

Counter Culture: Reading Nabarun Bhattacharya's *Lubdhak* as an Anti-anthropocentric Narrative

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Abstract-

*Posthumanism adopts a critical stance toward humanism, encouraging humans to acknowledge and engage with nonhuman entities while rejecting essentialist and hierarchical distinctions between culture and nature. This paper aims to investigate the involvement of dogs in Nabarun Bhattacharya's *Lubdhak* (2006) within the framework of post-humanist principles, particularly in questioning the exploitation of animals. The novel initiates a fresh discourse on animal life and rights, positioning animals at the core of the narrative. The paper seeks to acknowledge the capacity of animals to disrupt, astonish, and reshape shared human experiences. Specifically, it explores how the organization and discourse of street dogs challenge and disrupt anthropocentrism, questioning aspects of human development, rationalism, invention, and the ethical use or misuse of scientific knowledge. The argument will explore the extent to which the animal gaze undermines the dominance of reason's agenda, introducing an "alterity" to reason within the temporal continuum.*

Main Discussion

Lubdhak by Nabarun Bhattacharya is a book that addresses "the gaze of the political animal." As we envision it, the act of writing starts with the gaze of the political animal. Using a study of the animal gaze, this paper aims to investigate how the novel *Lubdhak* shows and addresses the dogs. I would then go on to assess how the dogs in Nabarun Bhattacharya's *Lubdhak* (2006) participate in the post-humanist logos and question the exploitation of animals, keeping in mind Jacques Derrida and Cary Wolfe, who show that to adopt a posthumanist approach to animals is to address the unexamined framework of speciesism. It would be an evaluation of how the aforementioned book places animals at the center of the narrative and initiates a fresh conversation on animal rights and life. The human figures in Bhattacharya's book will be analyzed from a posthumanist perspective, encouraging people "to respect and respond to realms that are not human." (Ryan 69). "The Political Animal" by Chris Danta and Dimitris Vardoulakis (2008) asserts that "the animal also becomes political, in the sense that it conditions the possibility of uniqueness and identity" (Danta and Vardoulakis). I would like to acknowledge the ability of animals to disrupt, astonish, and reestablish human connection. The main topic of this article is how the street dogs' organization and their discussion of humanity (its evolution, rationalism, creation, usage, and abuse of scientific understanding) contest and "disturb" anthropocentrism. The way humans are currently conceptualized ensures the oppression of non-human creatures. Derrida discusses the animals' ability to acknowledge "our" presence and perceive "our" existence, without which "I" (the human) would not exist. Nabarun Bhattacharya states in the foreword of the book *Lubdhak* (2006) that "the right to the sphere of life is not only of man, but of all living things." Derrida and Bhattacharya want to go from "the crossing of borders" between humans and animals to "the ends of man," or humanity's limits (Derrida 372) Derrida focuses on what the animal gaze reveals about human cognition, while in a separate context, Bhattacharya continues to dissect the accepted definition of life in language. The book initiates a fresh conversation on animal life and places the animals at its center, giving them rights.

Bhattacharya's viewpoint discusses posthumanism, which criticizes humanism and calls for rejection of essentialist and hierarchical distinctions and shows respect for and response to non-human realms. As the new century dawns, the city experiences beautification, which necessitates the expulsion of street dogs. Considering other related problems, the authorities have decided to confine the dogs inside Pinjrapoles (a location for putting the stray animals in cages). The concentration camps are similar to these pinjrapoles. One Pinjrapole has enough room for more than 117 deceased canines, whose bodies the worms would eat. These "wounded animals" draw our attention and deprive us of our political authority. The concept of the "political gaze" has a long history. In *Animal Theory: A*

Critical Introduction (2015), Derek Ryan notes that there are several instances of animals kept in anthropocentric forms throughout the history of Western thought. Many ideas have dominated discussions about animals' abilities, their treatment, and the perception that they have a lower status than humans (5). Man was described as "a wingless biped" by the members of Plato's Academy, and in Aristotle's *Politics* (1995), according to Aristotle, "the human is a political animal." Consequently, at the start of Western history, according to philosophy, people are superior to nonhuman creatures, who are kept apart from the polis and its inhabitants. Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (1968) states that "not only do animals have less reason than man, but they possess none at all"; "they lack a mind." By the seventeenth century's conclusion Philosophers such as Leibniz, Spinoza, John Locke, and David Hume had provided objections to Descartes' theory of animals and addressed the animals' "lively" abilities. Leibniz and Spinoza proposed a creative monism that rejected Cartesian mind-body dualism. In his 1996 book *Ethics*, Spinoza disagrees with both the human/animal divide and human superiority. Leibniz focuses on the "souls," but Locke saw the potential of "sensation," "heightened perceptions," and "memory" that "resembles reason," "perception," and "retention" in various species. It is important to note Immanuel Kant's viewpoint here since he believes that humans should be given moral attention because of their rationality, which animals "lack," yet he urges us to refrain from treating animals cruelly since it could become a habit. Animals in post-Darwinian modernity frequently appear as symbols and metaphors. The fascination with animality that Freud and Lacan had is frequently weakened by the usage of animal representations as "stand-ins for human anxieties and aspirations" or as contrasts for an "examination of human language." Merleau-Ponty's concept of animals as part of "the flesh of the world" provides new perspectives on animal research. The interpretation of *Lubdhak* depends on this lengthy history of animal theory that does not subscribe to the anthropocentric worldview.

