of Nusret allows some people to objectify their lives and disavow mourning after them and seeing the violent masculine reality of animal flesh.

The usage of these videos as a source of entertainment by some people who disavow seeing the value of the lives of farm animals and mourning after them does not simply bolster the human exceptionalism. But more importantly, I argue it spectacles the double-dealing in how human exceptionalism operates. It generates, regulates, and pays attention to the maintenance of the hierarchal taxonomies of species among which some human animals are the central nude (Livingston & Puar, 2011, p. 7). The entertaining aspect in the circulation of these videos also shows us that the double-dealing in human exceptionalism has been naturalized and has become our “normal” living condition. This is apparently seen in the anxiety of people regarding whether it was a dead body of a *dog*, but not a farm animal with whom Nusret performs a sexualized violent masculine domination. To subvert the human exceptionalism, I would suggest to avow mourning after farm animals because mourning as a political act is a way of creating ethical, political, and ontological connections with those faceless and nameless farm animals (Stanescu, 2012, pg. 568).

4.1.2. Gender and sexuality in the act of mourning

Mourning is associated with womanhood and femininity and thus it is considered a task of women: crying and lamenting at home, a private sphere. It is meant to be kept as private and personal experience because public mourning as a collective action is a threat to normative social order (Butler, 2002). With that said, I think performing a violent act on fragmented bodies of farm animals and viewing it as entertaining and pleasurable instead of mourning after them, have certain links to the feminization of the mourning. As a feminized, and therefore devalued act, mourning, especially after farm animals whose lives are not apprehended, would mean going against dominant masculinity. Therefore, it would be challenging hegemonic masculinity that provides a higher position within the gender order. Because, being sentiment and crying, which

are integral to normative way of mourning, are not considered as manly. In fact, they are viewed as a threat to normative masculinity. Masculinity is associated with toughness, physical and emotional strength, although there is no one form masculinity but masculinities, features of which change over time and across geographies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Imagine a hypothetical case in which Nusret grieves for farm animals, whose bodies do not *matter*, whose lives are not apprehended as a livable life. In such a case Nusret would not be able to enjoy representing and reinforcing his masculinity that he can do while performing sexualized violent acts of butchering a meat that is already associated with virility. On the contrary, he would be considered being sentiment, emotional and feminine. Likewise, if those people viewing the violent sexualized masculine domination over meat in Nusret's videos as entertaining, saw the grievability of farm animals and initiated a mourning, they would not be able to benefit the "advantages" of dominant masculinity. Besides those people who produce and circulate the parody videos of Nusret by imitating his violent masculinity in different contexts are predominantly men. Hence, they would not be able to enjoy representing dominant masculinity, if they saw the grievability of farm animals.

4.2. Performative Citations of Nusret

Innumerable number of imitation videos and photographs of Nusret, in which repeaters performatively imitate him, has been produced and circulated on international social media. There are all mimicry-based clips, remix-based clips as well as caps of Nusret in different languages that are produced by ordinary people from different countries in different contexts. There are also videos in which people show "how to cut a steak like 'SaltBae'" that are recorded in their own kitchen while dressing up and acting like Nusret. So, it has become one of the most internationally

known and circulated memes on social media. As central to the idea of meme on Internet, the production and circulation of parody videos and photographs are not any more under the control of original producer, Nusret; but they uncontrollably spread out the idea, act of behaviours in the original one through the “reproduction via copying and imitation” (Shifman, 2014, p. 18). The critical and interesting point in the production and circulation of parody videos of Nusret is the dissemination of violent domination and masculinity that are presented by Nusret through his sexualized performative acts of butchering, cooking, and serving meat in his own posts. In the following two sub-sections, I will first discuss the parody videos of Nusret in relation to the “repetition with a difference” in terms of reiteration of power relations. Second, I will elaborate my arguments on the ways in which Nusret’s “SaltBae” signature is performed by the repeaters as an indicator of masculine domination.

