

THE METABOLIC ONOPTICON

A Hard Manifesto on Food, Reality and the Human-to-be-Fed

Hakki Tan

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8582-3132>

*“My paradigm is not a paradigm of the Truth; it is
a paradigm of Reality.”*

- Hakki Tan

ABSTRACT

This manifesto applies Hakki Tan's Reality Paradigm to the contemporary transformation of food. The paradigm has two central concepts: Onopticon and Homovictimus. Onopticon names a regime of environmental and infrastructural imposition in which subjects are not primarily coerced through direct command or surveillance, but are compulsorily included within a pre-structured field of action whose exit is costly, weakening or practically unavailable. Homovictimus names the human subject who is held responsible for choices inside a world whose conditions they did not create. The Metabolic Onopticon is not a separate paradigm, but the food-specific application of the Onopticon: the pre-structuring of what may count as food through biological, legal, technical, financial, regulatory, computational and moral gates. The manifesto argues that alternative protein technologies, cultivated meat, precision fermentation, insect protein, patents, AI-assisted protein design and novel food regulation must be read not only as innovations, but as possible infrastructures of feedability. Yet the critique of alternative proteins must never erase the violence of industrial animal agriculture. The old regime is not innocent because the new regime is dangerous; the new regime is not innocent because the old regime is monstrous. The question is not whether new food technologies are good or bad in themselves. The question is who controls the gates through which food becomes real.

Keywords: Onopticon; Homovictimus; Reality Paradigm; Metabolic Onopticon; alternative proteins; food sovereignty; cultivated meat; animal suffering; biopolitics; patent regimes; artificial intelligence; empirical lag

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REFERENCES

I. THIS IS NOT A MANIFESTO ABOUT FOOD

This is not a manifesto about food.

It is about the construction of the world in which something becomes food.

Older power could starve human beings.

Newer power seeks to determine what may count as food.

The old sovereign could take bread away.

The new regime does something deeper.

It builds the shelf.

It writes the label.

It funds the substitute.

It patents the cell line.

It licenses the growth medium.

It trains the model.

It authorises the novel food.

It prices the alternative.

It moralises the choice.

Then it turns to the human being and says:

Choose freely.

This is the lie.

The human being is placed inside a food-world already built by others and then judged as a responsible consumer.

This is not freedom.

This is feedability under design.

II. THE REALITY PARADIGM

My paradigm is not a paradigm of the Truth.

It is a paradigm of Reality.

Truth asks: what is correct?

Reality asks: what has been constructed so that something can appear as correct, possible, necessary or inevitable?

The Reality Paradigm begins from a brutal proposition:

Power does not merely command the human being.

Power constructs the world in which the human being must act.

It does not merely say yes or no.

It builds the room.

It arranges the exits.

It defines the objects.

It names the dangers.

It prices the alternatives.

It establishes the documents required for entry.

It creates the world and then calls obedience realism.

This paradigm has two central concepts.

Onopticon.

Homovictimus.

Everything else is secondary.

Everything else is an application, mechanism or field-specific appearance.

There is no need for conceptual inflation.

There is no need to multiply names until the blow becomes weak.

The hammer is Onopticon.

The wound is Homovictimus.

III. ONOPTICON

The Panopticon watches.

The Onopticon constructs.

The Panopticon disciplines the subject through visibility.

The Onopticon precedes visibility.

It does not need to watch the subject at every moment, because it has already structured the environment in which the subject will move.

Onopticon is a regime of environmental and infrastructural imposition.

It does not primarily rule by shouting commands.

It does not primarily rule by watching bodies.

It rules by building the field.

It rules by making inclusion compulsory.

It rules by making exit costly, weakening or practically unavailable.

This is the core:

Onopticon = environmental and infrastructural imposition + compulsory inclusion
+ weakened exit.

The Onopticon does not only ask:

What will you choose?

It asks, before you arrive:

What will be available to be chosen?

What will be priced out of reach?

What will be regulated into invisibility?

What will be named backward?

What will be named sustainable?

What will be funded?

What will be patented?

What will become the future before anyone votes for it?

The Onopticon does not need to imprison everyone in the old sense.

It only needs to make life outside its structure weaker.

It does not need to ban the outside.

It only needs to make the outside expensive, unstable, illegible, shameful,
inefficient or impossible to sustain.

The strength of the Onopticon is not that it locks the door.

Its strength is that it makes the outside unlivable.

