

Animal-humanities and the Eco-sophical Parergon: *Homo Reflectus* in Species History

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When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES...
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo or James...
There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the dames:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter ...
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess...
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation of the thought,
Of the thought, of the thought of his name:
His ineffable effable
Effanineffable
Deep and inscrutable singular Name. (“Naming of Cats” in *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*, T. S. Eliot)

One can even set up quite ridiculous cases. A cat is penned up in a steel chamber, along with the following device (which must be secured against direct interference by the cat) ... there is a tiny bit of radioactive substance... If one has left this entire system to itself for an hour, one would say that the cat still lives.... (Schrodinger’s “Thought Experiment” with the Cat)

It surrounds me. And from the vantage of this being-there-before-me it can allow itself to be looked at, no doubt, but also-something that philosophy perhaps forgets, perhaps being this calculated forgetting itself-it can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever done more to make me think through this absolute alterity of the neighbor than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of a cat. (Derrida, 380)

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Globalization means the commercialization of the planet Earth in all its forms.
(Braidotti 7)

This predominant (discordant?) feline inflexion in the beginning of this paper may encourage the reader to surmise that this is perhaps a philosophisation on the “zoontology” of non-anthropomorphic whiskers and the top heavy references to good old T.S.Eliot, noted physicist Erwin Schrodinger and our philosopher-saboteur Jacques Derrida on the identical question of the cat is a deliberate attempt on our part to dismantle the hegemony of the human so that a “zoography” of morals can be inaugurated in a world standing on the brink of Anthropocentric apocalypse caused by our inflated human hubris. It is interesting to see Eliot jocularly naming the cat after Plato that does not however erase the cat/Plato hierarchy. “Schrodinger’s Cat” has itself become a scientific catch phrase that safely elides however the all important question of Schrodinger nonchalantly placing the cat in the radioactive chamber, justifying in that way the normal imaginary of caged and dissected animals for human needs. It is Derrida who comes to expose the inherent violence in such normative nonchalance when it comes to our atrocities against animals or our subjugation of non-humans. Seen through post-Anthropocentric optics, these normative taxonomies of human/non-human assume larger significance as we are called upon to *think through the Earth* or through other fellow species to salvage the damage of our “common home”- the planet Earth, inhabited equally by humans and non-humans. Human-centric anthropomorphic imaginaries are built on power bound binaries of inside/outside, human/non-human and such divisions remind us of Derrida’s notion of the “parergon” that problematises the frame/content, or inside/outside binaries to tease out a bridge between the divided realms. Ours therefore is a proposed eco-sophical parergonal suturing of the human/non-human, the Earth/Earth-others to constitute a holistic frame of co-living. Borrowing Claire Colebrook, Tom Cohen and J Hillis Miller’s ideas in their *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols* (2016), we intend to work for alternative philosophems – something Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe named as anti-humanism or posthumanism

Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that. Some of us are not even considered fully human now, let alone at previous moments of Western social, political and scientific history. Not if by ‘human’ we mean that creature familiar to us from the Enlightenment and its legacy: ‘The Cartesian subject of the cogito, the Kantian “community of reasonable beings”, or, in more sociological terms, the

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subject as citizen, rights-holder, property-owner, and so on' (Wolfe, 2010a). And yet the term enjoys widespread consensus and it maintains the re-assuring familiarity of common sense. We assert our attachment to the species as if it were a matter of fact, a given. So much so that we construct a fundamental notion of Rights around the Human. But is it so? (Braidotti 1)

This calls for a serious reevaluation of our conceptual and cognitive taxonomies in relation to sub-humans and non-humans and in that way there is a greater need now to redefine the category of the "human." Braidotti observes that the "debates in mainstream culture range from hard-nosed business discussions of robotics, prosthetic technologies, neuroscience and bio-genetic capital to fuzzier new age visions of trans-humanism and techno-transcendence" (Braidotti 2) and all these technologized buzzwords she felt are doing the rounds to enhance solely the cause of the human at the cost of the non-humans. Such "colonization of the life [non-human]-world" leads to what Braidotti calls the "post-human" that seeks a decentering of the "human." The present excursus would argue for attempts to deepen such post-humanist approaches in the humanities and social sciences so that a better critique of Anthropocentric humanism can be actualized. We would imagine a holistic approach here incorporating the necessity of both western and eastern parallax views in forging an alternative imaginary that questions our existing epistemic *a priories*. Braidotti raises these fundamental questions in her book:

