

Animals in the Mirror of Anthropomorphism in Richard Adams' *Watership Down* and Amitav Gosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Writers have long used animals to promote favored morals and values. The depiction of animals in literature renders these nonhumans to social actors enhancing a narrative viewpoint. This appropriation between humans and nonhuman behaviors is mostly achieved through anthropomorphism, the interpretation of non-human features and events in terms of human characteristics. The relationship between humans and animals has been evolved in literature. There's quite a variance between earlier literature and more modern works. The past few decades have witnessed a dramatic shift in the way the relationship between humans and animals is demonstrated in modern fiction. Novels that were composed during the second half of the last century frequently displayed fantastically hybrid creatures that owned such exclusive human abilities as linguistic expression and philosophical thought. This is observed in Richard Adams' *Watership Down*, in which wild rabbits have not only linguistic capabilities, but also culture and mythology. As the distance between the cultural world and the natural world increased- with the advance of technology, and environmental degradation- during the 2000s, authors desired to move beyond anthropomorphism and imagine the animal standing for itself, without representing or symbolizing humans. Animals were compared to humans. This is reflected in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, which introduces the Sundarbans as a living entity, where animals stand as rivals to humans. The current research aims at introducing anthropomorphism. It endeavors to investigate the evolvement of animals in the mirror of anthropomorphism in the last decades of twentieth century and contemporary literature via portraying the way animals are depicted in Richard Adams' *Watership Down* (1972), and Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004). The study acknowledges that the dramatic advance in exposing animal capabilities is seen in the mirror of anthropomorphism, which is a standard for depicting what is wrong with the human condition.

Keywords: anthropomorphism, humans, animals, literature, nature.

الحيوانات في مرآة الانسنة في روايتي " الماء ينزلق " لريتشارد آدمز و " المد الجائع " لاميتاف غوش

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الملخص

لطالما استخدم الكتاب الحيوانات للترويج للأخلاق والقيم المفضلة. ان تصوير الحيوانات في الأدب يحولها الى كائن اجتماعي مما يعزز الاسلوب السردي. يتم تحقيق هذا التخصيص بين السلوكيات البشرية وغير البشرية في الغالب من خلال الانسنة اي تفسير السمات والأحداث غير البشرية من حيث الخصائص البشرية.

تطورت العلاقة بين الإنسان والحيوان في الأدب. هناك اختلاف كبير بين الأعمال الأدبية السابقة والأعمال الحديثة. شهدت العقود القليلة الماضية تحولاً جذرياً في طريقة إظهار العلاقة بين الإنسان والحيوان. عرضت الروايات التي تم تأليفها خلال النصف الثاني من القرن الماضي بشكل متكرر كائنات تمتلك قدرات بشرية حصرية مثل التعبير اللغوي والفكر الفلسفي. لوحظ هذا في " الماء ينزلق" لريتشارد آدمز ، حيث لا تمتلك الأرناب البرية قدرات لغوية مماثلة لقدراتنا فحسب ، ولكن أيضاً ثقافتهم وأساطيرهم الخاصة.

مع استمرار العالم في الإبعاد عن الطبيعة - مع تقدم التكنولوجيا ، والتدهور البيئي - خلال العقد الأول من القرن الحادي والعشرين ، مال المؤلفون لتجاوز الانسنة وتخيل الحيوان ككيان لذاته ، دون تمثيل أو ترميز البشر. ينعكس هذا في رواية "المد الجائع" لأميثاف غوش. يصور غوش الحيوانات ككيان حي ، ينافس الانسان.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تعريف الانسنة. كما يسعى إلى التحقيق في تطور الحيوانات في مرآة الانسنة في العقود الأخيرة من القرن العشرين والأدب المعاصر من خلال عرض الطريقة التي يتم بها تصوير الحيوانات في " الماء ينزلق" (١٩٧٢) لريتشارد آدمز، و"المد الجائع" (٢٠٠٤) لأميثاف غوش . تقر الدراسة بأن التقدم الهائل في الكشف عن قدرات الحيوان يظهر في مرآة الانسنة ، والتي تعد معياراً لمناقشة الاخطاء في حياة الإنسان.

