

Autoimmunity and the Irony of Self-Definition: Translating the Economy of Terror

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This essay is on the structure of war and how it in the process of making the other party, the opponents, killable dehumanizes them, pushes them beyond the periphery of humanity. In the very process of doing so, they rip apart the logic of being human i.e., the rationale which symbolically represents the supposed essence of humanness, thereby turning the process of dehumanization back to their own selves. In the process of gobbling up the other as animal, as non-human, as killable and violable, the self takes the form and shape of its imagined other. What it attempts to exclude remains always already included as an epistemological absence in the structure of reasoning. The perspective of modern warfare gradually shifts its attention from terror as external to terror as internal. Both nation-state and the globe get defined in terms of peace and security provided by the sovereign who would assure liberty, right to life, and the maintenance of order. The notion of outside threat and the concept of warring nations, after the two world wars, get eroded by the very fact that all the major powers have enough of nuclear weapon at their hand to invite the dooms day. Therefore international peace and negotiation become a ploy for deferring the moment of the end of symbolic order, the proper name for which becomes humanity. The nuclear winter looms large and every step is taken to ensure that peace is maintained at any cost. Management becomes the new tool of governance and control. In this situation when all major powers are negotiating with each other, terror can only emerge from the “inside”. This “inside” is something on which the sovereign confers the right to life and therefore also the right to take away life, both literally and/or metaphorically i.e. by pushing outside the symbolic boundaries of humanity – making him/her monstrous, alien, outcaste and a threat to humanity. The moment of humanization coincides therefore with the moment of animalization. This essay addresses the violence that may erupt in the regime of peace, where the opponents to this regime, the vanquished who do not have any cards to play may turn to total terror, thereby inviting a total collapse of state and international power’s structure of reasoning. This essay shall mention a very brief episode in the *Mahabharata*, where we witness total terror and

unaccountable violence, which is not directed towards any reasonable gain. It illustrates how the absolute power of the opposition – the absolute capacity to govern becomes the turning point of transforming its “other”, its adversary in the form and guise of terror. The absoluteness of reason produces absolute unreason.

Here I shall try to talk about the need for politicization of animals, both literally as well as in the extended metaphorical sense of the non-humans – the dehumanized and the expendable entities of the modern state and governance. I shall also talk about the need for animalization of politics or the need for bringing in the animal question into politics in order to interrogate the apparently static norms of being human in any given society. At this moment I am not going into the details of the relationship between the human and the non-human (here the category of non-human includes both God and the animal, following Derrida’s lectures on *The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume-1* where he shows the closeness of animality and divinity in their respective relations to the sovereign). But there has been a movement from the pre-modern to the modern regimes of power where the question of animal has been rationalized and therefore invisibilized. Here invisibilization is deployed as a theoretical move to distinguish from simply becoming invisible, as this form of invisibilization shares a dichotomous relationship with visibilization or simply making visible. Invisibilization is not simply opposite to the process of visibilization. Rather the reasonable structure of making certain things visible has the politics of making certain other things invisible. The theoretical deployment of the essence of man in western enlightenment modernity actually invisibilizes the always already existence of its supposed binary opposite of animal within that very formation. The visibility of categorical markers causes certain invisibilization. It is called invisibilization as it shares an inseparable relationship with visibility and is not simply a binary opposite to it. Modernity while claims to enlighten every aspect of the globe is capable of hiding darkness that rests underneath. In the pre-modern forms of power, the subject was always subjected to the divine principles and shared the relationship of a sheep to the shepherd. From this, the modern democratic form of governance marks a shift where being human is rationalized in terms of a need for security of individual human subjects which shall be protected by the sovereign. Thus the role of both divine powers to intervene and the animal irrationality get bracketed out in this system. My study following the steps of Foucault, Agamben and Derrida will illustrate that this bracketing out is apparent and the specter of the non-human still continues to haunt the modernity we live today. Finally it will try to talk