4.2.1. Parody videos of Nusret

Parody is understood as subverting, making fun of and mocking the “original” idea, ideology, and/or set of behaviours (Hutcheon, 1985). However, the function and effect of parody is ambivalent. On the one hand, as Butler argues by providing the example of drag performances, parody has a strong potential to subvert what is taken for granted through making fun of the “original” and making us laugh through spectacle (Butler, 1990, pp. 176–177). However, on the other hand, parody can also reiterate the strength and naturalness of the “origin” rather than subverting it (as cited in Kenny, 2009, p. 226). In the case of the parody videos of Nusret, I think what is at stake is the combination of these two contradictory functions of parody. That is to say, while creating parody videos of Nusret for fun-purpose by performatively repeating his acts in

different contexts, repeaters contribute to the dissemination of the idea in “original” video: dominant violent masculinity performed through sexualized acts.

The objects that the repeaters use while performatively repeating Nusret is too wide to list, but the mostly used tools are meat, skinned headless unfragmented body of dead chicken/turkey, make-up cosmetics, nappies and baby powder, and hookah equipment. Whatever the context or the object that is used by the repeaters, there are several commonalities among these parody videos and between these videos and Nusret’s “original” videos. Firstly, and interestingly enough, the repeaters are mostly men at different ages. They dress up like Nusret, wearing black sun glasses, watch, belt, black or white shirt/ t-shirt, and black pants. In fact, in several parody videos, these accessories are presented as the main elements for doing things, such as cutting a steak, like “SaltBae”. I have come across too few number of parody videos in which the repeaters seem to be woman, and they also dress up and act like Nusret.³¹ Not only their physical/bodily and facial features, such as plucked eyebrow, hair lock, lack of facial and bodily hairs, evoke me the idea that they are women. But also, and more critically, their theatrical performance of masculine gestures, acts and behaviours seem to me somewhat mannered, campy, and factitious compared to that of man repeaters of Nusret. However, by which I do not intend to imply that gender is something inherit to sex that is expressed through acts.

At the first glance, what is repeated in parody videos might be simply seen as exercising a violence and masculine domination over the objects (human or non-human being) that are used by the repeaters. However, this would be a simplifying and superficial analysis because violence and

³¹An example of a woman repeater’s parody video of Nusret is accessible through the following link, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWwGRrulwMo>

masculine domination are quite apparent both in Nusret's own videos and in those parody videos. I would like to elaborate on Nusret's citational practice of masculinity in his performative acts. Nusret performs a set of acts and gestures that evokes domination and masculinity in his sexualized engagement with meat. Nusret does not create those gestures, manners and acts that seem masculine; rather he cites practices of masculinity, meaning of which are socio-culturally and historically established. As Butler argues regarding the construction of gender, the set of acts that seems masculine in Nusret's videos "is an imitation without an origin" (Butler, 1990, p. 138). Hence, I argue that in the parody videos of Nusret, through repeating a set of acts, the repeaters imitate an identity which does not have an origin. Regarding drag performances, Butler states that "[A]lthough the gender meanings taken up in these parodic styles are clearly part of hegemonic, misogynist culture, they are nevertheless denaturalized and mobilized through their parodic recontextualization" (Butler, 1990, p. 138). Following her logic, I argue that Nusret's parodied sets of acts, meaning of which are formed within hegemonic anthropocentric and androcentric culture, are denaturalized through the production and circulation of parody videos in different contexts. However, although parodied imitations of Nusret might have achieved the denaturalization of his violent and masculine acts, they disseminate both the hidden and apparent idea in Nusret's videos. The detailed and close reading of the parody videos of Nusret reveals that exercising a violence and masculine domination is represented as the key way of achieving a goal or being successful. Further, the constant re-presentation of violence and masculine domination as a way of achieving a goal by different repeaters and in different contexts spreads this idea among society; and therefore, contributes to acculturation of such manners. I will elaborate my arguments regarding the parody videos of Nusret and their political and ethical implication in social and power relations

both among humans and between human and animals through providing an example from parody videos of Nusret.