الكلمات الدالة: الانسنة، انسان، حيوان، ادب، الطبيعة

1. Introduction

In spite of the devaluation of animal lives and interests, they are present in literature. In *Thinking with Animals*, Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman state that “humans assume a community of thought and feeling between themselves and a surprisingly wide array of animals; they also recruit animals to symbolize, dramatize, and illuminate aspects of their own experience and fantasies.” (Daston & Mitman, 2005, p. 13) This is a reason for the creation of an interesting and paradoxical association between humanity and animality, because animals might affect “a community of thought and feeling” and thus constitute a prevalent presence in philosophy, mythology and fiction. Human-animal linkage is characterized by violence, and subjugation in the aspects of “the global agricultural industry, medical and cosmetic research, hunting, the destruction of natural habitats, domestication and the captivation of animals in zoos.” (Ryan, 2015, p. 13) *Watership Down* is a specifically interesting case study of literary depictions of animals. When proceeding toward the paradoxes of human-animal associations, it provides several various manners of what Daston and Mitman call “thinking with animals.” It serves as an allegorical story in which the anthropomorphic rabbits act as a vehicle for remarking on human nature and the human predicament. Adam’s piercing awareness of both the animal physiology and the landscape of the English countryside renders the tale into a nature documentary, where the plot and the personalities of the rabbits act solely as a hook to draw the reader’s attention. It is probable in line of this documentarist manner; the tale also sometimes turns into a furious accusation of human cruelty towards animals (Marstal, 2022, p. 110). Finally, the novel represents what is described as “an intense yearning to transcend the confines of self and species, to understand from the inside or even to become an animal.” (Daston & Mitman, 2005, p. 18)

Moreover, anthropomorphism occasionally has an impact on animal ethics. It is a factor that leads to the process of othering-dehumanizing the human- and makes prominent the processes that acquaint the discursive and political practices of speciesistic and cultural hierarchization. This is noticed in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, a novel which is based on the Morichjhani massacre of 1978-79, as animal rights came into conflict with human rights. Gosh aims to convey that if othering dehumanizes the human by transforming diversities into ideological hierarchies and reduce other species with whom we share life, anthropomorphism humanizes the non-human with no less transformative implications (Park, 2013, p. 162).

2. Anthropomorphism and Animal Study

Bence Nanay (2018, p. 171), defines Anthropomorphism as “the methodology of attributing human-like mental states to animals: when it comes to explaining the minds of non-human animals, we can and should make reference to mental states that we are familiar with from our understanding of the human mind.” The topic of anthropomorphism has presented a great number of researches from diverse spheres including history, biology, psychology, and ethology. In spite of the continuity of the debate over its use and misuse, surveys reveal a constant evolution of anthropomorphism (Schneider, 2012, p. 5). Archaeologist Steven Mithen thinks that anthropomorphism evolved some 40, 000 years ago and allowed for the nonhuman animals to be accepted as pets and finally domestication (Serpell &etal, 2005, p. 123).

Since human and nonhuman animals undergo identical evolutionary pressures, they possess basic life aims and challenges, as mating, protecting their lineage, and detecting sustenance. There is enthralling evidence that animals are conscious. This has been investigated in fields like evolutionary psychology (Pinker, 2003, p. 76). Animal philosopher, Peter Singer thinks that humans have a special role among animals: because of their highly developed self-reflexive capacity, humans are capable of analyzing their own behavior and evaluating their actions which are the outcome of unaware instincts and intuitions as well as conscious decisions. Therefore, humans are the decisive deviser of associations between humans and nonhuman animals. These associations vary from love and admiration to protection and fear, with the allowance of killing, harvest and exploitation of nonhuman animals. The type of human-animal relationships emerges from cultural and species-specific associations, and sometimes terminates in bigotry (Danielsson, 2020, p. 8, 9).