The main questions I want to address in this book are: firstly, what is the posthuman? More specifically, what are the intellectual and historical itineraries that may lead us to the posthuman? Secondly: where does the posthuman condition leave humanity? More specifically, what new forms of subjectivity are supported by the posthuman? Thirdly: how does the posthuman engender its own forms of inhumanity? More specifically, how might we resist the inhuman(e) aspects of our era? And last, how does the posthuman affect the practice of the Humanities today? More specifically, what is the function of theory in posthuman times? (Braidotti, 3)

In similar vein, Cary Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism* (2010) begins with drawing our attention to a hackneyed definition of Humanism. He refers to Michel Foucault who in his 1984 essay, "What is Enlightenment?" leads us to the actuality that humanism is apparently a doctrine in itself, full of its own prepossessions and superstitions, which Etienne Balibar calls "Anthropological universals." Foucault also drew a disjunction between Enlightenment and Humanism because Humanism is a doctrine and therefore,

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Enlightenment, in its true breath, should be a threat to that tenet. At this present juncture of the Anthropocene, a constitutional interference has been posited by Wolfe:

[...] even if we take the additional posthumanist step of rejecting the various anthropological, political, and scientific dogmas of the human that Foucault insists are in tension with Enlightenment per se, we must take yet another step, another post-, and realize that the nature of thought itself must change if it is to be posthumanist. (Wolfe xvi)

This means that posthumanism in its discursive practices should not just refer to the “thematics of decentering” of humans in connection to their existential coordinates but it should also interrogate the thematics of “thinking” itself

Here the spirit of my intervention is akin to Foucault’s in “What Is Enlightenment?”; the point is not to reject humanism *tout court*—indeed, there are many values and aspirations to admire in humanism—but rather to show how those aspirations are undercut by the philosophical and ethical frameworks used to conceptualize them. (Wolfe xii)

Such dogma ridden and anthropomorphic philosophical frameworks led to the hierarchic distinctions between humans and non-human others and in what follows we would look into an attempt to reverse the man/animal taxonomic binary, something that needs to be dismantled to restructure our colonizing thought patterns.

Zoographies and Thinking Through Animals

Matthew Calarco has been consistently (re)writing about animals and the place of animals in human thinking in his path-breaking works, such as *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (2008), *The Death of the Animal* (2009) and *Thinking through Animals: Identity, Difference, Indistinction* (2015). His neologisms such as “Zoography” and “zoontobiography” are concept metaphors that have radical claims to draw our attention in support of non-human others, and in *Thinking through Animals* Calarco classified pro-animal theorists as “Identity theorists,” “Right based theorists” and “difference based theorists.” Identity based theorists identify similar features between human and non-humans, while “right based thinkers” seek to fight for animal rights and difference based theorists acknowledge the human/non-human differences and yet call for a respect for the non-humans. This human disrespect for the Earth-others stems from epistemic and discursive prejudices and dogmas. Aristotle, Calarco reminds us, attributed only humans with the privilege of reason and cognition or what

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he called “Logos” and his denial of Logos to animals generated in Identity based theorists the desire to locate reasoning abilities in animals as well and in that way they reinforced their logic identity between humans and non-humans. Logocentricism is a reason based notion of identity among humans and animals that characterizes human beings as the inheritor of logos or reasoning capacities. Such a reason oriented view has however, been challenged by many and Calarco therefore mentions the ‘difference based theory’ on our approach to human-animal relations. Identity based theorists use the term “speciesism” to refer to the irrational attitude that we demonstrate to exclude animals from our mutually formed ethical community without any ground of reason. *Specieism* is akin to other forms of prejudiced hatred such as racism. Our hatred and indifference to non-humans is, therefore, foundational and something to do with our self-proclaimed anthropocentrism. There are a whole set of institutions, systems and discursive formations that determine our attitude for animals. Identity paradigm posits that similar beings should receive similar moral treatments/consideration. The theorists of difference as explained by Calarco rely not on any idea of continuity, similarity and identity among human and non-human agents, but they build their hypothesis of thinking through animals through an idea of difference or an Ethics of otherness.