In one of the parody videos, there are more than one performative repetition of Nusret that is performed by the same boy while he is engaging with different tools. First, we see the boy, who dresses up like Nusret and standing in the middle of a room holding a jar in his hand. He tries to open the lid of the jar, but he fails to do so. After this, he starts to touch and to slap the jar in the same way that Nusret touches and slaps the pieces of meat. His slow acts of fondling the jar evokes me that he is eroticizing his engagement with the jar just like Nusret does in his performative acts with meat. After touching, beating slapping, and fondling the jar, he tries to open the lid of the jar once again. This time he achieves to open the lid of the jar, and he throws the lid of the jar in a careless way. In his second performance in the same video, we see him sitting on a bed and holding a TV remote. His facial expression and his waving the TV remote imply that it is not working. He again starts touching, fondling, beating and slapping the TV remote while holding it on his one hand. Again, his slow acts of fondling but violent acts of slapping and his glances implies that he is sexualizing his engagement with the TV remote. Then he tries to use it again and this time it works. In both cases, what we see is that he makes something work through performing violent and exercising masculine domination over the objects that he engages with. That the idea of achieving a goal through exercising a violent masculine domination is more hidden in Nusret's videos, however, through parody videos of Nusret it is getting more visible and spreading. I claim that through repetition and spreading from one person to others, this idea would gain a strong acceptance, which at the end would contribute the institutionalized (violent) masculine domination.

4.2.2. “SaltBae” as a sign of domination

The gesture of “SaltBae”, which is originated in the way that Nusret adds salt on meat, is the nickname given to Nusret just after he has gained international fame on social media. Now, “SaltBae” is considered Nusret’s signature. Although it is one of the main gestures that are always performed by Nusret and by his repeaters in all (parody) videos, I have decided to examine “SaltBae” in a separate sub-section rather than incorporating it to the previous sub-section. Because, this is the only gesture of Nusret that is performed by him and by repeaters, including famous football players, outside the sequence of his performative set of acts. “SaltBae” has also gained a specific meaning through the course of its citational repetition in different contexts. “SaltBae” as an act signifies a masculine domination or a superiority of the doer over an individual, a group of people or non-human beings. Like the repeaters in parody videos, those who performatively cite SaltBae are mostly men. In fact, I could not find a photograph or a video in which the doer is a woman. That SaltBae, as a signifier of masculine domination, is being performed almost exclusively by men might be related to the fact that womanhood is associated with femininity which is conditioned as opposed to and in a binary position to masculinity. Nonetheless, implications of “SaltBae”’s mostly being performed by men is a critical issue to be probed.

It is nearly impossible to claim the exact date when “SaltBae” as a gesture has gained the meaning of masculine domination and superiority, or whether Nusret himself initially used this gesture for showing his masculine domination over meat or for the sake of his performance. This is a question that I cannot provide an accurate answer. Nonetheless, I think it is the performative citational repetition by mostly men that enables “SaltBae” to gain the meaning of masculine domination and

superiority. In other words, it's becoming a sign of masculine domination is the corollary of repetitive citational performances in a similar the line with the institutionalisation of genders, as Butler puts, is realized "through a stylized repetition" (Butler, 1988, p. 519).

To illustrate my argument, I will provide two different instances where the repeaters imitate "SaltBae" to point their domination. First, several internationally famous football players perform "SaltBae" after scoring a goal during the match at the soccer field. Goal rejoicing in the match is mixed with the feelings of supremacy, self-esteem, strength which are celebrated by the team members as collectively in a way that it shows their superiority and domination over the other team. Considering the masculine and domination-based competition imbedded in football, like many other sports, single gesture of "SaltBae" is a "good" way to show one's masculine domination to the members of the other team. The repetition of this act in a context where one party shows its domination through this act sticks the meaning of masculine domination to the act.

The second instance takes place in a very different context. A Turkish fighter pilot recorded and posted a short video of himself while piloting a fighter jet, in which he performs "SaltBae" just after he dropped a bomb on Syria. Again, "SaltBae" is performed after achieving a task. In this case, militarism, nationhood, manliness and domination are intertwined with each other.³² Based on the in-depth interviews that she conducted with male citizens of Turkey who did their military service, Ayşegül Altınay states that being able to shoot the target or to achieve the other military

³² In the context of Turkey, militarism and heteronormativity is closely connected to each other that can be seen both in the laws regulating the military service and discourses on military service. Male citizens of Turkey are obliged to service to the Turkish military by joining the Turkish army when they turn to 21-year-old, unless they have any medically proved physical or mental "disability". And, non-heterosexuals are not considered as eligible to fulfill the military service. In fact, there is a common cultural perception that men become "real men" only after they serve to the military.

