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A Study of the Portrayal of Animals in the selected Indian Writing in English Poems

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Abstract

Animals are the part and parcel of human life so in literature. Indian authors in most of the languages have represented different kinds of animals sometimes in negative and other time in positive ways. In literature it has been seen that most of the genres have represented animals in different forms. Various names of studies are prevalent related to animal studies. Anthropocentrism studies human beings as the center of the whole universe. It deciphers the importance of other creators in the universe. Ecocentrism studies nature and environment as the key to life on the Earth. Animals like, cow, horse, buffalo, tigers, bird, dog, cat, elephant, pig, bull, dear sheep, calf and many more have been represented since the emergence of literary practices. This paper aims to provide a brief note on how animals have been represented in the poetic expressions.

Keywords- Ecocriticism, Anthropocentrism, Nature, Ornithology, Human Beings

Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism is said to be a view which considers humans to be the most important factor and value in the world. Anthropocentric view shows the ways in which human beings interpret their relationships with other species, nature and ecosystems. It implies that human beings rank at the acme of the natural evolutionary progression of species and of life. Literally it means human-centered. It is the logical ethical system. Ethical system is to keep people determine good and bad, right and wrong. So treating every thing with respect is necessary. It is wrong to destroy a species (animals), cut down a tree or clear a wilderness. So recognition of moral value of life is needed.

Ecocentrism

Ecocentrism is an all-embracing concept which covers geo-diversity and bio-centrism but extends the latter. Ecocentrism is the basis of calls for the Rights of Nature and is the fundamental basis of Deep Ecology. It is the opposite of anthropocentrism. This creates a divide within the

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Green/environment conservation movement. It sees the ecosphere-comprising all Earth's ecosystems, atmosphere, water and land –as the matrix which birthed all lives and as life's sole source of sustenance. It dominates human activities. It finds intrinsic value in all of nature which includes living and nonliving parts of nature.

Cow is one of the domestic animals. It can be reared up by anyone. Generally it is found more in rural areas than in urban areas because it needs a 'house' of its own – a thatched shed where it can be tied to a pillar or pole, and fed with straw, grass and kadhuneer: (water collected after rinsing raw rice/ water drained after cooking); its urine is very religious in Hinduism- it is called 'komiyam'. It is mixed in 'pancha kavyam' (mixing up of milk, curd, ghee, cow dung, and cow urine in a tumbler (like coffee / tea glass) during 'yagam' or 'Homam' which has purifying power, done during a house warming function or a temple consecration.

Pancha kavyam: For example 50ml of milk, 50 ml of curd, 20 ml of ghee; 2 mg of cow dung; 2 mg of cow urine. All these should be mixed & be given to the people who make arrangements for the house warming or temple consecration function. Cow's urine (komiyam) is sprinkled in the (new) house with the help of mango leaves. This liquid is mixed with water poured in a sombu (copper/ ever silver vessel) immersed with mango leaves. This will be sprinkled by the priest/ prohibit or pandit so that the house will be sanctified.

Cow is very much celebrated in Hinduism. On Fridays, it is given a bath (in a tank/ pond/ river); it is beautified by applying first by sandal paste/ turmeric powder and then 'kumkum' (red powder). It is fed by with rice/ plantain. During Pongal season the first day is celebrated as 'Bogi' (all the waste and unwanted things like mat, dress will be burnt). The second day is Pongal –worship of the Sun God for health and wealth. The third day is celebrated as 'Mattu Pongal' – Thanks giving day for the animals – especially cows.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to study how animals are portrayed by poets in Indian writing in English Poetry.

Methodology

It is mainly a textual (Sociological) study and analytical approach of the poems selected.

Findings

The world is a place for human beings only! Thus many may think. It is a world for Nature (like trees, plants, mountains, rivers and seas) birds and animals also! Can human beings live without Nature or even without birds and animals? They can, but it can't be a meaningful existence. Human beings need the existence of Nature, birds and animals. Human beings need more oxygen for

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breathing and for their existence. The trees and plants take carbon-di-oxide and leave oxygen which is much needed for the human beings. Thus indirectly Nature helps human beings. Similarly birds and animals play their own roles not only in their lives but also in the life of human beings. All know well that animals like lambs are taken as food item (mutton); pigs as beef; horns of deer is used as a medicinal device especially for young ones (children) and pregnant women. Cow is worshipped in Hindu religion as 'kamadhenu' which gives immense wealth and luck. Dog gives protection. Elephant is considered as the symbol of Lord Vinayaga, and it cautions and prevents evil forces. Horse is very much used in war (horse soldiers), horse riding and traveling (horse cart).