All difference theorists such as Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger did not believe that human nature can be characterized by some timeless or unchanging essence. In other words, they do not have any inner core of humanity untouched by history. Human beings, Calarco concludes, are irreducibly enmeshed in socio-historical and cultural formations. They are “decentred,” dispossessed” and “ex-posed (in the sense of being posed outward to the other)”. To borrow Heidegger, we may say that even before we can think of ourselves and say something of ourselves, we have already been thrown outside of ourselves to a world populated by others. Critique of humanism “refigures the individual as a unique node in a network of relations,” an irreplaceable being in becoming – a singular other. We “generally tend to group others into recognizable and repeatable categories, thereby neutralizing their singularity and domesticating their strangeness” (Calarco, 32) but sometimes humans recognize or encounter a different other, an ethically other, someone who is irreducible to his/her usual perception of him/her. This realization throws a challenge to our existence and gradually we grow a sense of realization that we unnecessarily harbor some violence against them. This ultimately may lead to an urge for transformation in us as we realize the inadequacy of our usual mode of existence that fail to do justice to the singularity of the other. This transformative desire to respond to the “call of the other” constitutes the core of the ethics of difference.

An ethics of difference starts from the premise that the ultimate origin of ethics resides not with me (my rationality, my freedom, my autonomy) but with the other, with radical difference or heteronomy. (Calarco 32)

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In a genuinely ethical relation, I become a different “I”, an ethical “sub-ject”, someone thrown under the Other as support. (Calarco 33)

Hence the ideas of anti-humanism, relational ontology of human beings, and the idea of ethics deriving from the singular encounter with the Other – constitute the basic starting points for a posthuman future. However, the tragedy is almost all the ‘philosophers of difference’ restricted their purviews within the anthropomorphic world, for them animals have no world of their own, they are cognitively “poor in world” for Heidegger as only humans are open to “meaning” and a world of significance. (Calarco 33)

Going through Calarco’s present book as well as his early work, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (2008), we note that even Levinas who philosophised so much on the *Other* was also ethically anthropocentric (Calarco 32). In that way therefore, both Heidegger and Levinas reinforced the humanism inherent in classical philosophers and modern philosophers like Aristotle, Descartes and Kant. It was Adorno and Horkheimer who for the first time went beyond anthropocentric frames and later Judith Butler’s idea of “precarious life” also incorporated both human and animal life in her definition of precarity (Calarco 34). Radical philosophical theorisations promoted by Derrida, Deleuze and Hélène Cixous about whom we would come at a later stage in this paper convinced us that

[...] rethinking our relationships with animals is one of the most pressing tasks of our age.
(Calarco 35)

“The questions concerning animals and animality represent the limit upon which all the great questions are formed and determined, as well as all the concepts that attempt to delimit what is ‘proper to man’” (Calarco 36)

Animals are singular and our ethical response is determined not by our autonomous sense of subjectivity but through logic of heteronomy in which the encounter with the other determines our ethical response to the other. So seen in that light what ethical responsibility or response should we offer for the animal? The animal is more than what we think him/her to be. She is irreducible in her ontological essence and eludes our anthropomorphic and reductivist comprehensive grasp.

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Derrida's encounter with his cat which he enunciates in his *The Animal that Therefore I Am* makes him realize more about his own human persona. He reminds us that his cat precedes and exceeds his conceptual machination about her. Derrida says that he sees it

As a place where it can encounter me, see me, even see me naked. Nothing can ever take away from me the certainty that what we have here is an existence that refuses to be conceptualized. (Calarco 40)

The animal, or as Derrida coined the neologism, the "animot" eludes our human comprehensive grasp and it requires us to scale down and get immersed in the self of the other to realize the other. Such a process once again requires us to unlearn and re-learn to think through animals, through our Earth-others. This can only be achieved through a radical transformation in thinking and in what follows we map the contours of such a new manifesto for living in the Anthropocene. Subsequently we would go to radical French poststructuralist theory to enunciate our support for new posthumanist trajectories.

Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene

All the ideas discussed so far have been enforced and complemented in the recent work, *Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene*, edited by Katherine Gibson, Deborah Bird Rose, and Ruth Fincher (2015). This book seeks to "Enliven moral imagination, drawing us into deeper understandings of responsibilities, reparative possibilities and alternative futures" (Gibson et al. ii). The prelude to the *Manifesto* starts off with reference to the Biosphere, the part of the air where the humans and non-human animals can survive along with the whole abiotic element of the natural world. This era of the Anthropocene requires the conjoining of the natural world with the cultural world of intellectual episteme and the section in the manifesto on "Thinking" is about transforming our preconceived conceptualizations of Renaissance Humanism. It is about listening to the world for a change that would engender the possibility of thinking "with" the world and not "for" it because those solutions that look at nature as a mere objective, dead entity would always look for economy-driven solutions and generate politico-philosophical measures. The "preface" to the manifesto by Katherine Gibson, Deborah Bird Rose and Ruth Fincher is about strengthening the "tentative connections" between *Ecological Humanities* and *Community Economies* (i). The insistence on a reparative study of anthropological climate change to promote an *ecological-economic thinking* (vii), can be effective in repairing the peril that has been wrought upon the environment by humans. In short any theorization regarding the environment needs to be done outside the play of the binaries which has been a common trait of Renaissance Humanism.