The act of killing and eating one another is the natural cruelty that humans attribute to animals, but the fact that they are able to perform the same acts proves that they possess similar qualities. It is thus part of both nonhuman animal and human nature to reach the utmost as they face life-or-death dilemmas. Recently, animal philosophy has emerged as a field of literary science, which explores the human-animal divergence between psychology, ethnology and philosophy. There is a wide acceptance of nonhuman animals and animals as sentient beings. Despite being a matter of debate how far the animal capability to think reaches, ample scientific research has portrayed nonhuman intelligence, and in some cases has offered powerful evidence of crows, apes, and dolphins owning formerly unimagined levels of cognitive capacities (Pinker, 2003, p. 14). The more humans learn about animals, the more they discover that they are not unprivileged of language as it has been declared, but are communicating in ways recently discovered by humans.

Roman Bartosch (2017, p. 203), questions literary anthropomorphism and what he refers to as human-animal communities, declaring the impossibility of categorizing humans as animals or entirely different from them. He states that anti-speciesism aims at including animals in the community of beings, worthy of moral consideration. Nevertheless, disproving the racist supposition that (some) humans are (mere) beasts has acquainted post-colonial studies and criticism. The idea of the possibility of the truth of both of the assumptions is grappled with by recent research in human-animal studies. Endeavors to overcome the human-animal divide, either via anthropomorphizing animals or zoomorphizing humans, are undertaken at some intellectual dangers. Anthropomorphizing animals is connotated “as a term of reproach, both intellectual and moral.” (Daston&Mitman, 2005, p. 2)

At a time that anthropomorphizing animals is considered as a logical fallacy in most scientific frameworks, it is a dissimilar case in literary studies. There has been a repeated disapproval of fictional means of anthropomorphism and narratives that propose to give voice to animals, due to their sentimentality. John Ruskin criticizes those who ascribe human traits and objectives to the material world, plants, and animals, which he refers to as pathetic fallacy. In spite of such protests to sentiments and pathos that is inevitably associated with the fictional affiance with understanding the animal in terms of human empathy, countless narratives, from beast fable to contemporary Eco novels, comprise ideas about a community of humans and animals. Visualizing such a community implicates an understanding of the animal – frequently through virtue of anthropomorphism (Bartosch 2017, p. 204). Nevertheless, the function of anthropomorphism is not restricted to the mere understanding of animals but extends to the fulfillment of diverse aims.

3. Function of Anthropomorphism

Literature manipulates creative plot devices and literary techniques to form man’s conception of the world, and find answers to the perplexing philosophical questions to human transitory existence. This is achieved through giving a persona to the creatures who live alongside humans (Rajora, 2017, p. 774). Hume and Root state that:

There is a universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which

they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. We find human faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, ascribe malice or good-will to everything, that hurts or pleases us. (1957, p. 7)

The use of anthropomorphism in literature is for creating a wider appeal. The tale becomes more interesting, non-threatening, and more approved and convenient. Stories which manipulate animals and objects as people remain fresh in mind, and revivable of old memories, feelings, and experiences. Reading such types of stories enables the readers, particularly children, to turn the unfamiliar to familiar. For example, a cartoon that exposes ants with big muscles and capable of lifting heavy weights can assist in realizing the strength of the insects (Ali, 2016, p. 68). Similarly, in fairy tales, anthropomorphic motifs aim to elaborate and represent human grievances in mythological contexts and fantastical environments. It adds fantasy, magical realism and absurdity (Rajora, 2017, p. 775).

Nevertheless, the goal of anthropomorphism is not restricted to mere entertainment and teaching children but extends to handling controversial issues as well. This technique is utilized to introduce and treat political and social satires. It is a means through which it is possible to discuss a frightening topic in a story form that could not be faced directly (Ali, 2016, p. 68). George Orwell's works explore political issues saying that "every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism." (Quinn, 2009, p. 24) Orwell was a supporter of socialism, which states that all people deserve to share equally in work and products of their labor, and *Animal Farm* is a good example of this support.

