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## LEARNING FROM NONHUMAN ANIMALS: TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF POSTHUMANITIES

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### Abstract:

Throughout the debated discourse of humanism, humans were considered as the only species endowed with reason and moral values. The result was an andro/anthropocentric humanism that divided everything into hierarchies and confined everything within boundaries. European model of higher education has undoubtedly been an enforcement of humanist ideas and ideologies which established certain humans as exceptional and superior to other 'non-privileged' humans and nonhuman animals. In this era of posthumanism all the imposed and imbibed boundaries between the human and nonhuman are being questioned, challenged and eliminated to create an open network of cross-species encounters. In this context this article through the theories of Posthuman philosophy and Critical Animal Studies proposes a shift towards posthuman ethics of inclusion and understanding in the field of classical humanities in India. This can be achieved by employing post ontological methods to create and understand nonhuman representations. Theories and studies by posthuman scholars like Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Cary Wolfe, Graham Harman form the basis of this paper. This article is an acknowledgement as well as an advocacy of the shift happening across disciplines from humanities to post humanities, which however is yet to make a movement in education in India.

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On a rainy night we brought a shivering female ginger-tabby kitten home and gave her shelter and food. As she grew up she became part of our family and was named Ululu. Ululu's first pregnancy was tough, for she lost one of her kittens soon after birth and was left with only one male kitten. Because of sorrow or pain Ululu mourned the death of her first kitten. May be this is why Ululu became possessive and protective of her only kitten. Ululu taught the kitten many techniques to thrive. Imitating his mother, he learned how to talk, how to hunt, how to climb trees, how to request for food rather than taking it without permission, and that it is okay to scratch the rug but not the sofa. He was also taught that though some beings can be trusted, not all beings are alike. Ululu fell sick with her second pregnancy. She was taken to the vet, but her health deteriorated and one day she disappeared. I don't know what happened to her. It is said that cats don't like their humans to see them in pain and they prefer to die alone. This is my version of her story. Ululu I believe would have had a different story to tell.

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This is my experience of a cat, whom I have known only for two years, but whose memory stays with me still. I know my narrative is anthropomorphized with my assumptions of who Ululu was and what she was trying to tell. Though I have tried to represent her with empathy, there are instances where I ignore her as a cat and assume what she was trying to convey from a completely human perspective which makes it an anthropomorphic narrative for a lot of us. This is because the ideas of love, trust, care, pain, learning, and ethics are considered as human prerogatives. De Cartesian ideology considered humans as privileged with unique skills of reasoning, with the ability to judge right from wrong and with the honour of their capacity to create culture and history (Huxley, 1958, p.204-211). The result was an andro/anthropocentric humanism that divided everything into hierarchies and confined everything within boundaries. European model of higher education which was called 'humanities' in the Middle Ages was one institution that was used with the agenda of civilizing humans, which would distinguish them from animals (Davies, 1997, p.24-27). This system has undoubtedly been an enforcement of humanist ideas and ideologies which established certain humans as exceptional and superior to other 'non-privileged' humans and nonhuman animals.

Traditionally the field of humanities is associated with the study of liberal arts based on the cultural achievements of humans and is structured on "how people process and document the human experience" (Stanford Humanities Center, 2019). Such an anthropocentric outlook in our curriculum is outdated in this age of "humanimalmachines" (Pettman, 2011, p.6). Cary Wolfe (2003) while stating the "pressing relevance of the question of the animal...in contemporary culture...outside the humanities" (p.x) brings attention on how "the humanities are...now struggling to catch up with a radical reevaluation of the status of nonhuman animals that has taken place in society at large" (p.xi). In this era of posthumanism all the imposed and imbibed boundaries between the human and nonhuman are being questioned, challenged and eliminated to create an open network of cross-species encounters. All such "scholarly conversations" can be considered under "posthumanities" (Haraway, 2008, p.308).

In this context this article explores the idea of moving towards a posthuman ethics in the study of classical humanities in India. With reference to a variety of studies about the ethics in nonhuman animals, this paper proposes that a renewed understanding about the ethics of animals can contribute into building empathy and emotional intelligence in today's youth. Through the theories of Posthuman philosophy and Critical Animal Studies, my paper postulates that a post human ethics of inclusion and understanding should be imparted in the curriculum of education in India. This can be achieved by employing postontological methods like Diffraction, Object Oriented Ontology, and Posthuman Subjectivity when it comes to creating and understanding nonhuman representations beyond the limits of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. Theories and studies by posthuman scholars like Donna Haraway (2000; 2003; 2008), Rosi Braidotti (2013), Cary Wolfe (2003; 2008; 2009; 2010) form the basis of this paper. This is an acknowledgement as well as an advocacy of the shift happening across disciplines from humanities to posthumanities, which however is yet to make a movement in education in India.