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The conceptualization in the manifesto on “Thinking with Others” (n. pag.) addresses various anthropogenic events and focuses on the intertwined link between human history and natural history negating in that way the division between man and nature. It focuses on the fact that the real enemy that should be combated is not global warming but our preconceived understandings of the world which is largely determined by Western Enlightenment thinking. Our anthropomorphic hubris promotes the idea of the self and the other due to which we are habituated to think about or for Nature rather than “with” it. Time has come for the *Homo Faber and Homo economicus* to evolve into the *Homo reflectus* who can dislodge all our materialist greed to inaugurate a *thinking-self-for-the-other*. It is high time to deconstruct the Cartesian ideology that renders the non-human other as meaningless and dead. Three strategies are visualized here to salvage humanity in the Anthropocene: “Rethinking Being” that suggests the abandonment of the concept of “being” and the appropriation of the apprehension of “being-in-common,” “Assiduity of parochial consideration of economies,” usefulness of “bio-mimicry” and germaneness of practices of the “knowledge of bionomics” through “permaculture” designs are ways that can generate the existence of livelihood that can be shared across species; and the third is “Ethical Coordinates for More-Than Human Communities” which proposes the ways of conjoined livelihoods of humans and non-human others. The penultimate section of the manifesto called, “Contact Improvisation” suggests a form of dance positioned on the propinquity of the collaborators. The concept is to:

Explore further the eco-philosophical implications of Contact Improvisation, by considering what it might mean to dance with the “earth body” that we have. “Earth body” might be taken to signify my own body, understood as a thing of Earth, as is that of all creatures, human and otherwise, with whom I share an earthly existence in the “dance” of life. (Gibson et al., ch. 7, 44-45)

The norm of perceiving the world as a dead object can be changed if we start listening to it. The abandoning of delusions of mastery and control would then cease and we would argue that such a paradigm shift in human thinking can only happen when we incorporate the revolutionary tropes of radical French poststructuralist thinking. In what follows we would elaborate on that. Before that, we would like to engage briefly with Dipesh Chakrabarty’s notion of “species history” which, we believe, can unleash the radical imaginaries of new thinking in an Anthropocentric world.

Deep History and Species History

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The present excursus now takes the two essays of Dipesh Chakrabarty published in *Critical Inquiry*, “Climate and Capital: On Conjoined Histories” (2014) and “The Climate of History: Four Theses” (2009) as its point of departure to argue for a new post-anthropocentric imaginary in the domain of critical theory. In doing this it draws largely on available templates of radical French thinking as enunciated by Giles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous and Jean-Luc Nancy and also on recent theoretic trajectories of new disciplines such as Critical animal studies (Calarco 2008; 2015) and New Materialism (Crockett and Robbins 2012) etc. All these radical thought currents go beyond the Anthropocentric paradigm to unpack new road maps for future through innovative ideas of ethics, subjectivity, energy, theology and politics and any deliberation of post-Anthropocentrism must incorporate these radical optics to constitute a grammar of counter-epistemology of the future. In asserting our propositions further, we would begin by referring to Chakrabarty’s concern for a new model of “deep history.” We would however, argue that while Chakrabarty is right in drawing our collective attention to the anthropomorphic bias of all existing historiographic or political economic epistemes and also justified in his reiterated demand for inaugurating a new genre of planet history or species history to understand the implications of the Anthropocene, he fails to walk the extra mile to incorporate a genuine deconstructive approach to the problem. He goes near and yet shies away from the crux of the matter, and in that way misses the real implications of the whole task (Purakayastha, forthcoming). His whole endeavour in both his two essays seems to be only to project the inefficacy of our normative analytical modes of political economy. There is no denying that we need to recognize now the enormity of the planetary and geological changes, and yet we are powerless to ward off cosmic upheavals. All that we can do is to replace our existing political economic and sociological structures and habits which are accentuating geological changes. Chakrabarty seems to deny that. The Anthropocene, we have already demonstrated, necessitates a restructuring of our conventional imaginaries so far as our ideologies, consumption patterns and ontological orientations to others are concerned. In Chakrabarty we merely get the articulation of a genuine concern for the fallout of the Anthropocene but his over-prioritization of planet history over geo-political or political economic praxis can be seriously questioned on the ground of repetitiousness, closure and lack of futural directions (Purakayastha, forthcoming). His notion of species history or his proposition for an earth saving politics to avert the anthropogenic climate change is pertinent but not adequate enough to constitute a real paradigm shift in humanities and social sciences. For attaining that, we argue, we need to go to radical French thinking on post-subjective critical theory and also to the proponents of critical animal studies or zoomorphic zoontologies who have been raising these points on a requisite earth centric “geology of morals” or humanimity to dislodge the hegemony of the humanist logic that we have already discussed.