about a reconfiguration of both politics and modernity in terms of a constant continuous engagement and negotiation with the traces of animality that haunt each and every moment of human self-definition. Politics is here this process of negotiation that approaches towards an ethics and justice which is always incomplete and unattainable, yet which has to be approached nonetheless. This would also attempt to redefine and rethink how the literary (abstracted from the notion of literature) can represent the impossible structural relationship between the subject and object of violence. This would show how the collapse of the division of subject and object in the moment of terror can be translated into the literary – how the impossible moment of terror and violence itself is literary in its aporetic performance (in the sense that it is not possible to transcend violence and terror through human structure of reasoning as the former is instituted within the latter and therefore any attempt to do so creates an unpassable pass – an aporia. Literature performs such aporia instead of actually finding textbook solutions to terror – it performs the terrifying animal always already within the category of the human – how literature is a moment of deferring the terror that is the absolute alterity to the global being and its symbolic order. The article will point out how literature can force us towards the moment of terror indulging us to encounter the non-symbolizable.

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After the war of Kurukshetra was almost over and the knee-broken Duryadhona was waiting for his last breath, Ashvatthama was made the new general of the war, which apparently was assumed to have ended. In grief, remorse and anger for the loss of near and dear ones in the war, in the dark of the night, inside the forest, sleepless Ashvatthama witnessed suddenly an owl ravaging the nests of the crows, killing them mercilessly in sleep when they were totally unprepared. Ashvatthama learned how to defeat enemies in advantageous position. When man has no other means he takes resort to violence, goes against all forms of ordered arrangements which make life meaningful and human. Man faces his own animality at the moment of crises, goes back to the state of lawless nature, arrives at a decision which is outside the structural imperatives in which one lives and is marked by the suddenness of animal reaction. This episode of the Mahabharata called “Sauptika-parva

(Vedavyasha 497-516) or “The book of sleep” illustrates how man reacts instead of responding to a situation which compulsively takes away all his possibilities of engaging in a dialogue with reason. It is a situation when reason is asleep and violence becomes the rule of the game. However reason and violence are not separable just like humanity and animality. At the heart of reason resides the unreason of force which compulsively makes one give up to such reasoning. After great wars of the world are over with Hiroshima day, and each nation state of earth has learnt to live within its boundaries, strategies of maintaining peace become new kind of war. State machineries work towards that. Hannah Arendt shows how wars continue in the form of revolution after the Second World War (Arendt 1990: 11-20). Nation states have become violently hegemonic to manage the diversities within, as threat was perceived more and more to be internal than external. Particularly after a war, when external threat is resolved, the only threat perceived is that against hegemony of the state – its sovereignty which has to be maintained. Above all, violence becomes exemplary to war. Arendt comments: “It would be difficult to deny that one of the reasons why wars have turned so easily into revolutions and why revolutions have shown this ominous inclination to unleash wars is that violence is a kind of common denominator for both” (Arendt 18). Foucault would suggest that maintenance of peace is itself a kind of war and involves the violence of a certain kind of reason. Derrida in his book *Rogues* has carefully demonstrated how behind any legal framework there is a founding violence. Law functions as law as there is force behind it which is justified through a particular form of reason. However this force forces one to obey the law. But what happens when this legal structure itself is threatened? In its defense the sovereign executes its right to suspend law – to avoid descending into a state of nature, and in doing so itself initiates the very appearance of that state of nature – animality that is primordial to the constitution of this legal framework – the animality of primitive force. This is autoimmunity of modern state which in order to provide security to its subject, to save them from going down to the state of nature, unleashes violence within itself – it kills in order to protect. The principle of the modern state is to produce killable entities – antibodies within. Donna Haraway in her essay “Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies” has shown how the postmodern