It is evident that literature since ancient times has had a space for animals. They have been present as protagonists to dramatize man's continuous struggle against the forces of nature. In medieval literature, they were displayed as faithful comrades and dastardly obstacles, questing beasts and dreamland dragons, all presenting unique quirks and basic tropes. In the Renaissance, interest in animals and animal tales faded for a long period due to the spirit of humanism that focused on the beauty of humanity. Later, anthropomorphism turned more vivid and complex with Darwin's theory, which made man understand his unity with nature. In post Darwinian stories, animals are portrayed with needs and wishes of their own, which demarcates a dramatic shift from the trends of the past (Rajora, 2017, pp. 775, 776).

As to the modern age, novels written in the second half of the twentieth century exposed animals with exclusive human capabilities of thought and expression. They have been presented as stand-ins or proxies for humans. Furthermore, postmodern authors desire to move beyond anthropomorphism, and they think about the animal standing for itself rather than an allegory or symbol for humans (Porter, 2018).

4. Anthropomorphism in Adams' *Watership Down*

In *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?*, Kari Weil acknowledges a cause behind the significance of Animal Studies. The author states that “for centuries non-human animals have been locked in representation authored by humans, representations that moreover have justified the use and abuse of non-human animals by humans.” (Weil, 2012, p. 4) Yet, animals are tackled differently by humans in modern and post-modern ages.

Watership Down is an adventure novel. It portrays the survival of a small band of wild rabbits, who abandon their ancestral home for building a more humane society, where they can live peacefully. They establish their new home in their native Hampshire (England), which they do at Watership Down – a real place, where the author's childhood was spent. Adams' novel is distinctive in its manipulation of anthropomorphic techniques in many aspects; the author does not clothe his animal characters, or house them in human dwellings, or even engage them in dialogue with humans. However, the rabbits (more specifically European rabbits) are depicted as social animals, in manners that resemble human social practices (Leatherland, 2018, p. 166). In other words, the rabbits are anthropomorphized via having their own language, culture and mythology. He depicts the animals as living creatures with their social and cultural system, in a realistic way. In *Watership Down*, there are portrayals of animals' social and political structure and culture that is expressed in anthropomorphic manner. The organization of the rabbits' dwelling produces innovations. It enables the reader to understand that animals do possess their own culture. In the first chapter, anthropomorphism is apprehended when Adams presents an account of the social and political frame of the rabbits:

Nearly all warrens have an Owsla, or group of strong or clever rabbits--second-year or older--surrounding the Chief Rabbit and his doe and exercising authority. Owslas vary. In one warren, the Owsla may be the band of a warlord: in another, it may consist largely of clever patrollers or garden-raiders. Sometimes a good storyteller

may find a place; or a seer, or intuitive rabbit. In the Sandleford warren at this time, the Owsla was rather military in character. (Adams, 1972, p.9)

Thereby, the wild rabbits possess an organized social structure, and culture, and the manner they build their homes manifests intention and innovativeness. The novel endeavors to present the life of the rabbit society for humans, to acquire a vision and knowledge of animals that originally feels alien and unknown (Kaučič, 2020, p. 219, 220). Moreover, the text presents a vivid description of the rabbits' homes, and the way they build their dwellings. Adams' anthropomorphism could best be felt from his manifestation of the animals' burrows:

The holes certainly were rough – 'Just right for a lot of vagabonds like us,' said bigwig – but the exhausted and those who wander in the strange country are not particular about quarters. At least there was a room for twelve rabbits and the burrows were dry. Two of the runs – the ones among the thorn trees – led straight down to burrows scooped out of the top of the chalk subsoil. Rabbits do not line their sleeping-places and a hard, almost rocky floor is uncomfortable for those not accustomed to it. The holes in the bank, however, had runs of the usual bow-shape, leading down to the chalk and then curving up again to burrows with floors of trampled earth. There were no connecting passages, but the rabbits were too weary to care. They slept four to a burrow, snug and secure. Hazel remained awake for some time, licking Buckthorn's leg, which was stiff and tender. (Adams, 1972, p.47)