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At the end of his paper, Chakrabarty speaks of “Enlightenment reason” as the savior that can salvage us from the apocalyptic doomsday arising out of global warming but radical French thinking and Critical Animal Study theorists have ascribed all anthropogenic aberrations to the instrumentality of Enlightenment reason and its associative logic of human sovereignty that resulted in the hubris of the human cogito and the annihilation of the other species and geological resources. Chakrabarty’s flaw can be compensated through the findings of French theory on the *post-subject* which in the next section we would engage with.

Posthumanism, *Becoming Animal* and Derridean *Khora*

Drawing primarily on recent works in these fields such as *The Reject: Community, Politics and Religion after the Subject* (Goh, 2015) and *The Animal Question in Deconstruction* (Turner, 2014); *Religion Politics and the Earth: The New Materialism* (Crockett & Robbins, 2012), etc this paper posits for a futural thinking of the Derridean *khora*, the “non-ground” that thinks beyond (auto-reject) our anthropocentric or anthropomorphic aspects, a project that incorporates non-human animals, their voices and silences. Irving Goh while enunciating his idea of the “auto-reject” spoke at length on Derrida’s idea of the *Khora* and he notes that:

Khora, according to Derrida, will be that place where new thoughts or new ways of thinking (about religion) receive, in their instants of articulation or arrival, what Derrida calls “unconditional hospitality” ...Derrida will state that *Khora* can never be defined, determined, or identified as this or that place. *Khora* rejects localizing itself: it rejects determining a place of or for itself. It is *no place or a nonplace*. It is almost an impossible place, yet always necessary to claim a proximity to it, or an approximation of it, in order to give voice or place to the new. (Goh 130)

If the *khora* allows the “impossible possibility” of the arrival of the *other*, then we can think of the absolute alterity, or as Derrida called it, the “divinanimality” that “breaks with [...] the similar, to situate oneself at least in a place of alterity radical enough whereby one must break with all identification with an image of oneself, ... with all humanity.” (Goh 233) In this context, H  l  ne Cixous’ notion of the “counter Bible” or the animal perspective or the “animots” appears highly relevant. The term “animot” has been translated as “animal words” and it is “a matter of following or chasing after the animal, of assuming an animal perspective.” (Goh 150-151) This transformation from the human subject to the animal point of view is a superb form of auto-rejection and marks the rejection of the human experience and it does not mourn the “death by human knowledge” (Goh 151) Borrowing from Cixous, Goh calls

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such animotisation as our “second innocence” that animates divine *jouissance* because through it we abandon our sovereign human self and embrace a new innocence of nonhuman knowledge. Can we then think of a future discourse of politics/survival strategy in the Anthropocene centering on the non-human or the animal? We would argue for the Deleuzian idea of “becoming non-human,” or the “becoming animal” for radical survival possibilities in the Anthropocene. This impossible figure can be the animal, as the animal has always been rejected as a possible figure of thought in politics or political philosophy. “Becoming-animal” is that trajectory of resistance and to adopt the idea of *becoming animal* we need to “push existing political thought beyond its anthropologic and/or anthropocentric limits.” (Goh 202). The particular feeling or sensation of animal affects may perhaps be found in the originary and communicative *aisthesis* that humans and animals share. To cross the adjacent space of the animal is a question of recovering the originary *aesthesis* that is recovering the sensation of the earth milieu, of *aisthesis* that humans and animals originally share. Originary *aisthesis* was lost when “Aristotle supplemented it with the anthropocentric logos in his political philosophy” (Goh 230). *Aisthesis* in its immediate sensing and communication of pain or wrong done to a human or animal/ecology is of political potentiality, that is *aisthesis* in itself is already adequate to demand an addressing of the wrong committed against a human or animal or the Earth. Aristotle however refused to recognize the political potential of *aisthesis*. To recover *aesthesis*, before it is supplemented by a form of logos that has been appropriated by and reduced to the human is not only a way toward the adjacent space of *becoming animal*, but is also an unveiling of *becoming animal*'s potentiality for a future political project of justice. This brings us to posthumanism, to ideas of anthropomorphic others or “earth others,” to “zoo-morphic” paradigms. “Critical anthropomorphism” looks into contemporary French thought's idea of the “*clinamen*” which is clearly evident in the works of Michael Seres, Deleuze and Guattari and Nancy. “*Clinamen*” is some sort of subtractive thinking that debunks the capitalist accumulative impulse that drives the thought of the human subject, or subjectivity. In other words, the thought of the *clinamen* takes into account the fact that “one is always already in the process of auto-rejecting some part of oneself, even though this takes place at a molecular or atomic scale.” (Goh, 233) For a posthumanism that continues the poststructuralist deconstruction of the capitalist subject, *clinamen* can be its point of departure to a world of auto-subtraction/rejection for multiple dissonances to exist. Dipesh Chakrabarty's apocalyptic apprehensions, though completely justified could have been supplemented with such configurations of futural thoughts and his repeated harping on the inadequacy of capitalist history and the requisite primacy of species history would be taken up for a critical analysis in the subsequent section to demonstrate the inadequacy of his own futural openings.