tasks is one of the most significant ways in which men perform masculine authority during and after their military service (Altınay, 2004, pp. 82–83). Accordingly, taking part in military and having the knowledge of military is used as a power that is directly associated with masculinity (Altınay, 2004, p. 77). With that said, in that video, a Turkish fighter pilot performing the “SaltBae” indicates that he shot the target, while piloting and just after he dropped a bomb on Syria presents a masculine domination that is bolstered with nationhood in two levels. First, he as a soldier proves his abilities in achieving military tasks, manly tasks, therefore masculinity to his army friends, his family members, relatives and other people in Turkey that might see this video. Second, he as a *Turkish soldier* (my emphasis) represents the superiority and domination of the Turkish army on international level by posting his video of performing “SaltBae” in military uniform. That is to say, he does not only represent his manly domination but also that of the Turkish army, an institution to which he serves. Hence, the act of “SaltBae” is performed by the repeaters in different contexts to address their own masculine domination and the authority of an institution to which they are connected.

All in all, in the first part of this chapter I have probed the production and circulation of Nusret’s own videos as a source of entertainment and pleasure despite the spectacle violent acts of butchering in terms andro and anthropocentrism. I have argued that viewing the violent masculine domination over meat as entertaining and pleasurable by disavowing to mourn after farm animals first reveals the double-dealing in human exceptionalism that operates through including and excluding; and second, spectacles the gender and sexuality aspect in (dis)avowal of mourning. In the second part, I have examined the citational repetition of Nusret’s performative sexualized acts with difference by focusing on parody videos and the gesture of “SaltBae”. I have showed that performative citational repetition of Nusret’s dominant masculine acts denaturalizes his masculine

acts through parodying them. Nonetheless, those parody videos reiterate the idea imbedded in his acts – violent masculine domination. Last, I have argued that his salt adding gesture “SaltBae” has attained the meaning of masculine domination through its repetition by man doers in different contexts of power relations.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.1. To Sum Up

I have sought to explain the permissibility, meanings and ethical and political implications of sexualization of meat by focusing on the case of Nusret, who exercises a sexualized masculine domination over meat and/or skinned, headless bodies of farm animals almost in their entirety. The entanglement of feminist critiques on meat production and consumption, biopolitics over non-human animals, interspecies sexuality and performativity theories has shed a light upon my understanding of the production and circulation of Nusret's videos and viewing his violent masculine domination over meat as entertaining and pleasurable.

Having acknowledged the vegan/vegetarian ecofeminist activist theorist Carol Adams' contributions on our understanding of the sexualization of meat, I have tried to show the limitations of her theoretical concept of *absent referent*, through which she explains the permissibility of consumption and sexualization of meat (Adams, 1990, p. 66). I have argued that *absent referent* is not always applicable to explain the exploitation and sexualization of non-human animals especially when violent reality of butchering is spectacted. The importance of showing the limitation of this concept is that it points out the ways in which human exceptionalism operates. I have insisted that the permissibility of the meat consumption as a food and as a sexualized object lies in biopolitical anthropocentrism. It is the interlocking of androcentrism and anthropocentrism that permits Nusret as a human to disavow the fact that those body parts, over which he performs a sexualized form of dominance, actually belong to farm animals who/that were once alive.

Further in examining Nusret's sexualized engagement with meat, first, I have shown how Nusret performs sexualized dominance over meat and represents socio-culturally and politically accepted normative hegemonic masculinity through his performative acts of butchering, smacking, cutting, saucing, cooking and serving meat in his videos. I have also underlined that violent masculinity is imbedded in his sexualized performative acts of butchering and cooking meat. Second, I have pointed out that Nusret uses body parts of dead farm animals as a tool for representing and reinforcing his masculinity, which I consider as one of the ways in which non-human animals are further exploited after being killed and fragmented to be consumed as food. This is not only due to the fact that those body parts belong to farm animals who/that were once alive and used to have a life but also because the lives and material bodies of those farm animals are reduced to a piece of meat which is assumed to exist to serve human animals for several ends, including their pleasure, which bolster the ontological division between them –hence human exceptionalism. Third, unlike ecofeminist theories on meat production and consumption, I have argued that meat that is sexualized does not necessarily signify a woman body, but rather a human body. By suggesting such an argument, I believe I have achieved to go beyond the binary gender categories and show that the sexualisation of meat is not simply and only related to the sexual exploitation of women as it is argued by ecofeminists. Following this, I have also claimed that meat sometimes signifies a phallic figure in a way that it stands either as an extension of Nusret's body, therefore his manliness, or as a tool for sex playing of humans. Last, although viewing non-human animals as an object of love and/or sex has potential to subvert human exceptionalism as it transgresses the boundaries between human animals and non-human animals (Shir-Vertesh, 2013, p. 169), I have argued that any kind of sexual or emotional engagement of Nusret with meat, skinned headless bodies of farm animals and/or alive animals in his own barn cannot and should not be considered

