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**MANIFESTATION OF POSTHUMAN SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH THE  
METAMORPHOSED BODIES IN *ANIMAL'S PEOPLE***

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**ABSTRACT**

Metamorphosis of the body and the bodily images have transcended to become posthuman by investment through varied individual identity. The extent to which a person with a prosthetic or any kind of disability being qualified as a human is taken up in this paper. The book *Animal's People* by Indra Senha qualifies to be on the list of discussions of moral imperatives of philosophical posthumanism. The boy crouched due to the disaster and forced to walk on two hands and legs was further pushed to the periphery. This paper tries to analyse how humans among themselves become an embodiment of posthuman figure. The ultimate level of differentiation and the blurring of boundaries of the people between themselves as humans and animals become a posthuman tale of survival. This paper analyses how posthumanism is manifested in corporeal forms through the reconceptualization of what counts as a human. The critique of Zoe (biological existence) and Bios (fully realised life) are put into probe through the boy named Animal and his tale of life and survival throughout the years.

Keywords : Posthumanism, Disability, Identity, Zoe, Bio.

**INTRODUCTION**

The shift in focus from the Eurocentric concept of Man resulted in strong critique of humanism and complete rejection of anthropocentrism. The concept of a hyperspatial self was developed over the emergence of the Posthuman thought. Braidotti in *The Posthuman* puts forward the idea of humans that transcend the geographical boundaries and spatiotemporal particularities to attain timeless truth. The vision of cyborg was put forward to subvert all kinds of racist, class, gender consciousness. From the technological posthumanism stems the cultural, theoretical and philosophical posthumanism that decentres the power structures of the society by attaching the technological variants to the classification of the society. Posthumanism has expressed itself in various forms. Francesca Ferrando in her work *Philosophical Posthumanism* deals with the post in post-humanism, post-dualism and post-anthropocentrism. Technological posthumanism depends upon the use of technological advancements to enhance the connection between points of the living system. It differs from transhumanism as the latter focuses on the radical transformation of human condition mostly by the use of science and technology. Sometimes, radical change over the body of the human subject may eventually lead it to become a posthuman entity. "By thoughtfully, carefully, and yet boldly applying technology to ourselves, we can become something no longer accurately described as human - we can become posthuman" (More and Max 04). This fluid state of human subject is further evolved by posthumanism.

Critical posthumanism takes its turn on the developments in the field of literary criticism whereas cultural posthumanism embraces its specific take on the social theory and societal orders.

Philosophical posthumanism is based on the postulate that the subject position of human is not static but many and fluid. The plurality of human existence is put into probe to negate anthropocentrism and eliminate the dualistic features of the society. The technological advancements leading to the development of figures other than human gave rise to the thought of a platform devoid of any hierarchies and centres. Traditional humanism situated the world to be a Eurocentric male and did not prove a coherent way to break the conceptual boundaries and barriers constructed around man to elaborate on his fluid identity. Emancipatory readings of the human- animal and human- nature readings were nil in humanist approach and the need for destabilisation of the demarcating boundaries were the driving force for the development of the theoretical stance of philosophical posthumanism. This paper tries to analyse how the metamorphoses of one's body affect the manifestation of posthuman subjectivity. This paper takes up the idea of how philosophical posthumanism challenges the static, normative definitions of the human by reinscribing identity in multiple hybrid and fluid manners. In *Animal's People*, disability and metamorphosis represents resilience and agency of marginalised bodies as they push the boundaries of what qualifies to be a human and tries to engage themselves in a heteronormative discourse.

### **POSTHUMAN IDENTITY**

The posthuman identity does not lie on the basis of recrafting our body alone. The subjective positions and ideology does not differ according to the alteration of the normative human concept. The conundrum of being able to maintain varied identities and subjectivities hinder the coexistence of multiplicities. Identity has always been referred to as the element of "self" be it a personal or collective phenomenon. The approaches to identity depend on three different levels ; individual, relational and collective (Sedikides and Brewer 1-4). The failure of acceptance of the multi faceted identity realms give rise to the dissimilitude whatsoever the paradoxical Cosmopolitan references all around. The central argument of posthuman identity would be how the humans conceptualise themselves around the human and nonhuman others. Zygmunt Bauman's concept of fluid modernity argues that humans need society to enjoy their individual and collective freedom. In the absence of a society, their freedom becomes nothing but a mere apathetic condensation of an arbitrary chaotic system. Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity helps to understand how identities are destabilised under posthumanism. Characters like Animal and Kha in the jar do not fall within the category of a single identity, but rather embody a spectrum of identities- the deformed nature of Animal makes him simultaneously human and animalistic. The resilience of Animal and Kha in the jar divert the traditional boundaries of humanity and disability.