Recommendation

Animals are not our enemies. They help us in various ways. Man cannot live without the help of animals. Be kind to animals. People should treat animals as their friends and hostile approach should be avoided. One should be animal friendly.

Cow in Poetry

Cow in the Indian Continent and Hindu religion has a religious connotation. Cow is 'kamadhenu' which gives people all that they want. It is not killed for eating. Anuradha Mahapatra in her poem, "Cow and Grandmother" (*One Hundred Indian Poets*, p.408, translated from Bangla by Paramita Banerjee & Carolyne Wright) narrates their characteristics as seen by her. "Swam the paddy field like a heron. Now she wears white rice sheaves". The girl about to fall thinks like a cow. She checks the water level in the rough pitcher; gives starch to the wretched dog and barren cow. She buries her face in the hay. When the cows come home, jackals howl. She swims the white field like a heron to Rakminipur village. "The girl from an ancient time turns into / the blind Grandmother" (p.408), who doesn't know about science. The cow becomes old. The girl also becomes a grand mother. As evening deepens, "cow and grand mother quiet each other."

Bull in Poetry

Bull (Bullock) is the vehicle for Lord Shiva in Hinduism. It symbolizes unimaginable and unpredictable energy. Sri Sri (1910- 1983) in his poem, "The Bull in the city" tells about a bull in stone (that is why in the city). The Bull is in the city square all its lifetime. In the past, water flowed in the river, uninterrupted and in the present also. "But this stone – eyed Bull/This king for a day/Silent as the wash/of white on the wall" (p.29) it is squarely solid in the city square. In temples before Sivalinga, stone bull will be installed and it is called 'Rishaba'. On 'Prathosham' days there will be special abishegam with, gingili oil, milk, curd, coconut water, rice powder, lemon juice, vibhuthi (holy ash) and panchamirtham (combination of milk, honey, plantain, jaggery, grapes, and other fruits), turmeric powder and sandal paste. It will be decorated by new dhoti and garlands. 'Arathi' will

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be shown and it is considered to be very auspicious to see it. This is famous in Tanjore Big Temple. Thousands of devotees will watch this ritual from evening 4 to 6 on Prathosham day. This will take place in all the Siva temples.

Bison in Poetry

Bison (wild buffalo) represents unyielding and unconquerable power. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra in his poem, "Engraving of a Bison on Stone" (p.358) depicts an engraved bison. The land hasn't forgotten old miracles; one such is the engraving of a bison on stone. "The land turns of like an unexpected visitor and gives refuge" (p.358), which can't be locked or put away. Can a land sign its name? Can it die? Since it cannot be buried, it understands the language. It speaks in dialects. The land resists and it can't be tempted or broken. It reflects the recording of storm, rain and drought. It has learnt warfare from the armies.

Sheep in Poetry

Sheep is said to be a symbol of innocence (though lamb directly indicates innocence). N. N. Kakkad (1927-1987) has a poem, "Behold these Sheep on the Road" (pp.150-151) translated from Malayalam by E.V. Ramakrishnan. Along the unending road these sheep worm their way, bearing the butcher's seal on their haunches like the legacy of a coat arms. They jostle and kick each other; mate in the open, "teeming and spawning/drifted in dust and with hunger foaming at the mouth with lust squirming in their loins/crowding and pushing" (p.151). The shepherd herds them from behind whipping. The road is empty and so they move forward, ceasing to feel. The concluding lines;

They do not feel us.

Nor do we feel them.

Do we feel ourselves anymore? (p.151)

Is this conclusion acceptable? They do feel that they have been whipped and guided by one - may be their master, owner, shepherd or even Lord Krishna! Don't we feel for them? We do feel for them - that is why they are taken / driven to pastures and they are made to drink water. We feel more seeing their growth day by day. "Hey it is becoming fat". "It is fleshy". "This will fetch me good amount of money". So every poet has his right to say what he sees or imagines and every reader has the right to think/ to take in his own way the verse line and give interpretation as he/she wants to -- what the poet may not have thought of might have been conjectured by a reader.