The animals adapt themselves to various circumstances. Anthropomorphism, in the above quotation, assists in understanding the life and dwelling of the individual rabbits. The author borrows from the existing scientific research to portray the organization of rabbits through utilizing the technique of anthropomorphism to understand the rabbits' world from the human perspective as its comprehension is impossible in any other way. This technique further assists in introducing the rabbits' possession of their own names (Hazel, Fiver, Bigwig, General Woundwort, Captain Campion, Captain Holly....) with the hierarchical social structure with subordinate female rabbits. Additionally, rabbits possess their own folklore. Kaučič (2020, p. 220), states that the folklore elements in the novel is due

to Adams' inclusion of folklore quotes from English folklore ballads, as taking the motto of chapter 9 "The Crow and the Beanfield" from the ballad *The Two Crows*: "You will sit on his white neck-bone, And I'll peck out his pretty blue eyes." (Adams, 1972, p. 50). Furthermore, while Adams incorporates many factual elements in his novel, the motif of the rabbit as trickster is the essential anthropomorphic trope in the work. However, this anthropomorphic feature defines the code of survival by which the rabbits live, and it forms their mythology.

In spite of Adams' assertion that his novel is not meant to be a "political myth", mythology is central to the culture of the rabbit characters. One narrative thread of the novel follows the journey of the Sandleford rabbits as they search for a new dwelling, while the other encompassed tales concerning El-ahrairah, the semi-divine rabbit trickster figure that stretches through their mythology. The second narrative thread is implanted within the first. In all instances, Dandelion, the skillful orator tells the stories, as the rabbits' journey turns difficult or dangerous (Leatherland, 2018, p. 170). Joan Bridgman (1993, p. 7), believes that 'From the first page, the reader is trained to view the events in the narrative on the real and transcendental [spiritual] levels.' Adams' novel is valuable for its provision of the possibility to identify with animals and to understand them better. Similar to humans, rabbits possess the ability of communication:

They [rabbits] did not talk for talking's sake, in the artificial manner that human beings--and sometimes even their dogs and cats--do. But this did not mean that they were not communicating; merely that they were not communicating by talking. All over the burrow, both the newcomers and those who were at home were accustoming themselves to each other in their own way and their own time; getting to know what the strangers smelled like, how they moved, how they breathed, how they scratched, the feel of their rhythms and pulses. (Adams, 1972, p. 30)

Nevertheless, Adams' explicit description of the rabbits is not restricted to the mere reference to their language and exposition of their behavior, but extends to the portrayal of their capability to criticize man. They declare that human being destroys everything he faces without consideration for animals and their inhabitation. They regard the human as their main adversary (Kaučič, 2020, p. 221). Holly, a female rabbit, expresses rabbits' condition and condemns the destruction of their homes:

There's terrible evil in the world. It comes from men" said Holly [...] "All others ellil do what they have to do and Firth moves them as he moves us. They live on earth and they need food. Men will never rest till they've spoiled the earth and destroyed the animals [...] (Adams, 1972, p. 159).

Adams' animals are conscious that only man can turn into a threat, who will destroy their homes or even kill them. Animals in such stories are rather than being regarded as merely imagined personalities, they are considered as real animals with needs and interests, without the dominant attitude of humans concerning ruining their homes.

Consequently, the rabbits' ability to speak, their sociology, culture, tradition, mythology and folklore, their emotions, experiences of the world, the description of imagination and cognitive capabilities, their ability to criticize, and their planning skills all constitute the anthropomorphic qualities of the animals. Moreover, the act of dwelling and the physical dwellings of the animal are the outcome of intentional activities; the rabbits not only inhabit this world but also shift their world, in search of a safe haven on Watership Down, living their lives in accordance with certain rules. Their dwellings are their organized rabbit warren burrows. Much of the dialogue in the novel is greatly affected by the author's own experiences during the Second World War, bringing to mind the sense of old-fashioned masculinity and good fellowship between the characters in the all-male companionship that colored the great journey. The concentration on single species permits Adams to portray rabbits in modes analogous to humans. He revisualize the world due to the experience of another species. A world which is disclosed to be not different from man's world, yet unescorted by turning to a reductive symbolism which projects the animal as a metaphor.