Any attempt to transcend the human experience becomes a part of posthumanism. In the novel, the people of Khaufpur with various disabilities/ deformities are considered posthuman. Their amalgamation into the rest of the society comes under scrutiny. People named Animal and Kha in the jar become a simulacrum as humans are not an independent value in isolation. The pure altruism of characters like Zafar and Nisha, the social activists, Somraj; Nisha's father and Elli; the doctor's intentions are put under scrutiny as the emergence of various assemblages and synchronicity are at stake. The continuum of human and non human should emerge as the elimination of the contradistinction among all. The strategic narrations of trust and coexistence of humans and

nonhuman foster to diminish the species boundary. The assimilation of animal studies over the recent years have helped to view the demarcation and conformity of the varied entities. Posthumanist sociomaterial perspective does not mean for the separation of human/non human or evaluating them as discrete units rather they intend to learn the interdependencies of the multi species relation. A priori assumptions of the posthuman stance intend to decentre the gaze of human agency. It tries to disaffiliate from the ties of humanism as it does not maintain any kind of neutrality. The normative definition of humanism expresses to be an accomplice of violent exclusion of those who are regarded less than human- women, non hetero, people of colour, the disabled and indigenous people (Roffe and Hannah 17). The traditional dissolution of identity happens through the physical metamorphosis of Animal, while the blurred identity of the characters of the novel portrays resilience and survival outside the societal conventional norms.

### **INDRA SINHA'S *ANIMAL'S PEOPLE***

*Animal's People* by Indra Sinha offers an insight to the sufferings of the people still under the clutches of the horrendous Bhopal Gas Tragedy. On December 3, 1984, from the plant of the Indian subsidiary of Union Carbide Corporation, an American firm, Methyl Isocyanate leaked and drifted to the highly populated neighbourhood leaving the death toll around 15,000-20,000. Many underwent permanent illness with a major number of cases of chronic respiratory illness. Indra Sinha, born in 1950 brought up in England started to work relentlessly for the affected people from 1993 and co-founded Bhopal Medical Appeal which tries to provide clean water to the people. *Animal's People* accounts the city of Khaufpur that represents Bhopal and is a fictitious recording of the Gas tragedy. The fictionalised city of Khaufpur offers a scathing critique of what it means to be a human and the horrendous experiences that still haunt the people. Fog engulfed the town that night, as is referred to in the novel and made wounds that might never heal. It provides a posthumanist perspective in a postcolonial ecocritical reading. "That night" changed the lives of generations of people and the company's refusal to accept the repercussions of their actions left the people to be the sufferers of this land. The company did not face any kind of indictment and the people suffered in mute despair. Sinha provides a highly polemical narration of those affected presented as the tape recordings of a 19 year old named Animal who, at the age of six suffered a bent to his spine and had to start walking on both his legs and hands.

The story begins with a jarnalis (Journalist) approaching Animal who consents to record his story on a tape. Animal's story began a few days before the disaster as he was born then. From the age of six, he forgot what it was to be a human. He gives an account of all the people of Khaufpur who struggle to meet the day's needs. The victims of the tragedy are not any faceless figures but people with definite identity and desire. Animal was taken in by Ma Franci who came from France to help the victims of the disaster and dedicated her whole life to it. She was the only person in the world who showed him that he deserved to be loved. Later he was taken in by Nisha, the daughter of Somraj who had to quit his singing career because of the catastrophe. There he gets acquainted with Zafar, a local agitator demanding justice from the company legally and helping the people of Khaufpur. Animal gets taken into the fight against the company and Animal, who till then felt that he could not do anything for his people's good, started to be assigned important tasks. He meets many