The subject remains formally free.

But the world of meaningful action has already been narrowed.

The subject can refuse.

But refusal has a cost.

The subject can exit.

But exit weakens them.

The subject can choose otherwise.

But the conditions of otherwise have been destroyed, priced, delegitimised or abandoned.

This is the Onopticon.

It creates the conditions of experience and then hides behind them.

When the constructed world appears natural, the Onopticon has succeeded.

IV. WHAT THE ONOPTICON IS NOT

The Onopticon is not everywhere.

If it were everywhere, it would explain nothing.

A concept that names everything names nothing.

Therefore, the Onopticon must be limited.

The Onopticon is not any structure.

It is not any institution.

It is not any regulation.

It is not any technology.

It is not any collective arrangement.

Every human world is structured in some way.

That is not yet Onopticon.

The Onopticon begins only when structuring becomes environmental and infrastructural imposition; when inclusion becomes compulsory; when exit becomes costly, weakening or practically unavailable.

A seed exchange is not automatically Onopticon.

A local food cooperative is not automatically Onopticon.

A public laboratory is not automatically Onopticon.

A fermentation technology is not automatically Onopticon.

A regulation is not automatically Onopticon.

They become onoptic only when they close the field of possibility and turn access into a controlled gate.

An open seed network, for example, is not Onopticon when it preserves shared access, protects plurality, allows participation, keeps knowledge transmissible, resists proprietary enclosure and does not make itself the compulsory gate through

which all seed life must pass.

Such a network may even be anti-onoptic.

It may reopen what the Onopticon closes.

It may return possibility to the field.

It may weaken the monopoly of reality assignment.

But an open seed network can become onoptic if it hardens into a closed authority, monopolises legitimacy, excludes local practices, centralises data, imposes obligatory standards or becomes the only recognised gate of lawful seed circulation.

The same is true of the cooperative.

The cooperative is not innocent by name.

It is anti-onoptic only when it expands participation, access, plurality and shared control.

It becomes onoptic when it reproduces the same logic of gatekeeping at a smaller scale.

Therefore, the question is never simply:

Is this thing Onopticon?

The question is:

Does this thing impose the environment?

Does it structure the infrastructure before the subject arrives?

Does it include the subject compulsorily?

Does it make exit costly, weakening or practically unavailable?

Does it hide its own construction?

Does it make alternatives disappear without appearing to ban them?

Does it assign responsibility to those who did not build the field?

If the answer is yes, the Onopticon is present.

If the answer is no, there may be structure, but not Onopticon.

The Onopticon is not the existence of order.

It is the capture of reality through order.

V. HOMOVICTIMUS

Homovictimus is not simply the victim.

That would be too weak.

Homovictimus is the human being made responsible inside a reality they did not construct.

Homovictimus is told:

You are free.

You are responsible.

You must choose ethically.

You must consume correctly.

You must reduce your carbon footprint.

You must eat sustainably.

You must become healthy.

You must become efficient.

You must adapt.

But Homovictimus did not build the infrastructures.

Homovictimus did not write the patents.

Homovictimus did not design the market.

Homovictimus did not train the algorithm.

Homovictimus did not set the price.

Homovictimus did not authorise the substitute.

Homovictimus did not destroy the local producer.

Homovictimus did not decide which future would receive capital and which would disappear.

Yet Homovictimus is judged.

This is the structure:

Responsibility without corresponding power.

Choice without control over the field of choice.

Freedom inside a constructed corridor.

Homovictimus is not passive.

This must be said clearly.

Homovictimus can resist, refuse, sabotage, organise, cultivate, exchange, preserve seeds, build cooperatives, defend local foodways and create alternative

infrastructures.

But resistance does not erase pre-structuring.

A human being may resist a system and still live inside conditions they did not design.

Homovictimus names this contradiction.

Not absolute helplessness.

Not pure victimhood.

But the gap between assigned responsibility and infrastructural power.

VI. THE METABOLIC ONOPTICON

The Metabolic Onopticon is not a separate paradigm.

It is the application of the Onopticon to food, nourishment and metabolic dependency.

It names the regime that pre-structures what human beings may be fed with.

It is the Onopticon of the table.

The Onopticon of protein.

The Onopticon of hunger.

The Onopticon of the cell line, the growth medium, the fermentation tank, the patent office, the carbon label, the novel food dossier, the procurement contract and the AI model.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not merely say:

Eat this.