conceptualization of “the body as a strategic system...a highly mobile field of strategic differences” (1991: 211) is complicit with global imagination of political bodies. Therefore on one hand there is an acceptance of the existence of the animal/outsider/other within the human self but on the other there is an attempt to manage that animal/outsider/other by removal or quarantine – by execution or confinement. However the question is: if this animality can effectively be confined or killed or does it come back to haunt? If behind the power of the sovereign is the founding violence – the animal force which makes one obey – then the traces of that originary moment continues to haunt the sovereign. Whoever violates the legal structure sanctioned by the sovereign parodies the formation of sovereign itself, which conceals and denies the animality within. Animality is the principle for the formation of the Being of the sovereign in terms of its exclusion. To parody that animal within becomes then an act of re-enacting the sovereign which poses a threat to the sovereign. In the face of that threat the sovereign has to give up its self-justificatory juridico-politics and bring out its innermost animality and confront its own non-being. In the very next step he has to dramatize the killing of that animal. This initiates the production of bare life which is killable and therefore symbolically helps in purging the sovereign from its animality in a performance of “self” preservation. The act of suppressing revolutions is the act of saving the openness of “Being” of politics from sliding into undisclosable animal. Health of the political body is restored by performing the elimination of the animals/viruses/bad genes/rebels. However, as state reserves the sovereign right to transform any person into bare life by turning its immune system against its own subjects, the subjects react by revolting against such biopolitical reductionism by rejecting the sovereign. The subjects refuse such animalization and turn it back towards the state. To resist violence they become violent themselves. They parody the hidden animality of the sovereign which maintains its authority by animal force. Derrida points out in *Rogues* that America’s war against rogue states nonetheless exposes its own status of being rogue – its dependence on force which is hidden behind its apparent claim of peace making. The so-called rogue states of course don’t think themselves to be rogues, rather they claim US government to be acting as such. This is

the irony of both state and revolution who in order to combat animality embrace it and take recourse to it.

Unlike animals who instinctively can identify and kill the other – who react when face an attack but cannot respond - who apparently do not think in terms of having a Being which experiences and also makes meaning out of that experience – man faces the critical problem of defining the other. Man has to think the other to define his own self – to give a boundary and meaning to his Being. But this act of determining the Being is done through Being itself. This being is as defined by Heidegger existentially determined *dasein* or ‘being there’. It is already determined by its external world where it is thrown. Therefore the Being is already charged by traces of its other – the other beings of the world. However in an ironic cyclicity, in order to define itself, this conscious but existentially determined Being has to define and determine the other beings – to separate and externalize them. These other beings however continue to haunt the self/the Being as markings, as traces. Moreover these other beings cannot but be determined by this Being who thinks and therefore appropriates everything else according to its need. However this appropriation is partial as Being itself is simultaneously determined by other beings which it appropriates. Both are in a state of becoming. Animality is that mark of non-self which determines the self but which is attempted to be kept outside the self. Heidegger as Roberto Esposito shows would not meddle with that animality which is inscrutable to human understanding (Esposito 2008: 146-194). He would rather be interested in the openness of man’s own Being which can interpret itself and can engage with possibilities of becoming. But for Heidegger this Being is *dasein* or being there – it is existentially determined. Heidegger thinks of ontology as the first philosophy – he ontologizes Being in terms of its existence. This existence is that which individuates the Being. It seems existence is something tangible, present at hand. In order to counteract the metaphysics of presence Heidegger gives existence almost a status of presence. Agamben has discussed in this context how the Open of man’s Being is determined by it and can also understand it. But is it possible to give boundary to existence? Is it feasible to keep the undisclosable animality outside the Being? Heideggerian approach is imperative of an exclusion of animality which is almost like Kantian being-in-itself. Agamben shows how the very

notion of the open can push us towards a crisis. As modern states acknowledge the presence of elements disruptive to its secured Being, existentially determined as a construction; as it sees its political body as a strategic site of negotiations, it tries to bring the undisclosable animality – the other of humanity, of politics within its surveillance. Sovereign policies of postmodern societies are directed towards dealing with such animality – to bring it into the open. If the Being is haunted by non-being that is unpredictable, if liberal democracies are haunted by rogue-states which are impossible to be accommodated within its already given structure of reasoning, then the challenge is to invent technologies of self-management to manage the enemy within. This form of securitization is called autoimmunity. This is to time and again, like anti-virus softwares, select the malicious programs within the state – identify them and then eliminate them. Whatever is redundant to the survival and health of modern nation-state, whatever is a potential threat to its Being has to be quarantined and eliminated. The modern state is therefore always predicated upon a fear of falling apart by its internal abortive elements – it is compelled to maintain its openness in the face of the undisclosable. The US governmentality therefore faces deep crisis regarding those who can never be hegemonized – those who cannot be accommodated within the pervasive scheme of liberal democracy. Just like computer anti-virus programs they therefore engage in producing codes for identifying the illiberal, the primitive and the savage other of humanity – the turbans, beards and names pertaining to Islam. In the post-humanist age of knowing and acknowledging human self as a construction determined by its existence, in an age when much of our faith on a secured pre-given subject has waned out it becomes imperative that such existence can be managed shaping and securing the subject in formation – giving a teleology to that subject. Anything that is perceived by modern liberal democracy as disruptive to the formation and maintenance of this liberal democratic subject, who ought to participate in world market of economic exchange, is thought of as apolitical, as outside the existential situatedness of modern subjectivity and therefore by default is characterized by animality - as enemy within which has to be combated.