unborn babies in the jar preserved and many deformed due to the effects of the gas leak. He converses with them and through it brings out a multifaceted approach to the brutal circumstances they undergo. The plot moves through a turmoil of events that almost led to the death of the people and even though the societal status of the people remain the same they realise their own identities and decide not to surrender to the brutal circumstances of life. “If I’m an upright human, I would be one of millions, not even a healthy one at that. Stay four foot, I’m the one and only animal”(Sinha 365-366). Animal portrayed in the novel is not a figure of pity and dismay; rather the brutal circumstances have not made them surrender. They came out of the turn of events as the survivors and not the sufferers. The slim hope of things falling back to place one day helps them move forward. The Bhopal Gas Tragedy left irreparable scars on the living entities, and they got transformed into posthuman subjectivities as their survival was prioritised over normalcy. Sinha’s Khaufpur becomes a strong critique of postcolonial capitalism where the worth of human beings becomes materialised only based on their functionality which further marginalises those with any kinds of ‘scars’ as per the normative concept of normalcy and thus becomes subjected to corporate neglect and are further pushed downwards.

### **(DIS)ABILITY AND (POST)HUMAN**

Disability does not form a uniform category. Claims of individual identity, susceptible perceptions and biocertifications widens the bifurcation further. Degradation into the subhuman category of the disabled people further cemented the hierarchical categorisation of the human beings. “I used to be human once” (Sinha 01). “I walked on two feet just like a human being” (Sinha 01). These are the opening statements of the central character of the novel, Animal. The notion of a normal human being was being continually questioned before him and the physical deformity as that of Animal was not considered a normal trait of the abled bodies. When any kind of normative human traits are challenged, they are viewed as cyborgs. Any kind of disability or challenging any kind of established hierarchies are seen as an aberration or abnormality. Disability exerts itself on both sides of the human/ non human binary. It might tend to reshape and rethink the notion of human and on the other, it might further solidify the normative concept of human (Goodley and Runswick-Cole 2016 ). Kha in the jar proves himself to be a rework of the notion of human whereas Animal stands as an aberration from the standardised image of man.

The enacted separation of the human/ non human expresses itself through the perception of human subject within posthumanism. The privilege and hierarchical field contextualise humans within all the radical fields. “Their experiences expose the ideal of the rational, autonomous, bounded agent that underlie normative conceptions of what it means to be human”(Naraian 17). The corporeality of Animal’s body parallels the monstrosity that has been attributed to his persona. The ethical implications of the varied subjectivities and the premise of independent and universal human is put at stake in the case of Kha in the jar. Animal’s relation with Kha in the jar and people like Zafar and Nisha manifest how heterogeneous assemblages are a way of reparation against homogeneity. The people of Khaufpur stands antithetical to the “spatially globalizing, socially industrial, economically capitalist, culturally hybrid and intellectually rationalist order that western civilisation represents”(Bartra 192)

“I am not a Muslim, I’m not a Hindu, I’m not an Isayi, I’m an Animal”(Sinha 14). Animal presents himself to be a problematization of the possibilities and position assumed for equal belonging as we are not equally human. Disability cannot be presumed as posthumanism because if so, a physically and cognitively powerful discrete element would constitute the normative human self. Lennard Davis in his work *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* describes how disability challenges the normative definitions of human identity(24). Animal’s and Kha’s deformities serve as poignant illustrations of bodies deemed “abnormal” but reveal their own form of agency and humanity. The novel’s portrayal of disability as posthuman engages with Lennard Davis’s critiques of normative embodiment, challenging ableist perspectives that marginalise those outside physical ‘norms.’ In Khaufpur, Animal and Kha represent a diverse spectrum of human existence that questions normative ideals of ‘wholeness’ and demands recognition of disabled bodies as possessing agency and resilience.

### THE POSTHUMAN TURN OF SUBJECTIVITY

A humanist approach within the posthumanist paradigm has been pivotal in the poignant discussions of inclusions among the humans. The lingering question of who qualifies to become a human and up to what level the prosthetic amalgamation and digression from the normalised concept helps in the definition of humans has been perceptible. Thoughts on animal studies could only be formulated with regard to the existence of humans. In the novel, the existence and identity of Animal depended solely around the narratives of other “abled” humans. Animal says, “The world of humans is meant to be viewed from eye level. Your eyes”(Sinha 02). It clearly denotes that Animal plays no role in the jurisdiction of his own life. He becomes a mere puppet in the hands of others. Indignation against Animal arose from animalising him in order to establish dominance and hegemony over him.