N-I Community or Becoming Animal/Divinanimality: What Comes after the Subject?

The post-anthropocene phase of life demands new trajectories of thinking so far as the idea of self, community, ontology, politics and ethics are concerned, something that Chakrabarty hinted at but he remained within the same old humanist frame. Radical French poststructuralist thinkers on the other hand had thought about the absolutism of the humanistic frame long back and their quest for post-subjective or post-humanist ontologies are more than relevant now. In what follows we would dwell on radical French philosophical ideas of post-humanism as enunciated by Irving Goh in his *The Reject: Community, Politics and Religion after the Subject* (2015). In a certain way, the present day geo-political conditions, Goh observes, make us all *rejects*, either we reject others socially and politically, ontologically or we get rejected by others and that makes the category of the *reject* so important for us and Irving Goh's book, *The Reject* (2015) as the title suggests, philosophizes on the theoretic category of the *reject* through the radical philosophic optics of contemporary French thoughts. Goh takes Jean Luc Nancy's poststructuralist inquiry made in the sixties about "what comes after the subject" – a question that Nancy posed to his leading contemporaries such as Derrida, Deleuze, Alain Badiou and many others who grappled with the poststructural problematic of the liquidation of the "sovereign subject" and its radical consequences – as his point of departure. Goh critically engages with some of the rejoinders to Nancy's question and while evaluating those answers offers his own idea of the *reject* or the "auto-reject" which Goh argues, perfectly subtends all the radical responses to Nancy's question as provided by Derrida, Deleuze, Badiou, even by Nancy himself, or by Hélène Cixous and others who theorized the possibilities of post-subjective configurations.

Goh argues that as poststructuralism is very much a story of the *reject*, it is worthwhile to enunciate this paradigm of the *reject* with French thoughts and in doing this it elucidates the "philosophical, ethical and political potentialities of the *reject* and their implications for the contemporary world." (Goh xii). He therefore, places the *reject* as a "critical figure of thought" in the post-Anthropocentric world of capitalo-democratic politics that promotes the ethos of subjective sovereignty and consequent totalisation of human power. Through his engagement with the varied responses to Nancy's question, Goh probes to establish how many of them fall short of real post-subjective imaginaries and subsequently asserts his own notion of the *reject* which he claims has the contours of genuine post-subjective templates. Goh would contend that almost all radical French thinkers such as Derrida, Deleuze, Helen Cixous and others in their theorization actually bordered onto the *reject* or the notion of the "auto-reject" to envisage our thoughts beyond the sovereign subject. In Goh's analysis however, it is Deleuze and Guattari and Nancy himself who should be credited the most for upholding the

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idea of the *reject* in their conceptualization of radical post-humanist paradigms. The term *reject* is “but a shorthand for a theory that seeks to articulate and affirm a figure of thought that would give expression to the multiplicity of heterogeneous rejects” – they are figures who break away from all normative configurations. Goh cites the “nomadic war machine” (Deleuze), the “clinamen” (Nancy), the idea of the “becoming animal” (Deleuze), “Zoo-morphic” (Braidotti), the “animot” (Cixous), the “divinanimality” (Derrida), “animal messiah” (Cixous) etc – as prefiguration of the *reject*. Deleuze’s response to Nancy rallied for the construction of “new functions and discover new fields that make [the subject] useless or inadequate” and Derrida’s opinion was, one could free oneself from “the necessity to keep at all cost the word subject ...” (Goh, 2). As Goh goes back to Nancy’s question and attempts an adequate answer, he claims that such an answer remains the unfinished task of contemporary French thought, and the radical figure of thought in French theory that “comes after the subject” can establish French theory’s relevance to the contemporary world. Here Goh refers to Cary Wolfe’s views in his “What is Posthumanism?” which reiterates that the future of posthumanism or posthuman discourse can “take a leaf from contemporary French thought’s question - who comes after the subject?” (4).