It is to be noted that the 'animal' in this paper is not used as the standard binary to the human in anthropocentric ideologies. The word 'animal' should not be misunderstood as a limited phrase denoting only "a theme, trope, metaphor, analogy, representation, or sociological datum" (Wolfe, 2009, p.567). It is used to refer to those heterogeneous nonhuman sentient beings (nonhuman animals/animals) who share the space, culture and history with human beings. Human animals are the heterogeneous human beings who occupy the world who is different but not superior to each other or to other nonhuman agents. The term 'human' is used to refer to the

'human western white urban heterosexual male' which is considered as a prototype of human superiority towards what they consider as sub human beings, be it, the female, the dalit, the colored, the colonized, the queer or the animals.

Monotheistic religions in the Judeo Christian tradition and Islam propounded human exceptionalism where the god created a world based on hierarchies and "...saw that it was good" (The Holy Bible, Gen. 1.4-26). Such religions established power structures and constructed languages of "singularity of relationships" in "human dominion under God's dominion" (Haraway, 2008, p.245-6). Across philosophical and theological disciplines nonhuman animals have been considered as "lowly creatures of scant intelligence whose sentience consists only in base and impulsive reactions" (Crane, 2016, p.4). Aristotle while addressing man as a "Social Animal" stated that an unsocial man is "either a beast or a god" (1998, p.5). The cartesian idea of animals as automatons, Heidegger's and Schopenhauer's philosophy of the 'lacking animal' mind further cemented the concept of human supremacy. Darwin called man, "the only moral animal" not naturally but "potentially" (Wright, 1994, p.344). Throughout the debated discourse of humanism, humans were considered as the only species endowed with reason and moral values. However, a counter argument if not an antihumanist one challenging "human exceptionalism" was also in movement along with this (Haraway, 2008, p.306). Haraway speaks about the "three great historical wounds to the primary narcissism of the self-centered human subject": Copernican, Darwinian and Freudian (Haraway, 2008, p.11-12).

The impact that Darwin's evolution theories had in the socio-psycho history of humans and animals is significant which Haraway referring to Freud calls the "second wound ... which put Homo sapiens firmly in the world of other critters" (Haraway, 2008, p.11). In Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871), as he ponders on the evolution of moral sentiments in humans states that they are no different from animals (p.158-60). What decides these human moral codes? Wright (1994) remarks, "The molding of a moral code is a power struggle, and power in human societies is usually distributed complexly and unequally" (p.362).

In the *Indian Express* dated 24 July 2019, there was news about a bitch (or should I use 'female dog'?) being forced out of her house for having an "illicit affair" (borrowing that word from the news, for we don't know what it is for her) with her neighbor dog (Online Desk). The owner's human ethics could not understand or accommodate the sexuality and the animality (perhaps the ethics) of the female dog, which resulted in her expulsion. This made the owner impose his/her ideas of morality on the bitch that led to her being expelled into the streets. As advocates of Animal Rights are trying to find a new home for the female canine, we realize how tangled the concepts of human ethics and morality are. How and on what basis can an ethics towards animals evolve from this human ethics?

Even before Darwin, thinkers started pondering about the role and place of animals in the evolving human ethics. The concept of Animal Rights and Animal Ethics is said to have developed in the West as early as the 1630s, the "First known animal protection legislation ... in Ireland, "An Act against plowing by the tayle, and pulling the wool off living sheep" (Lin, 2019). This is true if we conveniently ignore the erasure of the pre-colonial cosmologies of various indigenous cultures and beliefs and their animal associations. Jeremy Bentham's (1776) remark, "the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?" signals this movement towards a utilitarian sentiment in the ethical treatment of animals (p.283). Bentham's ruminations on suffering as the standard to morality briefly ruminates on the suffering in animals. Influenced by Hindu ethics and Buddhism, German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer associated "compassion

towards animals” with “goodness of character” in humans (Schopenhauer, 1995, np.). Nietzsche’s ruminates on human values and “animal wisdom” and talks enviously about the “blissfull” absence of consciousness in nonhuman animals (Singer, 2011, p.26-7). Here too, the focus was on human amplitude and animal exiguity.