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A newspaper report of the *Mail Online* published on May 9, 2011 gives an account of a soldier who was an Iraq war veteran and is serving “five terms of life imprisonment for raping and killing a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and killing her parents and sister”¹. He defends himself before the trial by saying “he didn't think of Iraqi civilians as humans after being exposed to extreme warzone violence.” Pressed by the order of violence he was regimented to think Iraqis as non-humans. When total management of life becomes the principle of new world order anyone and everyone can be a potential animal who can simply be killed. The fundamental irony of the Being of man is that unlike animals it knows what an animal is and what is not. In human world of meaningful perception he always has to determine the other of humanity to define itself. Agamben comments: “The open is nothing but a grasping of the animal not-open. Man suspends his animality and, in this way, opens a “free and empty” zone in which life is captured and abandoned {ab-bandonata} in a zone of exception” (Agamben 2004: 79). However this animality comes back to revenge its elimination. The other cannot be killed and all autoimmune processes are unsuccessful, as the animal other is not dissociable from the human self. In a two-step move the modern art of governance first acknowledges the animal within all human systems of survival and then initiates its management through elimination or captivation. However this produces an aporia, as the first step makes the second one impossible. If animal is intrinsic to humanity then how can it be separated and killed? It is bound to come back. The US soldier to kill the non-human, to avoid death that was reality for him every moment turned inhuman, stripped himself off the laws of humanity. Agamben comments: “It is not easy to say whether the humanity that has taken upon itself the mandate of the total management of its own animality is still human, in the sense of that *humanitas* which the anthropological machine produced by deciding every time between man and animal...To be sure, such a humanity, from Heidegger's perspective, no longer has the form of keeping itself open to the undisconcealed of the animal, but seeks rather to open and secure the not-open in every domain, and thus closes itself to its own openness, forgets its *humanitas*, and makes being its specific

disinhibitor. The total humanization of the animal coincides with a total animalization of man” (Agamben 77). Steven Green, the convicted soldier said, “I was crazy...I was just all the way out there. I didn't think I was going to live.”

The shadow of death is primordial to one's realization of one's own animality – the immolation of the physical body which poses a threat to the total management of life. However in Heideggerian idiom death is also one's own-most experience which cannot be shared – it individuates oneself – gives meaning to his existence – boundary to one's Being. Man can make his own death meaningful – he is conscious of his being as he is conscious of his death that will take away his being. Animality and humanity are bounded together by death. To separate death out of the sphere of life – to make killing the norm for somebody and survival the rule for others, as we see in modern biopolitics (which is at the same time thanatopolitics as well), is to separate the animal from humanity. When death is perceived as a principle in producing this Being and giving it meaning then absolute desire for securitization – freeing oneself from death apparently – is autoimmunity that is waging war against oneself. Therefore the state waging war against its subjects tries to secure them. We have to acknowledge that all battles whose war cry is security is somehow or other directed against its own self and all violence against the other is in a way directed against oneself. The self carries the traces of the other – the animal, as life carries the shadow of death. So neither separation of animality from humanity, nor accepting animality as inseparably linked with the humanity can help us deal with the philosophical problem of autoimmunity. Agamben has pointed out that the total management of animality within has rendered the separation of human-animal impossible. The obverse is also true that is if we think in terms of separation of animal-human then we deny the animal within. The art of governance in hegemonic states combines the two in an aporetic moment – it acknowledges animality as within the rational self as an element of undecidable and then tries to separate it, identify it, manage it, quarantine it and if necessary kill it.