It does something more dangerous.

It constructs the world in which this becomes the available, legitimate, moral, scalable, fundable and future-facing food.

It does not need to ban all alternatives.

It only needs to make life outside its food infrastructure weaker.

The lentil becomes old.

The chickpea becomes poor.

The small farmer becomes inefficient.

The local dish becomes nostalgic.

The seed exchange becomes informal.

The pasture becomes carbon-heavy.

The animal becomes emissions.

The insect becomes protein powder.

The cell becomes meat.

The microbe becomes milk.

The model becomes rational diet.

The label becomes morality.

The shelf becomes destiny.

This is the Metabolic Onopticon.

It does not begin at the mouth.

It begins before the table is set.

Its power is not simply that it offers new foods.

Its power is that it weakens the world outside the new food regime.

VII. FOOD IS NOT A MOLECULE

Food is not merely protein.

Food is not merely fat.

Food is not merely carbon.

Food is not merely amino-acid profile.

Food is not merely texture.

Food is not merely yield.

Food is not merely land-use efficiency.

Food is animal, soil, labour, hunger, memory, death, feast, shame, poverty, grandmother, village, market, smell, religion, prohibition, class, desire and history.

To reduce food to the molecule is not only a scientific act.

It is a political act.

Measurement is not the enemy.

But when only the measurable is treated as real, the world is mutilated.

A model may show that novel foods can reduce environmental impacts under specified conditions. Mazac and colleagues report that incorporating novel foods into European dietary models could reduce global warming potential, water use and land use by more than 80 percent under nutritional and feasibility constraints.

That matters.

It must not be ignored.

But a model is not a meal.

Optimisation is not culture.

The danger begins when the model replaces the table.

When food becomes a problem of optimisation, the human being becomes a metabolic unit.

Taste becomes a behavioural barrier.

Culture becomes friction.

Poverty becomes affordability constraint.

Resistance becomes consumer hesitation.

Memory becomes non-compliance.

The Onopticon does not destroy culture by declaring war on it.

It translates culture into a variable and then optimises around it.

VIII. ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS ARE NOT INNOCENT

Alternative proteins are not innocent simply because the old food system is rotten.

The old food system is rotten.

Industrial animal agriculture produces severe environmental, ethical and health problems.

This must be admitted without hesitation.

Food systems are major contributors to greenhouse-gas emissions, land use, water use and biodiversity pressure; FAO and other global food-system analyses repeatedly place agrifood systems at the centre of climate and sustainability debates.

But the rottenness of the old regime is not the innocence certificate of the new.

Cultivated meat, precision fermentation, insect protein, microbial foods and AI-designed protein platforms are not merely solutions.

They are also gates.

A gate can protect.

A gate can exclude.

A gate can organise.

A gate can capture.

A gate can become compulsory while still calling itself alternative.

This is the decisive point:

The question is not whether alternative proteins can reduce harm.

Some may.

The question is:

Under whose control?

Through which patents?

With what regulatory costs?

For whose market?

Against which producers?

At what scale?

With what energy?

With what dependency?

With what erasure of existing foodways?

With what exit?

If these questions are not asked, sustainability becomes a mask.

The future arrives as a moral command.

IX. THE ANIMAL INSIDE THE ONOPTICON

The animal must not disappear from this manifesto.

If the critique of alternative proteins forgets animal suffering, it becomes morally cheap.

The old food regime is not merely inefficient.

It is not merely carbon-heavy.

It is not merely ecologically destructive.

It is a machinery of organised animal suffering.

The animal is born into infrastructure.

The animal is bred into function.

The animal is selected for yield.

The animal is confined for efficiency.

The animal is transported as weight.

The animal is slaughtered as throughput.

The animal is disassembled as product.

The animal does not enter the food system as an animal.

It enters as future meat.

This is also Onopticon.

Not because the animal is persuaded.

Not because the animal is morally addressed.

Not because the animal is called responsible.

But because the animal's world is environmentally and infrastructurally imposed before the animal can live it.

The animal's body is placed inside a reality already built for extraction.

Its movement is designed.

Its reproduction is managed.

Its feeding is calculated.

Its growth is accelerated.

Its pain is normalised.

Its death is scheduled.

Its remains are priced.

The animal is not only killed.

The animal is made killable.

The animal is not only eaten.

The animal is made edible through a world that has already stripped it of world.