It was the feminist scholars who were quick to connect experiences of their bodies with the animal body. In the 1970s the animal ecofeminists through the praxis of intersectionality radically raised their voice against cruelty to animals, vivisection, fur fashion, animal experimentation, meat-eating, unethical zoo-keeping, and pet-keeping to list a few (Gaard, 2012, p.14-15). However, such animal ecofeminist movements were also mocked at, questioned, and suppressed by patriarchal power structures. They used the animal-woman movements to further cement their shared dehumanized and subservient status imposed on them.

These sentiments however gained attention and got propelled into today’s Animal Ethics through the works of male philosophers like Peter Singer. Peter Singer in his *In Defence of Animals* (2006) upholds the possibilities within the inclusion of nonhumans in his utilitarian scheme of ethics. He “moved beyond the animal welfare tradition of ‘kindness’ and ‘compassion’” (Villanueva, 2017, p.5). Singer (2006) wonders, “where significant human interests are at stake” is it possible to make an ethical choice “for the interests of animals, considered equally, to outweigh our own.” (p.18). Thus, the human treatment of animals also came under the socio-political panorama of human ethics. Singer states,

“Animal Liberation will require greater altruism on the part of mankind than any other liberation movement, since animals are incapable of demanding it for themselves, or of protesting against their exploitation by votes, demonstrations, or bombs. Is man capable of such genuine altruism?” (Singer, 1990, p. 356)

Here too ethics being a prerogative of human beings inadvertently structures a discourse where nonhuman beings are at the mercy (or not) of human agencies that decide right from wrong. Criticizing the early sentiments of animal welfare, Crane (2016) says, “Animal welfare, while revolutionary in many aspects, nonetheless maintains its ultimate gaze on the human animal, not the nonhuman animal”(p.6). According to him ethics towards animals evolved because in our treatment of animals human “morality integrity” was what was at stake (Crane, 2016, p.6). This further solidified the ‘othering’.

Peter Singer (2006) demands “we should look for further evidence that animals other than ourselves are sentient” (p.17). I say we should also look deeper into recent animal focused studies to see if animal are ethically coded and how. That is, can animals evolve from being moral subjects to become moral agents? Nietzsche criticizes human morality in his *Daybreak* thus, “We do not regard the animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings” (Nietzsche, 1881, as cited in Meighoo, 2016, p.60) Are nonhuman animals judging us thus? The knowledges about animal ethology, consciousness and their sense of ethics cannot be ignored by human animals any longer.

Of all the ethics of understanding, empathy is the best measure to understand human and nonhuman animals. Empathy is undoubtedly an important aspect of human morality. Beckoff (2002) is convinced that, “Shared emotions and empathy are the social glue for the development and maintenance of bonds with other animals” (p.104). Frans B.M. de Waal (2016) in his thought provoking essay on Animal Empathy states that empathy in mammals came out of “enlightened

self-interest” to bring up their offspring and to have a healthy community (p.81). For him “Empathy is second nature to us (human mammals), so much so that anyone devoid of it strikes us as dangerous, mentally ill, or both” (de Waal, 2016, p.81). de Waal, in his essay also refers to numerous studies and observations done by scholars on animals to prove that sympathy and empathy are not confined to humans (2016, p.81). For de Waal, “the most compelling evidence” regarding animal empathy is the study conducted by a team led by psychiatrist Jules Masserman (1964) at Northwestern University as early as in the seventeenth century (2016, p.84). Their 1964 report says,

“... rhesus monkeys refused to pull a chain that delivered food to themselves if doing so gave a shock to a companion. One monkey stopped pulling the chain for twelve days after witnessing another monkey receive a shock. Those primates were literally starving themselves to avoid shocking another Animal” (as cited in de Waal, 2016, p.84).

This cruel experiment inadvertently substantiates the communal ethics in monkeys and the ethics of scientific enquiry in humans.