It is important however to think of combining these two contrary impulses to think of animality as within humanity, but also try to separate the two. But this has to be thought of as an attempt which is non-actualizable – as an impossible possibility. It

requires the recognition of animality at each and every attempt of separating it. The recognition of animality within helps one negotiate with it. The confidence of being human as we see in the American soldier would fall easy prey of identifying the animal in others and in the process of doing so denying his own humanity. I define humanity here in terms of Derrida as responsibility towards the animal which is within.² Humanity is purely situational and depends upon how one responds to a situation. Each situation forces us to confront the animal within and responding to it we become human. Otherwise we fall in the trap of rationalizing our animality – managing it or killing it by the discourse of reason. When *Ashvatthama* got inspired by the owl which killed its prey in the middle of the night, he picked up the rationale of attacking the enemy in sleep and justified his uncle by saying that it is the duty of warrior class to annihilate the enemy in whatever means. His moment of confrontation with the animal, which reacts and cannot respond, probes him to rationalize, interpret and bring the animal action he witnesses within the structure of his meaning. The moment of confronting the animal therefore becomes also the denial of it. However this denial comes back to him and he animalizes itself, as *Rudra* (the god of death and the underworld who is also *pashupati*, the god of animals) enters him to enable him kill his unprepared enemies at night. Just like the American soldier, he thinks his enemy in terms of the crows killed by the owl but doesn't realize that; in this process he becomes like the owl – embodies the animal which ironically he believes he is not. Derrida in his book *The Animal that Therefore I Am* destabilizes the notion of conscious modern subject. In *Rogues* he has already demonstrated how US war against rogue states exposes its own hidden but fundamental rogueness on which its liberal democracy is predicated. In *The Animal that Therefore I Am* he shows how the “I am”, the cogito, is born by negotiating with its animality. The title of the book parodies Descartes's “cogito ergo sum” – “I think therefore I am” where the thinking “I” qualifies the “I” of the Being. Derrida asserts how each moment of self-recognition has to pass through recognition of one's own animality. Each act of defining oneself as different from the animal passes through a recognition of one's animality, which is identified as animality in the process of meaning making. This act of meaning

making involves a double bind of human-animal. Being human is about not being animal. This non-being-animal follows the human animal for not sliding into it. Being is shot by this animality and has to be responsible to it. Responsibility is not simply an act of responding to a response but also to a non-response – to whatever is undisclosable to human openness. The open should therefore constitute remaining open to the undisclosable of the animal and not to make it open. When the hegemonic world order declared the end of history and when our postmodern consciousness realizes that the disclosure of whatever cannot be brought within the purview of knowledge, the tendency is towards a naturalized violence both by the state and its adversaries. Tendencies to clean the inside from animal aberrations become imperative in a world order where peace has to be maintained at any cost. In this situation Agamben suggests a different reading of politics through his reading of Benjamin's letters. He comments: "Ideas—which, like stars, "shine only in the night of nature"—gather creatural life not in order to reveal it, nor to open it to human language, but rather to give it back to its closedness and muteness." (Agamben 81) This suggests being responsible to the other – the animal within, which is at the heart of all forms of meaning making. Agamben with Benjamin prefers nature over history – nature which is not a Hobbesian state of violent nature where impulses rule, but a space which forces us to think of the animal impulses which are within human selves and societies and at the same time closed to human meaning making apparatuses. Rather meaning making is a process which happens through a negotiation and separation of that closedness. Benjamin associated the recognition of such closedness with the work of art. Agamben comments: "nature, as the world of closedness (Verschlossenheit) and of the night, is opposed to history as the sphere of revelation (Offenbarung). But to the closed sphere of nature Benjamin—surprisingly—also ascribes ideas as well as works of art. Indeed, these last are defined "as models of a nature that awaits no day, and thus no Judgment Day; they are the models of a nature that is neither the theater of history nor the dwelling place of man. The saved night [Die gerettete Nacht]" (Agamben 83). Night is where this essay started – night of war, killing and suffering – it is night when the owl flies and catches its prey. Here it won't be irrelevant to quote from a Bengali poet Jibanananda Das who writes on how a person

committed suicide to escape boredom of existence, or rather what we can call too much of existence – a situation where existence itself acts as a foreclosure – an impossibility of any form of transcendence. He as a poet, a seer, associates and collaborates himself with a predatory owl and hopes to fly with him in the middle of the night when the moon is down:

O profound grandmother, is it wonderful still?