This is the animal Onopticon.

The farm is not simply a place.

The farm is a reality-machine.

The cage, the pen, the feedlot, the slaughter line, the genetic programme, the veterinary protocol, the transport crate, the stunning chamber, the carcass hook - these are not neutral instruments.

They are the architecture through which a living being is converted into meat before death completes the conversion.

Here the Onopticon reaches a brutal clarity.

For the human, exit is costly.

For the animal, exit is abolished.

The animal is not Homovictimus in the same way as the human.

The animal is not held morally responsible for choices inside a constructed field.

The animal is not told to choose.

The animal is denied even the fiction of choice.

But the animal reveals the deepest violence of the Onopticon:

a world can be built so completely around a being that the being appears to have existed only for that world.

The chicken appears to have existed for the tray.

The cow appears to have existed for the steak.

The pig appears to have existed for the cut.

The fish appears to have existed for the fillet.

This appearance is not natural.

It is manufactured.

The animal is transformed from life into inventory, from body into protein, from suffering into externality.

This is why the critique of cultivated meat must never become an apology for industrial animal agriculture.

The old regime is not innocent because the new regime is dangerous.

The new regime is not innocent because the old regime is monstrous.

Both can be true.

The slaughterhouse is not redeemed by the patent.

The patent is not redeemed by the slaughterhouse.

One regime cuts the animal open.

Another may capture the cell line, the growth medium and the future of meat.

The task is not to choose one innocence against another.

There is no innocence here.

There are only different architectures of violence.

Industrial animal agriculture organises the suffering of sentient beings at massive scale.

Cultivated meat may reduce slaughter, and that ethical possibility cannot be dismissed.

A serious manifesto must say this plainly.

If fewer animals are bred into suffering, confined into production and killed for meat, that matters.

But the reduction of slaughter does not automatically abolish domination.

It may relocate domination from the animal body to the cellular gate, from the barn to the bioreactor, from the farmer to the platform, from the slaughter line to the patent office.

The ethical question is therefore double.

First:

How do we confront the existing machinery of animal suffering without denial?

Second:

How do we prevent the answer to that suffering from becoming a new Onopticon of food?

If this second question is asked without the first, the manifesto becomes cruel.

If the first is asked without the second, the manifesto becomes naive.

The animal must remain in the centre.

Not as symbol.

Not as sentimental ornament.

Not as marketing image for clean protein.

But as the living being whose suffering exposes the lie that food systems are merely technical arrangements.

The animal is where the old regime bleeds.

The cell line is where the new regime hides.

The Metabolic Onopticon must hold both in view.

X. PATENT IS A METABOLIC WEAPON

You cannot patent the hunger of humanity.

But you can patent the conditions under which hunger will be answered.

You cannot patent the lentil as such.

You cannot patent the chickpea as such.

You cannot patent the bean as such.

But you can patent the engineered strain.

The growth medium.

The scaffold.

The cell line.

The process.

The texture pathway.

The fermentation protocol.

The purification method.

The flavour design.

The gate.

Patent law is not identical everywhere, but the structural distinction matters: the USPTO treats laws of nature, natural phenomena and abstract ideas as patent-eligibility exceptions, while the European Patent Office allows patentability for biological material isolated from its natural environment or produced through a technical process under specified conditions.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not need to own every meal.

It only needs to own the passage through which the meal becomes possible.

This is the new seizure.

Not seizure of bread.

Seizure of the gate through which bread is replaced.

XI. REGULATION IS NOT ONLY SAFETY

Safety matters.

No serious critique can deny this.

Food must not poison people.

Novel foods must be assessed.

Public health is not a joke.

The European Union's novel food system places authorisation with the European Commission after EFSA safety evaluation, and EFSA describes its role as assessing the safety of novel foods before they enter the EU market.

But safety is never only safety once it becomes a dossier, a cost, a legal procedure, a consultancy chain, a toxicological file and a bureaucratic threshold.

The large firm calls it compliance.

The small producer calls it a wall.

The same rule can protect the public and exclude the weak.

This is not contradiction.

This is modern governance.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not abolish safety.

It routes safety through gates that not everyone can pass.

XII. AI DOES NOT EAT, BUT IT DESIGNS APPETITE

Artificial intelligence does not eat.

But it can help design what eating will become.

It can model protein structures.

It can predict texture.

It can optimise fermentation.

It can map consumer preference.