Beckoff and Pierce (2009) give more evidence to reinforce that, “Animals clearly have the cognitive and emotional capacities for moral behavior and display empathy and rational thought” (p.142). They have identified three behavior clusters in animals –

“The cooperation cluster: altruism, reciprocity, trust, punishment, and revenge. The empathy cluster: empathy, compassion, caring, helping, grieving, and consoling. The justice cluster: sense of fair play, sharing, desire for equity, expectations concerning desert and entitlement, indignation, retribution, and spite” (Beckoff and Pierce, 2009, as cited in Rowlands, 2012, p.23).

For Rowlands also the “empathy cluster” of Beckoff and Pierce is very promising to advocate animals as moral agents (2012, p.23).

In Lesley Roger’s book *Minds of Their Own* (1997) on animal consciousness, she argues with experimental data that animals are not only conscious of the self and others but also are equipped with intelligence and memory. *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical perspectives on Animal Cognition* (2002) edited by Mark et al. also provide significant evidence of animal intelligence and rationality. In the book, *Beastly Morality: Animals as Ethical Agents* (2016) edited by Jonathan K. Crane, ethics in animals is addressed in detail, with evidence from studies across disciplines. In the “Introduction” Crane states:

“Data (biological and behavioral) are quickly accumulating that show that nonhuman animals are sentient, thinking, self-recognizing, and other-concerned creatures...philosophical, legal, and theological arguments are also emerging along the same lines, expressing a profound recoiling against the narcissism innate to most human attitudes toward—and treatment and assessment of nonhuman animals” (2016, p.10).

Referring to Robert Lurz, Jonathan Crane stresses that nonhuman animals are “self-conscious and self-aware, manifest theory of mind (perceiving the world through another’s eyes or experiences), and demonstrate sophisticated prosocial behaviours and empathic responses to

others, as well as other dimensions of what we otherwise consider constituent dimensions of human morality” (as cited in Crane, 2016, p.11). Thus, there is compelling evidence to prove that nonhuman animals are ethical beings. They have a sense of what is right or wrong based on their experience of what they feel, experience and receive, be it pain, happiness, food, care, trust or anything else that they value most.

However, as Mark Rowlands (2012) advises, “satisfactory interpretations” of that evidence can only lead to the right enquiry that “extends far beyond the narrowly philosophical” (p.14). According to Rowlands (2012), morals in animals should be addressed with “an attitude of respect” (p.254). He concludes his study thus, “...the sort of attitude one bears to something that can act, and acts for the good, but is not responsible for what it does. This is moral respect. If animals can, and sometimes do, act for moral reasons, then they are worthy objects of moral respect. That is why it matters” (Rowlands, 2012, p.255).

Now that we are open to the idea of nonhuman animals as ethical agents, is there anything that we human animals can learn from them? The idea of learning from animals is not a new idea. Centuries ago, across cultures when human beings used to live close to nature, they would meditatively observe nature and her animals to learn. This is to see and imitate techniques of survival in the wilderness that they both shared. In that pre-colonial era, both human and nonhuman animals were at the mercy of natural elements and seasons. Hence observing and learning from animals was key for survival. This primordial awe I believe is similar to Rowland’s concept of “moral respect” (2012, p.255). This respect is cardinal to the abundant indigenous animal stories in these cultures where animals were even revered as trickster gods, the rudiments of which still exists in Native Canadian, Aboriginal Australian, Tribal Indian as well as other surviving indigenous cosmologies. There are tribal communities still adept in this intra species communication and learning. This system of transspecies interconnectedness though forgotten is inherent in human animals. In this mode of learning humans and animals are in equal platform of empathy and respect.

Today, facing the paradoxical age of the Anthropocene, human beings are treading their way back to nature to discover eco-conscious, ecosophical alternatives to learn new methods to coexist. As a result, the strategy of learning from nature is gaining its worth. An example of such a case of sustainable development planning by studying nature is called Biomimicry. Citing Bensaude-Vincent (2002) and his team of chemists, Hout (2016) says, “Whereas traditional technological approaches tend to see natural systems and organisms as resources available for unrestricted use, the Biomimicry Revolution introduces an era based not on what we can extract from nature, but on what we can learn from her” (p.39). Here the nature systems and animals are considered as mentors that include “the bacteria, fungi, plants, and animals of this planet, the organisms that clothe the landscape, cycle the nutrients, cleanse the air, sweeten the water, and create soil from rock” (“Biomimicry Resource Handbook”, 2002, as cited in Hout, 2016, p.40).