There appears to be a marked rise or resurrection of the subject with the assertion of all anthropomorphic paradigms and other forms of sovereignty across the globe and therefore devising a new figure of thought other than the classical notion of the subject can emerge as a viable strategy. Critical trajectories in the domain of feminism and postcolonial studies have been instrumental in critiquing the absolutist subject and in its discussion on the coming form of religion in the postsecular world, on friendship, communities and love, this book promotes the idea of the “auto-reject” as that new form of future. By proposing the theory of the *reject* or the *auto-reject* as a possible replacement of the totalizing subject Irving Goh offers a theory of new ethics. Auto-rejection according to him

involves creative regeneration, therefore, ... not self-annihilation (Goh 7)

“Giving up all that one has prepared and gathered for oneself, and giving up the position on which one has begun to ground or found oneself with all that one has gathered: that is what the subject is unable or reluctant to do. The auto-reject meanwhile detaches or frees itself from such gathering and (self-) positioning”. (Goh 8)

The ethical force of the auto-reject derives from its erasure of its sovereignty and in that way it affirms the respect for the other.

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“the auto-reject, unlike the subject, has no interest in accumulating for itself predicates that might contribute to its foundation; it has no interest in totalizing everything, including elements outside of itself, within its grasp and control...has no interest either in whatsoever foundation of itself ...” (Goh 8)

While elucidating on the notion of the *reject*, Goh argues that the idea of *reject* is not exclusively his conjuration, in fact the *reject* “has always subtended philosophy” (13), it was already with philosophy right at its beginning and is evident in both Plato and Socrates and it traverses philosophy even after them.

The Post-Secular Animal-Other and Post-Anthropocentrism

Derrida’s naming of ideas such as “messianicity without messianism”, or his notion of the “khora” also borders onto the auto-reject in religion. For Derrida

khora can never be defined, determined, or identified as this or that place. Khora rejects locating itself ... it is no place or nonplace, it is almost an impossible place, yet always necessary to claim proximity to it, or an approximation of it, in order to give voice or place to the new. (130)

This impossible but necessary place takes on a clearer contour of a *reject* or the *auto-reject*. For a future thinking of ontology, one must reject any adherence to a particular institution or ground, one must own up the *khora*, the non-ground. If the *khora* allows the “impossible possibility” of the arrival of the other, then we can think of the animal-other, the absolute alterity, or as Derrida called it, the “divinanimality” that “breaks with [...] the similar, to situate oneself at least in a place of alterity radical enough whereby one must break with all identification with an image of oneself, ... with all humanity.” (Goh, 136) So the *auto-reject* for the postsecular must follow after the animal. It is “only then that the reject or auto-reject can open religion and/or the postsecular to a future where differences not only between anthropocentric and anthropomorphic religions and reason, but also between humans and animals, are affirmed and respected.” (138) Goh’s take on ‘Prolegomenon to Reject Politics’ marvelously deepens this idea of “becoming non-human”, or the “becoming animal” as explicated by Deleuze. Like Derrida, for Deleuze and Guattari too:

There is a politics of becoming animal: To the inhumanness of the ‘diabolical powers` responds the sub human ... of becoming animal: become beetle, become dog, become ape, head over heels and away, rather than lower one`s head and remain a bureaucrat... judge or be judged. (198)

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According to Deleuze and Guattari, “we lack resistance to the present” and Goh would add, “Becoming-animal is that trajectory of resistance, if not force of rejection that we need today”. (Goh, 202) In other words, *becoming animal* can resist or sidestep the force of the “state war machine” and hence lead us out of the impasse of contemporary radical political/ethical thought. To adopt the idea of *becoming animal* we need to “push existing political thought beyond its anthropologic and/or anthropocentric limits. (Goh 202-203)