It can identify flavour pathways.

It can segment appetite.

It can turn desire into data.

AlphaFold demonstrated the power of AI-based protein-structure prediction, with Jumper and colleagues reporting highly accurate protein-structure prediction in Nature in 2021.

This is scientifically extraordinary.

But the political question remains.

Who owns the model?

Whose data trains it?

Which tastes become default?

Which populations become the norm?

Which cuisines are invisible?

Which appetites are treated as primitive?

Which food futures become investable because they are calculable?

AI does not abolish hunger.

It can render hunger computational.

It can make appetite legible to capital.

It can turn the mouth into a market prediction.

For AI, appetite is a data point.

But appetite is not a point.

It is childhood, poverty, disgust, memory, prohibition, festival, mourning, class, desire and silence.

No regression line can hold that without loss.

XIII. THE INSECT IS NOT RETURN TO NATURE

The insect is not simply nature returning to the plate.

In traditional entomophagy, the insect may belong to season, ecology, ritual, local practice and embodied knowledge.

In industrial insect protein, the insect becomes biomass.

Flour.

Powder.

Functional ingredient.

Feed input.

Protein unit.

The insect is not eaten as insect.

It is processed as platform.

FAO's work on edible insects treats insects as possible resources for food and feed security, while also discussing rearing, processing, safety, livelihoods and cultural acceptance.

That is precisely the point.

The insect enters the Onopticon when it is detached from local relation and converted into a global protein strategy.

The living body is renamed.

The renamed body is processed.

The processed body is legitimised.

The legitimised body is placed on the shelf.

The shelf is called future.

XIV. CULTIVATED MEAT IS NOT MERELY MEAT WITHOUT SLAUGHTER

Cultivated meat cannot be judged honestly if animal suffering is erased.

The strongest argument for cultivated meat is not novelty.

It is not investment.

It is not technological elegance.

It is the possibility of reducing the mass breeding, confinement and slaughter of sentient animals.

That possibility is real.

It is ethically serious.

It must not be mocked.

But it must also not be used as a moral blank cheque.

The question is not whether slaughter matters.

It does.

The question is whether the reduction of slaughter will be used to sanctify a new proprietary food infrastructure.

The suffering animal must not become the advertising shield of the patent gate.

Cultivated meat is often presented as an ethical escape.

Less slaughter.

Less land.

Less harm.

Perhaps.

But the question is not only what harm is reduced.

The question is what power is created.

Moss argues that cultured meat may threaten food sovereignty by reducing food to its components, removing producers from ecological relations and reinforcing power asymmetries. This directly supports the warning that cultured meat is not merely an ethical object, but a political infrastructure.

The animal disappears.

But the patent appears.

The slaughterhouse may shrink.

But the bioreactor expands.

The farmer may disappear.

But the platform remains.

The living relation is not liberated.

It is reorganised.

This is the hard truth:

A food technology can reduce one violence while creating another dependency.

The old violence was bloody.

The new violence may be sterile.

Sterility does not mean innocence.

XV. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS NOT ENOUGH IF REALITY IS ALREADY CAPTURED

Food sovereignty asks:

Who controls food systems?

Who defines agriculture?

Who decides what people eat?

These questions are necessary.

But the Onopticon asks a prior question:

What must happen before something can appear as food at all?

If food has already been reduced to protein, carbon, yield, patentability, regulatory approval and investment potential, then sovereignty arrives late.

The battle has already moved upstream.

Broad argues that plant-based and cell-based animal product alternatives risk being absorbed into the corporate food regime and may conflict with food sovereignty perspectives. Baudish and colleagues argue that the protein debate should be reframed through a justice gap rather than a simple protein gap. These are important interventions. They identify power. They identify justice. They identify the danger of corporate absorption.

The Metabolic Onopticon goes one step earlier.

It asks:

Who controls the conditions under which food futures become visible?

This is metabolic sovereignty.

Not merely the right to choose food.

The right to contest the construction of food reality itself.

XVI. EMPIRICAL LAG AND THE COMPLICITY OF KNOWLEDGE

This manifesto does not hide its limit.

It is not a patent map.

It is not a market survey.

It is not a regulatory cost analysis.

It is not a life-cycle assessment.

It is a theoretical alarm.

But alarm must not become laziness.

Empirical lag is not an excuse for the absence of evidence.

It is an accusation against the regime that recognises violence only after violence has produced measurable remains.