While turning to search for ethics in animals, we must try not to impose human constructs of morality onto them, like in the case of the abandoned dog. Nonhuman animals do not have to behave like humans to be qualified as moral agents. As Crane (2016) propounds, “Nonhuman-animal morality—whatever that is— must by definition be nonhuman in both concept and behavior” (p.18). Undoubtedly a redefinition of the concepts of ethics and morality is required for an inter-intra species enquiry.

This possibility of permeability in ethics can be considered as a posthuman endeavor. Posthumanism is a movement of inclusion and understanding and “the animal is the necessary,

familiar and much cherished other of anthropos" (Braidotti, 2013, p.68). Posthuman ethics is a call for "nonspeciesism" where "The I and the who dissipate into collective singularities defined ethically by the specificity of their relations, which renders them perpetually mobile and metamorphic" (MacCormack, 2012, p.66).

As Carl Safina (2015) says, understanding animals and treating them as they deserve would make us more humane than human (p.448). The first step to challenge anthropocentric speciesism is to understand animal individualism. "Just as all humans are the same and each human differs, all species are the same and each species differs, and within that, each creature, too, is an individual" (Safina, 2015, p.447). Scholars of post humanism propose various strategies of criticism and representation to challenge the various nuances of anthropocentrism.

Derrida in his 1997 lecture "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)" speaks about the moment when naked from the shower he fell under "the gaze of a cat" (2013, p. 392). He voices the discomfited clash of two nuditities. Since man can never become naked again in the true animal sense, the writer feels ashamed of being nude before a "pussy cat" (Derrida, 2013, p.388). He imposes the social and cultural modesty allocated on him onto the cat. Thus the cat mirrors the writer's knowledge of shame. According to Donna Haraway, "shame trumped curiosity" in Derrida which failed him (2008, p.20). For Donna Haraway (2000), it is not mirroring that happens under animal gaze, but "diffraction" (p.101). This "optical metaphor" is part of a relational ontology that challenges the reductionist way of thinking (Haraway, 2000, p.101). This idea of diffraction is developed in detail by Karen Barad (2007), "as a useful counterpoint to reflection" or mirroring and sameness (p.72).

Haraway (2008) proposes "informatics or the cyborgian" as the "fourth wound" that challenges "the primary narcissism of the self-centered human subject" and "melds the Great Divide...of animal/human, nature/culture, organic/technical, and wild/domestic... into mundane differences...that demand respect and response" (p.11-15). This Harawayen fourth blow of decentering man opens up entangled arenas of connection and communication between humans and nonhuman others, especially animals beyond the limits of anthropocentrism.

Relinquishing the metaphoric romanticized version as well as the infantilized narratives of animals, the posthuman endeavour demands "a system of representation that matches the complexity of contemporary nonhuman animals and their proximity to humans" (Braidotti, 2013, p.70). "This post-anthropocentric approach requires more efforts of our imagination to ground our representations in real-life conditions and in an affirmative manner" (Braidotti, 2013, p.73). Posthuman representations of companion species are about "Living with animals, inhabiting their/our stories, trying to tell the truth about relationship, co-habiting an active history." (Haraway, 2003, p.20) The case of the posthuman condition of the oncourse as a "cyber-teratological apparatus" is proposed by Haraway and re-stressed by Braidotti to establish a reconfiguration of the human-animal entanglements (Braidotti, 2013, p.75).

Haraway's method of Diffraction is one of them. It is "about making a difference in the world as opposed to just being endlessly self-reflective" (2000, p.104). For Haraway, Diffraction is "another branch of semiotics" that challenges the limits of reflection and it is a "methodology-seeing both the history of how something came to "be" as well as what it is simultaneously" (2000, p.104-05). Diffraction understands and acknowledges the "many more meanings and contexts" of things without removing it from its current realities and stories (2000, p.105). For Barad (2007) diffraction of Haraway is a, "methodological approach ... of reading insights through one another in attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how

they matter" (p.71). This is closely connected to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome which proposes "Principles of connection and heterogeneity" (1987, "Intro"). "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (Deleuze, 1987, "Intro").