I too shall grow old like you,

Despatch the hag-moon across the Kalidaha at flood-tide:

Together we shall leave empty the vast storehouse of life. (Das 49)

The poet knows that the social symbolic which gives man its humanness is contingent. The idea of the poetic – the literary is to fly with the ravenous owl – an inclusivity of the always already predatory animal in each of us. It is both a realization of the animal within and also by acknowledging the same indulging into an ethics of the care for the other – the animal within. This animal is not external to our human selves but haunts our selves. While immense securitization of selves may indulge suicide to destroy the symbolic to which one is chained, the poetic choice is to invoke the literary mode of flying with the predator bird to participate in the natural cycle of violence that is inescapable. The inescapability of violence may indulge new ethics of responsibility towards the non-human animal other which is within and which haunts our apparently secured self. There are several strategies of dealing with the compulsive world order, the total management of life which captivates or kills the animal within. One is to assert the ego against the existence to secure one's humanity and individuality from repetitive structure of governance which sees every man as potential animal/inhuman/savage/terrorist. However, to secure such total humanity one ironically turns back to the animal violation of reason which he renders reasonable and humane though, as we see in Ashvatthama. Another strategy is to commit suicide and end the trauma of being haunted by the animality one cannot escape. But ironically again death gives us our humanity as we think about it, and reaching death is the end of this process

of thinking through death and therefore becoming non-human and animal. The thinking of death is the thinking of freedom, but the moment of death is total annihilation – the Being doesn't remain to determine its freedom. If for Agamben behind each biopolitical arrangement lurks the thanatopolitical then for Mbembe the thanatopolitics has to be replaced by a politics of dead bodies – a necropolitics when death becomes a reality of any and every moment. Suicide bombers combine the above two modes of escapades in a singularity – it becomes a simultaneous act of killing and being killed in an existential condition where death is the only reality of life. Mbembe writes: “Death in the present is the mediator of redemption. Far from being an encounter with a limit, boundary, or barrier, it is experienced as “a release from terror and bondage.” Gilroy suggests that death in this case can be represented as agency. For death is precisely that from and over which I have power. But it is also that space where freedom and negation operate.” (2003: 39) Here the distinction between the beast and the sovereign collapses. The beast/terrorist becomes sovereign by its animal force but also the same sovereign is killed like a beast. The only way to deal with this terror is however to think humanity in terms of “nature, as the world of closedness and of the night”. By collaborating with the predatory owl who kills without thinking and meaning – who kills without sense of enmity one can live, if not a life of non-violence but of non-cruelty where one knows that one has to kill to survive, one has to name and give boundary to one's own self but one cannot strike out the animal, cannot make simply killable what one is not and what one cannot accommodate into his world of meaning. One has to be responsible to the animality to deal with the crisis of autoimmunity. The crisis of autoimmunity is such that it makes metaphoricity impossible. The capacity of the sovereign to ‘become’ ‘like’ animal if necessary is only a fantasy as each sovereign is subjected to power – to the apparatus of state and civility which is abstract and which functions on the principal of producing its outside – its exception. It is therefore impossible to distinguish between the animal and the human in modern state apparatus as the one can always be metamorphosed into the other. It shares a relationship of metamorphosis instead of metaphoricity. Deleuze and Guattari in their discussion of Kafka's work write:

Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor... it is no longer the subject of enunciation who is "like" a beetle, the subject of the statement remaining a man. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage. (1986: 21-22)

The modern state apparatus invisibilizes this metamorphosis by producing the illusion of free rational human subjects. Therefore it would be a philosophical-political act to question such reasonable production of the boundaries of human and focus on the apparently impossible counter-possibility of redefining such boundaries territorialized by the sovereign power structure.