There is a form of knowledge that arrives too late and still calls itself rigorous.

There is a form of academic caution that is not caution at all.

It is obedience with footnotes.

It says:

Wait for the data.

Wait for the damage.

Wait for the bodies.

Wait for the bankrupt producers.

Wait for the closed farms.

Wait for the lost seeds.

Wait for the destroyed foodways.

Wait for the monopoly to become visible.

Wait until the gate is built.

Wait until the exit is gone.

Then speak.

This is not neutrality.

This is epistemological complicity.

The academic order often treats early warning as speculation and delayed description as science.

It does not ask whether thought could have seen the structure before the wound.

It asks whether the wound has already become countable.

War reveals this obscenity in its naked form.

For war to become a proper object of rigorous study, the war must often first happen.

People must die.

Cities must burn.

Displacement routes must form.

Children must be counted.

Mass graves must be mapped.

Trauma must be surveyed.

Loss must become dataset.

Only then does the institution arrive with method.

Only then does the report become serious.

Only then does the grant become possible.

Only then does the dead become evidence.

This does not make research useless.

It makes late knowledge morally suspect when it mistakes its delay for superiority.

In some matters, scientific certainty after devastation is not wisdom.

It is a clean autopsy.

The same structure operates in food, more slowly, more quietly, more politely.

The producer collapses.

Then comes the rural report.

The seed disappears.

Then comes the biodiversity paper.

The patent gate closes.

Then comes the market concentration analysis.

The consumer's alternatives narrow.

Then comes the behavioural study.

The local cuisine is severed from practice.
Then comes the heritage project.
The wound is made.
Then knowledge kneels beside it and calls itself objective.
This is empirical lag.
Not the absence of data.
The lateness of authorised knowledge.
The Metabolic Onopticon benefits from this delay.
It builds before it is measured.
It captures before it is named.
It reorganises before it is audited.
It becomes infrastructure before it becomes controversy.
By the time academic reason arrives, the regime no longer appears as a project.
It appears as reality.
And reality is always harder to indict than intention.

This is the crime of empirical lag:

It forces thought to wait until domination becomes data.
It forces critique to speak only after the field has already been rearranged.
It allows the gate to be built in the name of innovation, safety, sustainability and necessity.
Then it asks the critic to prove harm inside a world already shaped by the harm.

No.

This manifesto does not reject evidence.
It rejects the priesthood of delay.
It rejects the arrogance that confuses late measurement with truth.

It rejects the academic alibi that says:

We could not speak before the damage became measurable.
Some structures must be named while they are still being assembled.
Some gates must be exposed before they become the only road.
Some futures must be interrupted before they become common sense.

To wait is sometimes method.

But sometimes waiting is collaboration.

The question is not whether data matters.

It does.

The question is who benefits when only completed damage counts as knowledge.

The Metabolic Onopticon lives in that interval.

Between construction and recognition.

Between capture and proof.

Between warning and publication.

Between the wound and the dataset.

That interval is where reality is seized.

That interval is where Homovictimus is produced.

That interval is where hunger becomes governable before hunger becomes evidence.

Empirical lag is therefore not a minor epistemological problem.

It is one of the temporal weapons of the Onopticon.

It is the delay through which power becomes normal before critique becomes legitimate.

XVII. THIS IS NOT TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

This manifesto does not say:

Biotechnology is evil.

Fermentation is evil.

Artificial intelligence is evil.

Cultivated meat is evil.

That would be stupid.

Technology does not have one political soul.

The same technical process can serve different social relations.

Open infrastructures are not the same as proprietary platforms.

Cooperative ownership is not the same as venture-capital enclosure.

Democratic regulation is not the same as regulatory capture.

Public knowledge is not the same as patent dependency.

The Metabolic Onopticon begins where food technology becomes enclosed inside gates not democratically controlled.

It names not technology itself, but the capture of food possibility by technical systems that present themselves as inevitable.

The concept is falsifiable.

If the structure does not impose the environment, if inclusion is not compulsory, if exit is not costly or weakening, if alternatives remain viable, then the Onopticon is not fully present.

If the gates are owned, patented, hidden, financialised and moralised, the Onopticon grows.

XVIII. THE GLOBAL SOUTH IS NOT THE LABORATORY OF THE FUTURE

The Global South must not be turned into the substrate of someone else's clean protein future.

In the Global North, the question is often:

Which protein is sustainable?