challenging human exceptionalism/anthropocentrism. Consequently, interspecies sexuality should be examined within social, ethical and political context of the human and non-human animals relations (Beirne, 1997, p. 329; Wadiwel, 2017, p. 292). The body parts of dead farm animals are reduced to properties of Nusret, which means that their relation by definition is that of an unequal power relation. Hence, Nusret's sexual or emotional affinity to meat and/or skinned headless bodies of farm animals bolsters human exceptionalism.

Furthermore, I have probed the circulation of Nusret's photographs and videos, and production of performative citational repetition videos and photographs of Nusret on international (social) media in terms of reiteration of power relations of species, gender, and sexuality. I claim that in the circulation of Nusret's videos, what is more than the promotion for production and consumption of meat as "food" is viewing violent masculine sexual domination over animal flesh as entertaining and pleasurable. I have argued that exercising and viewing the violent masculine sexual domination over animal flesh reveals the double-dealing in human exceptionalism and gender and sexuality aspect of (disavowal of) mourning. Human exceptionalism operates in a way that on the one hand, it apprehends the lives of some specific non-human animals, such as companion animals, as *livable life*, therefore, *grievable life*, on the other hand, it operates a power *over* the lives and bodies of farm animals in a way that their lives reduced to a *deadling life*: a life that is produced to be killed to produce a meat to be consumed as food by humans (Stanescu, 2013, p. 151), and as a source of sexualized entertainment in the case of Nusret. I have also suggested that the femininization and therefore devaluation of the act of mourning is related to the disavowal of seeing the grievability of the lives of farm animals and mourning after them. Because the seeing the cruel sexualized violent masculine domination as entertaining and pleasurable enables to enjoy the "advantages" of masculinity.

Last, having examined the citational repetitions of Nusret's acts in parody videos that are performatively produced by different repeaters, I have posed that parody videos reiterate the violent masculine domination which is imbedded in the "original" videos of Nusret. Through citational repetition, the salt-adding pose of Nusret, "SaltBae" has gained the meaning of masculine domination which is used by predominantly men.

5.2. Further Research Avenues

The significance of this thesis does not only come from the challenges it poses and contributions it makes to the existing scholarly discussions in this field, but also it manifests itself through its strong potentials to open new ways for further research projects that would contribute to the intersections of Gender Studies and Critical Animal Studies. Based on the discussions in this thesis, one further research would be the interrogation of the multiplicity of reasons behind the initial significant silence in Turkey, that lasted for couple of years, regarding Nusret's interspecies sexual engagement with meat and skinned headless bodies of farm animals, although he had been known with his restaurants.³³ That research can consider the regulatory power mechanisms that aim to control sexualities in contemporary Turkey, as well as that zoosexualities' being a huge taboo that is not even mentioned despite its prevalence in Turkey.³⁴ Finally, in further research,

³³ Nusret had become popular with the prices and "quality" of meat that he sells in his restaurants. People, including celebrities in Turkey, who go to his restaurants, used to (and still) post the photographs of themselves eating in his restaurants. Although he has been posting his videos and photographs for couple of years, his sexualized acts of butchering were not an issue in Turkey until the late of 2016 and beginning 2017 when he gained an international fame on social media. This silence was broken in 2017.

³⁴ Although sexual engagement with non-human animals, as a taboo, is not mentioned and talked, there are laws regulating the sexual crimes against non-human animals. Animal rape (especially cats and dogs) in Turkey is one of the most shared news in animal rights group paces on Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, there is a Turkish saying that "Donkey is our national bride" (*Milli gelinimiz eşektir.*) There are also rumors about that in the countryside of Turkey, men have their first sexual experience with donkey or dog.

Islamic doctrines regarding human and non-human animal relations can be also taken into consideration to provide a broader context in which non-human animals are woven into the economic, social and political imaginaries and practices of human animals.

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