I will conclude my discussion referring to a short story by Bangladeshi writer Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, titled "Chhelemanushi" (in English that would mean "Immaturity"). The story is about a utopian world where cannibalism is sanctioned and humans are cultivated in farms for daily consumption. In all other respects, the society seems similar to ours. One fine morning a man purchases a boy of 16 to eat. Somehow the meal gets deferred and the boy stays in his household. We see an emotional attachment growing between the person's wife and the boy. The boy is wild as "it" is grown up in a farm. After some time, the man's brother-in-law comes to visit and when he knows about his sister's attachment with the boy, he laughs and says that it is irrational to incur such feelings – it is a sign of *chhelemanushi* or immaturity. The brother-in-law finally kills the boy and prepares a good meal. The wife could not enjoy the meal properly. After years of this event, everybody used to laugh, including the wife herself, about such supposed immature behavior she showed at that moment. The consumption of human flesh can be read here as an extended metaphor for a certain kind of political rationality which can conceptualize anybody or anything as consumable and killable – as animal, assuming it to be outside all forms of politics. While the structure of sovereignty always operates on exclusion and needs such exclusion to define what man is and who is supposed to enjoy the rights of being human, politics can be redefined as an approach to question this limit. While the limits of the political cannot be erased, political practice would always attempt to stretch such limits. After witnessing the fallacy of

political maturity and reasoning of both the state and its violent adversaries which in the name of security or revolution can kill so many, render so many the status of being killable and in turn become animal itself, it is important to rethink modernity. Modernity is not simply about rationalization of who is supposed to be the political subject, but to try to move beyond such rational limits in any given time and space. Thinking in terms of recognizing the animal within which one escapes to become human but which continues to haunt the very process becoming human can reshape the political thinking. It might help us to think how we must respond to the question of how to provide justice to a war criminal like the US soldier mentioned in this essay. It might help the sovereign to rethink ways of dealing with criminals, refugees, outsiders, non-citizens who are within the city state but not as a part of it. To assert the political identity of oneself one has to define the I-ness not in terms of presence but in terms of the animal within and start with the conviction “The animal that therefore I am”. Literary here as we see in the discussion of the story becomes a re-organization of our desire. It is a shift in the paradigm of the social symbolic inside which we produce boundaries of human and the animal – the rational self and the non-cognizable, mute yet horrifying other. The task of the literary is to push us towards the moment of symbolic crises – the moment of terror without ever actualizing it. Therefore Derrida conceptualizes all literary criticism as nuclear criticism. This is because in the aftermath of nuclear threat the only way to approach terror that is non-cognizable and beyond the symbolic is through the literary. Derrida comments:

This absolute referent of all possible literature is on a par with the absolute effacement of any possible trace; it is thus the only ineffaceable trace, it is so as the trace of what is entirely other...The only "subject" of all possible literature, of all possible criticism, its only ultimate and a-symbolic referent, unsymbolizable, even unsignifiable; this is, if not the nuclear age, if not the nuclear catastrophe, at least that toward which nuclear discourse and the nuclear symbolic are still beckoning: the remainderless and a-symbolic destruction of literature. Literature and literary criticism

cannot speak of anything else, they can have no other ultimate referent, they can only multiply their strategic maneuvers in order to assimilate that unassimilable wholly other. (Derrida 1984: 28)

Thus in the face of total annihilation literary becomes the strategy of multiplying the impossible possibilities – the presently non-realizable possibilities of reorganizing and questioning the inescapable difference of the human and the non-human/inhuman. The moment of literary points towards future possibilities of justice – justice that is annihilation of the present logic of difference and the coming of the unforeseeable. The unforeseeable is structured like terror but which never comes and which is deferred through an aporetic performance.

Notes

1. “I didn't think of Iraqis as humans,' says U.S. soldier who raped 14-year-old girl before killing her and her family.” *Mail Online*, 2011.
2. This idea is there in several of Derrida's texts. See Jacques Derrida, “Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundation of Authority”” in *Acts of Religion; Rogues: Two Essays on Reason; The Animal That Therefore I Am*.

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