This works in a hierarchical development of schemes. The company solely responsible for the accident and the spoliation of future generations failed to give a humane consideration to the people of Khaufpur. They were left all alone to suffer in despair. Within Khaufpur, it was people like Animal and Kha- in the jar who faced extreme indignation. The “self” as is known is derived from the Eurocentric, white, male, bourgeois expectations. The reinvigoration provided by posthuman agency puts a curtailment over the human agency and gives more subjective position to the multiple identities. “I no longer want to be human”(Sinha 01). The indignation faced from all around makes him want to stop trying to be a human. Somewhere along he realises that the potent subjectivities synthesised from a fusion of outsider identities are always dehumanised and seen as a threat. “I am done talking to tape machines”(Sinha 06). Animal gets no chance of any real life conversations with people. All that he can vent out is to the machines that record. People come and record their stories to gain enough sympathy and not to truly alleviate their lives. Even with struggles to obfuscate the boundaries, Darwinian theory of natural selection has been put as an imperative to force humanness upon the others. The people of Khaufpur become victims of racialised bacteriology(Diehl 87). The people in the city were deformed due to the callousness of the company but they were considered less than humans. The company was not ready to take blame for the repercussions of their actions, the survivors were left to be considered as ethnic horrors. “For his sort we are not really people. We don't have names”(Sinha 9).

Animal self identifies as a non-human that embodies Cary Wolfe's 'nonhuman turn', which rejects humanity's existence based on exclusive boundaries and asserting agency that is rooted in survival. He situates himself outside the human norms thereby critiquing the socio-political structures that marginalise non- normative bodies, thus embracing a posthuman identity that defies conventional expectations of humanity.

### ZOE AND BIOS OF POSTHUMAN THOUGHT

A profound understanding of "life" happens in the technologically mediated time with kinds of hybridised life forms and emerging rationalities. The line of existence and living become differently inferred for the humans even with the lingering question of who qualifies to become a human. The world does not let people with differential abilities to attain any kind of biovalue that would enmesh themselves within the global, political and economic strain of the society and thus, are in no position that any kind of investment on them for their generative potential is done. Cultural apparatuses mark a change in their biovalue. The posthuman thought marks a distinction between the Greek concept of zoe and bios in the living ethos. Bios and zoe are two ancient Greek words that stand for life, put forth by Aristotle. Zoe refers to the bare life of humans being the passive right holders. They just exist with no rights. Bios refers to the fully realised human beings where they become the active right holders. It was later taken up by many like Hannah Arendt in her work *Human Condition* and Giorgio Agamben. The terms Bios and Zoe are scattered throughout Aristotle's corpus with major emphasis on works like *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *On the Soul*, and *Parva Naturalia*. The major determinants of life being in a similar statement of  $x = y$ ,  $x$  being life and  $y$  being the definiens provided for  $x$  (Bagwell 13). For the people of Khaufpur,  $x$  stands for the brutal circumstances they had been undergoing since generations and  $y$  refers to the actions of the Kampani (Company) in Amrika (America). The company's reluctance to decontaminate the factory and denial to face the repercussions of their actions and all other dehumanising capitalist approaches played a part in shaping the brutalities of life that stands for  $x$ . The technological mediation in life gives new nuances to the categorisation of who becomes a human and thus explores how the zoe and bios of life gets intertwined with the life of the differently abled. When certain categorization of humans are considered subhuman, their life gets pejorated to mere existence as they are not conferred upon any kinds of social status and capital.