However, *becoming animal* proceeds at the molecular dimension, and hence if there is a magnitude to *becoming animal*, it would be at a level of what Deleuze and Guattari would call an “n-1 degree magnitude”. They do not fail to articulate the aesthetic dimension of the aisthesis of *becoming animal* and as they believe, “it is through writing” in the sense of literature such as Kafka’s writings or Melville’s *Moby Dick*, “that you become animal” (209). So art is the site for Deleuze and Guattari where they locate the emergence of *becoming animal*. Hence becoming animal’s transversal communication between heterogeneous populations opens a body to an unlimited relation with any number of living entities. The *becoming animal* allies with the *anomic* and this alliance with the *anomic* is how *becoming animal* challenges the state’s politics of (dis)friendship and builds a transversal politics of the future. This brings us to posthumanism, to ideas of anthropomorphic others or “earth others,” to a “zoo-morphic” paradigms. Posthumanism is akin to auto-rejection and in such auto-rejection, posthumanism must be willing to take the risk of allowing new forms of relations it seeks with the reject other to fall into a state of inoperativity. Here Goh employs Nancy’s idea of “inoperative community” that suggests a posthumanism to refrain from totalizing all the *rejects* within its discourse (Goh 233). For a posthumanism that continues the poststructuralist deconstruction of the subject by articulating the *reject*, especially the *reject* that is not borrowed but draws from itself as an *auto-reject*, *clinamen* can be its point of departure to a world of auto-subtraction/rejection for multiple dissonances to exist. In the subsequent conclusive part, we would discuss on how novelties of thought in New Materialist thinking and Critical Animal Studies can also provide those necessary domains of epistemic experimentations.

Conclusion: Towards New Materialism and Critical Animal Studies

We would like to conclude with the findings of New Materialists (Crockett and Robbins) and the proponents of critical animal studies or posthumanist studies through a detour of the works of Matthew Calarco, Stefan Herbrechter and Crockett and Robbins. In their work *Religion, Politics and the Earth: The New Materialism* (2012), Crockett and Robbins define new materialism as a new discipline that

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Takes seriously the material and physical world in which we live. The New Materialism is a materialism based on energy transformation...For us what we need is a theology that genuinely takes account of the earth without lapsing into wishful thinking about what it means to live in harmony with nature or New Age platitudes about Gaia that produce a false spirituality. (Crockett & Robbins xvi)

Having defined *New Materialism*, Crockett and Robbins embark on a wonderful explanation of New Materialist idea of theology, energy, being, politics and ethics. They propose for an ‘athermal idea of energy’ keeping in mind the disastrous reality of the Anthropocene and in doing that, unlike Chakrabarty, they launch a severe attack on capitalism and go ahead with a concrete blue print of new politics and ethics which would rally for the hunt for alternative modes of non-heat energy through the application of non-equilibrium thermodynamics. Theirs is a perfect example of cross-disciplinary initiative to stave off the dire consequences of the Anthropocene as they involve a physicist and a radical artist in writing their manifesto on art and energy in the post-Anthropocene. Needless to say such intense and subtle analysis of energy requires specialized knowledge on physics and energy science but credit goes to the New Materialists as they perfectly blend specialized knowhow with a clear proposition for alternative earth centric materialist modes of thinking vis a vis energy, politics and ethics:

We work against philosophical idealism by taking the earth as subject rather than simply asserting and upholding the vantage point of spirit. Into this Hegelian or quasi Hegelian space, we are also asserting or inserting a Deleuzian emphasis on the earth. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari ask “Who does the earth think it is?” as they posit not a genealogy of morals à la Nietzsche but a geology of morals – an earth based science of right and wrong, good and evil that not only inspires but also helps to define our project with the new materialism ... We posit earth as subject ... Earth becomes itself by thinking through its own materiality, energy, forces, layered strata, atmosphere, magnetosphere...this process is dynamic and entropic process but it relies upon a reconceptualisation of thermodynamics provided in part by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* ... we claim that energy is immanent Deleuzo-Hegelian spirit (or Spirit), and energy avoids the traditional dichotomy between spirit and matter, because everything is energy transformation ... the earth is the solution to the energy crisis, but we do not know how to think like the earth, what Deleuze and Guattari call the mechanosphere.

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We need to deterritorialize our thinking to unlink it from preestablished ruts and prescribed territories ... As such this book is an experiment in thinking. (xx-xxi)

This is indeed radical thinking and the proposed drive for reterritorialization of our thoughts looks for a carbon free future, or desires to constitute life beyond the paradigm of *Homo Crabonicus* (96), something that the delusion of corporate capitalism has deeply entrenched in our minds about the unending supply of fossil fuel-induced energy in this planet. This hunt for the alternative also takes into account the non-human *other* or the animals as they lead their life in consonance with the Earth. The deconstruction of the anthropogenic self will be complete if we pull us down the pedestal of human superiority, and critical animal studies by Matthew Calarco, Cary Wolfe and Paola Cavalieri can be powerful entry points here.

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