In the Global South, the question may be:

Will the rain come?

Will the seed be available?

Will the price of imported wheat rise?

Will fertiliser arrive?

Will debt swallow the harvest?

Will war close the road?

Will aid come with conditions?

SOFI 2025 highlights how elevated food-price inflation undermines access to healthy diets, especially among low-income populations, while UNCTAD stresses that countries facing acute food insecurity are often highly dependent on imports and vulnerable to price spikes and supply disruptions.

In one world, future protein is a branding problem.

In another, food is debt, drought, import dependency and survival.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not operate evenly.

In Silicon Valley, it may appear as investment.

In Europe, as regulation and ethical consumption.

In China, as state strategy.

In the Global South, as dependency, aid, input control, land pressure and raw-material extraction.

The future is never universal.

It arrives with geography.

XIX. HOMOVICTIMUS AT THE TABLE

Metabolic Homovictimus is Homovictimus at the table.

The human being is told:

Eat responsibly.

Eat sustainably.

Eat ethically.

Eat for the planet.

But this human being did not build the food-world.

They did not subsidise one crop and destroy another.

They did not patent the fermentation process.

They did not design the carbon label.

They did not choose the procurement policy.

They did not train the appetite model.

They did not price the healthy diet beyond reach.

Yet they are responsible.

This is the cruelty.

The subject is morally burdened after being infrastructurally disarmed.

Metabolic Homovictimus is not the one who cannot act.

It is the one who must act inside conditions already constructed.

That is worse.

XX. THE INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION OF HOMOVICTIMUS

The Onopticon is not only outside the subject.

It is not only shelf, patent, regulation, algorithm, bioreactor, carbon label and price.

Those are its outer bones.

Its deeper victory begins when the subject carries the cage inward.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not merely build the food-world.

It teaches the subject how to feel inside it.

It trains disgust.

It trains guilt.

It trains aspiration.

It trains shame.

It trains what appears modern.

It trains what appears backward.

It trains what appears healthy, ethical, rational, sustainable and future-facing.

The subject does not simply encounter the shelf.

The subject has already been prepared for the shelf.

This is the interior construction of Homovictimus.

Homovictimus is not only trapped by infrastructure.

Homovictimus is taught to desire the infrastructure.

The screen arrives before the table.

The advertisement arrives before hunger.

The carbon label arrives before memory.

The influencer arrives before grandmother.

The nutrition app arrives before appetite.

The sustainability campaign arrives before taste.

The dashboard arrives before the village.

The model arrives before the meal.

The subject is not only told what to eat.

The subject is taught how to judge themselves for wanting otherwise.

This is the most efficient form of power.

Not prohibition.

Self-accusation.

The old command said:

You must obey.

The new command says:

You must choose better.

And the subject repeats:

I must choose better.

I must eat better.

I must optimise myself.

I must reduce my footprint.

I must adapt to the future.

I must leave old food behind.

I must not be primitive.

I must not be irresponsible.

I must not be dirty.

I must not be nostalgic.

I must not be a burden on the planet.

The cage speaks through the prisoner.

This is not persuasion in the simple sense.

It is reality-training.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not need every person to love alternative proteins.

It needs the world outside its food regime to feel morally, economically and cognitively weaker.

It needs the old table to feel guilty.

It needs the local producer to feel inefficient.

It needs the animal relation to appear only as emissions.

It needs the lentil to appear insufficient.

It needs the chickpea to appear poor.

It needs the village dish to appear unscientific.

It needs the bioreactor to appear clean.

It needs the patent to appear innovative.

It needs the platform to appear inevitable.

It needs the model to appear rational.

Then the subject does the rest.

The subject polices themselves.

The subject edits their appetite.

The subject mistrusts their own memory.

The subject calls adaptation freedom.

This is the psychological economy of feedability.

Attention is the first field of cultivation.

Before the cell is cultured, appetite is cultured.

Before protein is designed, desire is designed.

Before the market is entered, the imagination is entered.

The Metabolic Onopticon colonises attention so that its infrastructure arrives as recognition rather than shock.

By the time the product appears, the subject has already seen its future in images.

Clean labs.

White coats.

Blue planets.

Smiling children.

Ethical consumers.

Carbon numbers.

Efficient proteins.

Cruelty-free surfaces.

Sterile salvation.

The screen prepares the mouth.

The mouth believes it chose.