The book *Lubdhak* opens with a reflection on historically catastrophic earthquakes, primarily focusing on the 1737 Kolkata earthquake that claimed 300,000 lives. about the 1737 Kolkata earthquake that claimed 300,000 lives. It was among the three most catastrophic earthquakes of all time. Bhattacharya is skeptical of the historical metanarrative that documents the death of solely humans, leaving out the rest of the wildlife and other non-human species. Thus, he brings up the matter of the exclusion of animals from human history and raises the query, "Undoubtedly, not just the human resides in a metropolis, so where are the dogs?" (Bhattacharya, 10). Bhattacharya's concerns include the dogs' relocation from the past and the man-made city. Is it because "only the human possesses the logos," as Aristotle believed in his *Politics* (1995)? (Aristotle 1253, 10-11)? Indeed, through this logos, people "rationalize, normalize, and ultimately code their behavior." (Danta and Dimitris, 4) The "passive" animals and "active" humans are divided. However, the animals are not to be viewed as "Others" in the post-humanist logos; instead, there is a perceived affinity between animals and humans. As we can see, *Lubdhak's* posthumanist creatures, in contrast to the humanist creatures that are devoid of "language, consciousness, and self-consciousness," provide a forum for and must "learn about animal consciousness" to remake history (Drive, 2). Bhattacharya is well-known for

using strong language that can forcefully refute and attack any dogmatic culture. He laments the brutality of science and its murderous creation. As a result, he challenges the custom of utilizing science, which has no authority to wipe out the planet where all species have equal rights and contributions. The description of the subject and the object becomes important in Bhattacharya's story. Before using them in his text, he thoroughly examines the items, which come from various branches of study. He cites, for instance, the scientific Shuttle Box experiment, which was used to shock and kill the creatures gradually. The Shuttle Box experiment's description alludes to "animal cruelty," the sadist human's delight in the creative method of murder. Ten to twelve days later, the "active" dog is learning and embracing defenselessness and makes no attempt to jump or get out of the shuttle box.

Here, the language adopts an animal viewpoint, and we must react to the creatures' significance and presence. Before "their" "silent" presence, "we" feel embarrassed while reading the narrative about how we treat and feel about the animals. The novel's characters are introduced by Bhattacharya in the second chapter. Kaan Gojano is one of them. Gojano, which means "growing new ears," is a terrified black bitch with a long past. It was an acid assault. Someone threw acid on her head out of personal hatred. She might be able to preserve her head somehow but had to wait for a replacement ear to grow after losing one of hers. She carries the terrible recollection in her name. Now, she discovers a small area close to a landfill. Relatively safe is the area behind the vat. Five plans designed by the local government to expel dogs from the city are presented in Chapter 3. Each and every scheme is hampered by a counterargument outlining the problematic aspects of the relevant scheme. Thus, one human logos is opposed by another, and the last one that is recognized is the one that has the strongest reasoning. Pinjrapoles, which were developed during the colonial era, would be used since they would manage the entire procedure. The dogs' political preparation is described in Chapter 5. They sketch out a blueprint for their assault on humans. They refused to allow the dogs to be captured by the dogcatchers. They would conceal themselves. They form a group for concealment. As a result, they use their political expertise to save lives. The hounds continued to unite under the direction of Bahanno, a yellowish bitch who bit fifty-two people for their senseless disruption. Kaan-Gojano, unable to forget the acid attack, makes friends with Gypsy, a former pet who had to relocate to a new place to live that would welcome him after being well-fed and now being shunned. The dogs are able to recognize and understand when humans act aggressively against animals. Following a lengthy discussion, Kaan-Gojano agrees and lets Gypsy stay there. The Cat, Gypsy, and Kaan-Gojano feel secure under the vat, demonstrating their awareness of the trust in communication and relationships across species. Kaan Gajano helps others see that "in the attempt of humans to make the city more beautiful, we are a mismatch with such beauty." (43). While conversing, the dogs discuss Pinjrapole and its effects, as well as human politics. The Shadow-Dogs are circling over the thirty-story and twenty-story human homes. They have no idea why this is occurring. However, they believe that something hazardous is going to take place. Every day, Badami, one of the canine messengers, puts herself in danger to deliver messages to several locations within the city. Acknowledging the bureaucratic aspect of human politics, Badami states, "They

are using their own method of plotting. That power is not ours. Therefore, we must control our own behavior.” (44) Their pals are starving and dehydrated to death at the Pinjrapoles. There is no choice except to go away. There are more dogs on the run. They are unsure if the dogs will have the ability to flee. They now consider magic to be real. The dogs were adamant about fighting for their lives. Hold their breath patiently as Alpha Canis Majoris, sometimes known as the "Dog Star" or the brightest star in the sky, begins to shine brighter than before. It is impossible for humans to explain the canines' rejection of the human world. The body of scientific knowledge cannot describe the widespread killing of dogs. One of the experts declares at the book's conclusion, "I do not locate any account of this incident in science." (67) Nabarun Bhattacharya questions the humanist logos, which cannot understand the animal's "vision." The hounds' departure contests knowledge and power, or the strength of an anthropocentric view of the world. Their flight asks that the terms "human" and "world" be redefined to eliminate the human-animal dichotomy and incorporate the creatures.

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