5. Anthropomorphism in Amitav Gosh's *The Hungry Tide*

Amitav Gosh's *The Hungry Tide* is a good example that represents the relation between man and animals. It is a river safari in search of Orcaella, a fresh water dolphin which is the world's rarest creature. It integrates the art of nature and the strife between human and non-human, both compose an essential part of nature. The entire ecological systems of archipelago are represented by people, habits, and dolphins of Sundarbans. The connection between disciplines like literature and environmental studies have been consistently recombined by Gosh for the

exploration of possibilities of ethical evaluation of human responsibility towards environment (Basu, 2020, p. 1354).

The Hungry Tide is a tale about the people of the Sundarban. Sunderban is a broad forest in the coastal region of the Bay of Bengal. For settlers there, life is vastly hazardous. It is an unparalleled forest that is regarded as one of the natural wonders of the world, since it is the greatest coastal mangrove forest. The Sunderban, the world's most considerable delta shaped by three great rivers, the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and the Meghana, stretches over India and Bangladesh. Because of its tough and thick leaves, the Mangrove forests are largely hostile towards humans who face their destiny there in dozens. The Indian part of the Sunderban comprises one hundred two islands- of these fifty four islands have human inhabitants (Theresa, 2018, p. 2). "People lived here once, but they were driven away by tempests and tides, tigers and crocodiles". (Ghosh 43)

The rest of the places are thick mangrove forests-residents to the Royal Bengal Tigers, crocodiles, and several of the world's fatalist snakes. They settle in a National park, a tiger conserve and three wildlife sanctuaries. The rivers and streams that entangle the delta are overwhelmed by crocodiles and snakes. In this distant land, marine biologist Piya Roy, fisherman Fokir, and translator Kanai met. While travelling into the deep mangroves they undergo a territory risk. The appearance of Piya Roy, of Indian parentage but stubbornly American, and Kanai Dutt, a complicated Delhi businessman gets stuck a fateful tragedy. Kanai has visited his widowed aunt to explore writings left behind by her dead husband, who served as a political radical and died ambiguously in the outcome of a local uprising. He encounters Piya on the train from Calcutta and knows that her visit to the Sunderban is to search for a rare species of river dolphin. Kanai becomes Piya's translator as the biologist hires an illiterate yet proud local fisherman, Fokir, to guide her across the mazelike backwaters. Since then, the tide starts to turn.

For decades numerous novelists have sympathized with the poor philosophy of modern materialized people. Gosh remarks the approaching of the time for the decision to be made finally with the community of eco-critics and environmental writers to notice the great number of instances of positive healthy attitudes regarding natural world. Humans are depicted in a way that their survival altogether is at the mercy of ecosystem (Theresa, 2018, p.3): "Every year, dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles." (Ghosh, 2004, p. 2) He exposes the conflict between humans and nonhumans which is exemplified by the Morichjhapi massacre, the massacre of Bangladesh refugees following the partition of India. Dutrieux Mathilde (2021, p. 30, 31) states that via Kusum's voice a glimpse of the tension between human and nonhuman forms of agency could be gained. Kusum is a refugee on Morichjhapi

who had wander over paths with Kanai as they were children and is Fokir's mother. At Morichjhapi, human lives were victimized in the name of animal rights and environment protection. Kusum portrays the scene by saying:

The worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence, were worth less than dirt or dust. 'This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people from all around the world.' Every day, sitting here with hunger gnawing at our bellies, we would listen to these words over and over again. Who are these people, I wondered, who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? (Gosh, 2004, p.261, 262)

kusum's touching statement above discloses the manner their lives are regarded as if they did not matter at all. Via her voice Gosh refers to the government: through looking back at the state's role in Morichjhapi. Gosh portrays an environmentalist politics that disregards human histories in places reckoned animal reserves. Kusum further complains saying that:

it seemed to me that this whole world had become a place of animals, and our fault, our crime, was that we were just human beings, trying to live as human beings always have, from the water and the soil. No one could think this a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived — by fishing, by clearing land and by planting the soil (Gosh, 2004, p. 262)

in the above statements Kusum affirms the remoteness of people who intend to protect the animals. Those people do not seem to be familiar with rural practices anymore. In Morichjhapi, human beings are killed as they appear to be worthless than others because of their status as refugees, dispossessed people who were in urgent need from the state (Mathilde, 2021, p. 31, 32). Gosh's depiction of Morichjhapi massacre paves the way to the exposition of western models of animal conservation supported by Piya. It affirms that other species are not merely anthropomorphized, but overestimated or at least equalized with humans. They possess the same rights as man. Piya was confronted with the issue of animal rights

when a tiger gets killed and she remarks about it: “Once we decide we can kill off other species, it’ll be people next — just the kind of people you’re thinking of, people who’re poor and unnoticed.” (Gosh, 2004, p. 301)

Therefore, animal protection sounds more significant than human life. Humans, specifically those from low classes are either being killed or marginalized. Fokir is an instance of people who are marginalized by the state to inhabit the environmentally challenging Sundarbans. Fokir is one of the individuals who are living a threatened life because of the Bengali tiger according to Nilima (Kanai’s aunt)’s unofficial records (Çetin, 2013. P. 86). Nilima refers to the number of people killed saying that:

My belief is that over a hundred people are killed by tigers here each year. And, mind you, I’m just talking about the Indian part of the Sundarbans. If you include the Bangladesh side, the figure is probably twice that. If you put the figures together, it means that a human being is killed by a tiger every other day in the Sundarbans. (Gosh, 2004, p. 199)

The tigers are a constant threat to people of the Sundarbans. Nevertheless, Piya, who acts as a champion of environmentalism, thinks that killings by tigers is like an accident, humans are never going to get extinct by this, but killings of the tigers will cause their finishing from the earth (Rahman, 2016, 10816). Consequently, the conservation policies carried out by the government and international organizations have adversely affected the local people and created conflicts between human rights and animal rights. Gosh appears to take a middle ground in these disputes, while supporting the attainment of the basic needs of local people, he advocates the conservation of endangered species and finding solutions for the local problems (Rahman, 2016, p. 10820). In other words, Gosh intends to move beyond anthropomorphism by representing animals as the concurrent of humans.

6. Conclusion:

Anthropomorphism, or the literary device in which a nonhuman object or character acts or behaves the way a human would act, or portrays characteristics of a human being, is used by authors for various purposes along the history of English literature. While didacticism and entertainment were the main targets of anthropomorphism in the centuries preceding the modern era, revisualization of the world through creatures other than human beings and finding out new facts regarding the other species’ worlds are its principal objectives in modern age.



It is deduced that authors' approach to creatures is developed, and animals are given more significance and employ a greater role in human life with the development of literature. While animals are used and abused by humans in old literary works, they are depicted as creatures possessing their own world, culture, special means of communication and even capability of criticizing humans in modern age. Besides, they are represented as human rivals who strive to maintain their life in postmodern literature. Their survival in most circumstances is on the cost of human extinction. In other words, animals are not merely anthropomorphized in postmodern literature, but they exceed human traits in owning the right of existence and conservation on whatever rate it demanded. Interestingly, it is human beings who act as critics of animals and their exploitation of human rights of life and occupying their places of residence in the postmodern era. Therefore, anthropomorphism in recent times acquires more significance than before, as it leads the authorities to prepare future plans for a better life for both humans and nonhumans.

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