For Rosi Braidotti, posthumanism is a dimension of post-anthropocentric expansion of life towards the nonhuman or Zoe. Braidotti calls Zoe "the human and nonhuman intelligent matter ... the transversal force that cuts across and reconnects previously segregated species, categories and domains" (Braidotti, 2013, p.60-61). This "zoe-egalitarian turn" in the relationship between humans and animals must reflect in every agency responsible for socio-cultural-political-economic-educational scenarios. This situation imposes "a different burden of responsibility on our species... potentially lethal consequences...of the technologically mediated power" of the humans (Braidotti, 2013, p.66). As one of the solutions to this Braidotti offers "matter-realism" as the foundation of ethical values across disciplines, especially Humanities in the 21st century (2013, p.67). Trans-disciplinarity or Inter-disciplinarity with "emphasis on Life as a zoe-centered system of species egalitarianism" should provide the base for any critical enquiries in posthumanities (Braidotti, 2013, p.146).

Posthumanism also challenges the "normative subjectivity" of the humanism which denies a subjective reality to nonhuman animals (Wolfe, 2010, p.xvii). This system of thought has its roots in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "deterritorialization...in which a subject no longer occupies a realm of stability and identity but is instead folded imperceptibly into a movement or into an amorphous legion whose mode of existence is nomadic or, alternatively, whose "structure" is rhizomatic rather than arborescent... (Bruns, 2007, p.703). The subject for Deleuze and Guattari is "subjectless subject... non-homogeneous, mutable, hence not essentialist, and assembled from heterogeneous components, beyond and before the human and language" (Young et al, 2013, p.302).

For Braidotti (2013) posthuman subjectivity is "an assemblage" (2013). She affirms, "a posthuman nomadic subject is materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded ...It is a subject actualized by the relational vitality and elemental complexity" which is the basis of the entangled posthuman reality(2013, p.188). According to her, the ethical imagination of posthuman subjects exists as a form of "ontological relationality" which "rests on an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others... removing the obstacle of self-centered individualism on the one hand and the barriers of negativity on the other" (Braidotti, 2013, p.190).For Haraway (2008) it is a "doubleness" where "species of all kinds, living and not, are consequent on a subject- and object-shaping dance of encounters" (p.4).

Criticizing the materialist mode of subjectivity, Wolfe (2008) remarks, "paradoxically, the only way to represent nonhuman subjectivity (or any subjectivity) is to be antirepresentational, and (a corollary) the only way to address the ontology of nonhuman beings is to be post-ontological" (p.127). Post-ontology for Wolfe is a challenge to the Cartesian ontological difference between humans and animals based on pain and suffering (Castricano, 2008, p.16).

Posthuman subjectivity is not a denial of the objective mode of enquiry, but rather takes objective analysis to another level of understanding. The boundary between the subject and the object blurs. One such method of understanding proposed by Graham Harman (2017) is Object Oriented Ontology (OOO). OOO liberates the object from its narrow constrains and states and uses it "in an unusually wide sense" (Harman, 2017, p.256). It liberates the object from reductionist predetermined identities allocated to it by human perceptions. According to Harman, "an object



is anything that cannot be entirely reduced either to the components of which it is made or to the effects that it has on other things" (2017, p.43). It is a broad interdisciplinary method "that rescues the non-Relational core of every object" (Harman, 2017, p. 256). OOO does not deny subjectivity. Instead, it acknowledges new subjectivities outside humanistic ideologies.

Eco-phenomenological approaches in philosophy also "opens up and develops an access to Nature and the natural, one which is independent both of the conceptuality of the natural sciences and of traditional metaphysics" to understand the nonhuman animal (Wood, 2003, p.78). Thus eco-phenomenology creates spaces for interdisciplinary enquiries and intersectional experiences of the natural world that challenges the Cartesian dualism.

Engaging such modalities of enquiry across disciplines, educational strategies in India must evolve and accommodate a deeper empathy in its curriculum to develop an emotional intelligence which should go hand in hand with artificial intelligence in the future. Thus nonhuman animals must enter into a dialogic space in our curriculum. This learning from animals must be based on values of empathy, moral respect and a critical consciousness with an eye for diffractive patterns that will use new methodologies of understanding and representation beyond anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. This is how we take the realm of the study of humanities to a new era of posthumanities.

After listening to a lecture on ethics by a priest at an International Seminar, I felt compelled to ask the speaker what he thinks about the ethics of compassion and love towards nonhuman animals. Convinced of himself, he replied that if he were to choose between an injured baby squirrel and an injured human child, he would most definitely tend to the child. A posthumanist would reply: The choice should not be that simple.

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