Multifaceted critique harboured against the multiple marginalised humans have to be liberated for them to experience the status of bios as distinguished from that of zoe. The differentiation of zoe and bios happen on the level where a distinction on the basis of zoe mainly happens between living and non living entities and bios on the grounds of social and cultural entitlement they enjoy. This is clearly depicted in the novel as a differentiation of the different characters. Animal encounters Kha in the jar who becomes neither zoe nor bios in his life. He is stuck in a jar and pleads with Animal to break him free. Even though he is unborn, Kha in the jar wishes to be free and enjoy the life that Animal enjoys. Kha tells Animal that he should feel fortunate enough to be able to lead a life even if being four legged. Animal when compared to others, experience a mere biological life and in no way is able to live a fully realised social life. Until he met Zafar who took him into the fight against the company, he felt that he was just a mere animal who could do no good to anyone else. Once he started

realising his potential, he started to be aware of his social standing and rights and started to embrace his name realising that he is no less of a human being. The people from the rest of the world view the people of Khaufpur as mere biological beings who just exist and have no right to live their lives to the fullest. The people being ripped off their justice and rights because the world, even their Government fail to consider them as people with social configurations. The Amrikan Kampani feels no need to declutter the mess they have created and holds them unaccountable for the brutalities done upon the people of Khaufpur. Their denial to be held liable to any of their wrong doings further intensify how certain groups of people are privileged enough to lead a life with full potential whereas others merely exist and perish to the grounds and still make no difference.

Zoe refers to the passive stakeholders while bios are those who are the active right holders of any particular society. Bios become fully realised human beings with full public life. Any group to take control over the others must strip them off their rights and completely reduce them to zoe from the level of bios. The people of Khaufpur became mere zoe after the tragic incident of the night and the government and the Kampani failed to realise the full potential of their life.

Agamben's bare life resonates with the lives of Khaufpur's residents which is marked by their deformity and abandonment that qualifies them for zoe rather than bios. Animal's journey, one marked without any kind of privilege illustrates how posthumanism interrogates societal structures that bestow humanity selectively, often marginalising bodies deemed 'unworthy' of full human rights and status.

## CONCLUSION

The characters like Animal and Kha in the jar give a posthuman perspective of the subaltern. Kha in the jar offers a retrospection of the rights, revolution and resistance against the anthropogenic world. Kha becomes a hyperspatial self whose influence over Animal is well felt even though Kha is not physically present in the outer world. The space and voice devoid of the non normative human beings are upheld by the unborn babies in the jar who yearn to Animal to let them out so that their voice and plight are being heard. Animal is symbolic of the incoherence and vagueness in the inclusion that is so held high by the posthumanist theoretical stance. The multiple voices within his head offer varied perspectives on subjectivity. Kha in the jar ceases to be a human to Animal as the former was never born into this world. Animal does not appear to be an able human to the rest of the people in Khaufpur while the people of Khaufpur are not regarded even in the slightest sense as people who were deprived and ripped off their justice and lives for the past generations. The posthumanist perspective of coexistence has been under light from the time of spiritual and mythical narratives. The epistemological orientation and inclusion on all levels show humans' coexistence with the non living/ humans.

The endeavours must aim at developing the kind of pluralism which strengthens the coexistence and incorporation. Repudiation of binary distinctions can only help to embrace the difference and foster complexity and fluidity. Reparatory measures have to be taken to transform the world through holistic measures taking in consideration of the radical ontological differences.

Considering disabled self as a posthuman factor would be a hindrance because if so, the normative human self would mean a completely abled body as is defined by Humanism. Animal, biologically,

would become a posthuman as his present physical condition was part of the amalgamation of intake of the deadly gases; an outside source that altered his physical form forever. But considering the alteration of his physical form as a disability, thereby considering him a posthuman in that light would break the coercive argument of philosophical posthumanism altogether. The definition of the perfectly abled body would show a tendency to return to white, male counterpart of the world. Differently abled bodies considered posthuman or an extension to the normal self would collapse itself. It should always try to maintain a critical distance yet try for a fluid seamless non-discrete world. Posthumanism profusely talks about biological citizenship espousing the adaptation of the companion species. The concept of disabilities among humans forces to reconsider the disabled bodies as separate entities. Posthumanism works as a multispecies cooptation which if not treated with inclusiveness, might intensify the discrete bifurcation and lead to legitimised discrimination. Posthumanism should always try to think of life beyond self and rethink it beyond species. *Animal's People* ultimately posits posthumanism as a means to reconceptualize humanity itself, urging a shift towards inclusivity that recognizes resilience and agency in forms historically viewed as 'abnormal.' Sinha's narrative advocates for a more fluid, interconnected understanding of identity, one that celebrates diversity beyond normative human confines, advocating for ethical and social justice for all forms of life.

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