This is how Homovictimus is interiorised.

Not by brute force.

By the conversion of external necessity into internal morality.

The subject is made to feel responsible for the very world that disarmed them.

This is why Homovictimus is not merely a social position.

It is also a psychic wound.

The wound is not only that the subject lacks power.

The wound is that the subject may come to experience this lack of power as personal failure.

If they cannot eat well, they failed.

If they cannot afford sustainability, they failed.

If they remain attached to old food, they failed.

If they distrust the new protein future, they are irrational.

If they resist the model, they are anti-science.

If they refuse the shelf, they are nostalgic.

If they ask who owns the gate, they are obstructing progress.

This is the inner court of the Onopticon.

The trial no longer needs a judge.

The subject becomes the courtroom.

Homovictimus is condemned from within.

The Metabolic Onopticon therefore has two architectures.

The outer architecture:

Patents.

Platforms.

Labels.

Regulations.

Procurement.

Bioreactors.

AI models.

Supply chains.

The inner architecture:

Guilt.

Shame.

Aspiration.

Fear.

Moral self-surveillance.

Desire for inclusion.

Fear of being backward.

Fear of being outside.

The outer architecture weakens exit materially.

The inner architecture weakens exit psychologically.

Together they produce feedability.

A human being can leave a building.

It is harder to leave a reality that has entered the nerves.

This is why the Onopticon is stronger than the Panopticon.

The Panopticon wants the subject to fear being watched.

The Onopticon wants the subject to become unable to imagine the outside as livable.

Its highest achievement is not obedience.

Its highest achievement is when the subject calls the constructed world their own choice.

XXI. AGAINST THE DEMAND FOR SOLUTIONS

This manifesto does not offer solutions.

It refuses the demand.

Not because the wound is unimportant.

But because the demand for solutions often arrives as the final discipline of critique.

First they build the gate.

Then they ask the critic to design a better gate.

First they construct the corridor.

Then they ask for a more humane corridor.

First they enclose the future.

Then they demand a policy proposal inside the enclosure.

No.

The task of this manifesto is not to manage the Metabolic Onopticon.

It is not to reform its locks.

It is not to decorate its gates with ethical language.

It is not to make feedability more inclusive.

The first task is exposure.

The first task is naming.

The first task is to show that what appears as necessity has been constructed.

The Onopticon always asks critique to become administration.

It asks thought to become roadmap.

It asks refusal to become stakeholder input.

It asks negation to become design feedback.

It asks the wound to become a policy document.

This manifesto refuses that conversion.

A solution offered too quickly becomes part of the machinery.

A repair proposed inside the gate may strengthen the gate.

A humane alternative may become the next compulsory architecture.

The Metabolic Onopticon does not need enemies who misunderstand it.

It needs critics who are forced to improve it.

This text does not improve the cage.

It points to the cage.

It does not promise exit.

It breaks the innocence of the room.

Disclosure is not liberation.

But without disclosure, liberation becomes another managed illusion.

XXII. FINAL DECLARATION

The Metabolic Onopticon is not the future of food.

It is the danger inside the future of food.

It is the possibility that hunger will not be solved, but possessed.

It is the possibility that food will not be liberated from old violence, but captured by new gates.

It is the possibility that the human being will not be nourished, but rendered feedable.

Do not ask only:

What will we eat?

Ask:

Who is constructing the world in which this becomes food?

Who owns the gate?

Who names the future?

Who disappears when the alternative arrives?

Who is held responsible after the conditions have already been built?

Can one remain outside without being weakened?

Can one refuse without being punished by infrastructure?

Can one exit without losing access to the conditions of life?

The Onopticon constructs reality.

Homovictimus is judged inside it.

The Metabolic Onopticon constructs the food-world.

Metabolic Homovictimus is told to choose responsibly within it.

The animal is made edible before it is killed.

The human is made responsible before they choose.

The cell is made proprietary before it becomes meat.

The shelf is made moral before it appears as freedom.

The Onopticon does not only build the cage.

It teaches the prisoner to call the cage reason.

It does not only weaken exit.

It weakens the imagination of exit.

That is why the Metabolic Onopticon is not merely a food regime.

It is a regime of appetite, attention, animal suffering and reality.

That is the crime.

That is the paradigm.

That is the warning.

Older power could starve human beings.

Newer power seeks to determine what may count as food.

Its strength begins there.

Its limit begins when this construction is seen.

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