Elephant in Poetry

Elephant, one of the strongest animals in a forest is associated with Lord Ganesh. There is a proverb in Tamil, "Even if one elephant lives or dies it is worth-1000 sovereign gold". It beautifies a circus arena. In some temples, it will be there to please children & they will be made to sit on it's back

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by the help of mahout. In Temple celebrations, it will come first before the procession of gods and goddesses. In forest areas (tourist centres), elephant riding takes place to please the tourists. Its tusk is very costly and smuggled to foreign countries.

N. N. Kakkad has a poem, “Death of a Rogue Elephant” (p.150). It is about a rogue elephant! The rogue elephant’s trumpeting was heard over the foundations of unfinished houses. He said to himself: “Is the forest far or near? / The darkness and solitude of the dense/ forest stain the evening;/ but scattered all round is / the sprawling unfinished metropolis.” It is not the elephant who utters this, it is the poet who himself assumes the persona of an elephant, commenting upon the plight of the new metropolitan (corporation / towns) which are incomplete due to various reasons both utterable and unutterable.

In its (elephant’s) further musings, the poet’s concern for the society is well delineated. though the streets are long and broad, empty always criss-crossing of foundations of houses are seen; they are not completed, may be people have not come to this metropolis. His mind reminisces the sea side. He hears “the last trumpeting of the rogue / elephant hit by the bullet” (p.150)

It may be shot by the mahout when it becomes unruly and uncontrollable; or it may be from the battle field where bullets are used on both sides. Its trumpeting dissolves into silence. “The blackness of the dusk sucked that grief dry/along with the sky’s blood” (p.150).

The poet alone walks along the unfinished walls of those houses. The building work is not yet complete may be because of dearth of money, sand, cement, workers & other reasons. This poem narrates harm to an elephant; if it becomes wild and uncontrollable by any means, there is no other go for the people but to take away its life by using a bullet. Is it not a cruelty to an elephant? Yes. But people should know how to control a rogue elephant. A rogue son/student is not killed by his family members/teachers in the school/college. A bullet is not taken by them to control him. Similarly killing an elephant is an atrocity - it is a cruelty to animals. Will SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) take note of this? Though an elephant is highly worshipped or feared, it is a pity that if one possesses legs like it, it is termed elephantiasis (filariasis). What a bad name to it!

Deer in Poetry

Deer is always liked by all, for, it is feminine, swift & shy like a woman. Historically, in Ramayana elusive deer comes, after seeing her (its) beauty, Sita insists on for it requesting her husband, Rama’s brother Lakshmana to bring it to her. Though at first he was unwilling for it, later he had to do what she asked, lest he’ll be called by a bad name. So he drew a circle (line) and asked her not to cross it (Lakshmana Rekha) – not to come out - lest, she will have to face problems. That deer was not a real deer, but Marison (a confidant of Ravana) who was asked to abduct Sita for Ravana.

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Vinod Kumar Shukla (1937) has written a poem, “The Deer is Swift” (p.296, translated from Hindi by the poet & Daniel Wissbort) which is a small one but conveys a lot of inner meanings. When the word ‘Deer’ is uttered even to a lay man, the Deer episode of Sita will come to his memory. “The deer is swift”, yes, it can (not run) almost fly like a kangaroo. It feels as though it is behind the jungle bars. Somehow the poet seems to say the opposite of reality in this poem. “Birds don’t fly as far/ as they might”. In both ways it may be argued as yes or no. He further writes, “The Himalayas are not so tall as they might be” Will anyone accept this line (statement)?

The poet’s third observation is also like the previous two. “The ocean is smaller, not so deep.” Can an ocean be small and shallow? “The long river is not so long”. Can a long river be small? “There might be more stars/but there aren’t”. There is a riddle in Tamil: “It’s not possible to fold mother’s saree! Not possible to count father’s money!” What is it? Ans: Sky & stars! Nobody can fold the sky; nobody can count the stars! The poet complains that there are not more (enough) stars. “It’s the air that’s everywhere/ but everywhere it is caged.” This seems to be right. Though air is present everywhere, it is not free air! It is imprisoned. Outwardly it may mean the air in the bed room/study room / jail or any room. Metaphorically, it means no freedom. People are not able to breathe the air of freedom. The air has no joints and no knots can tie it. The last 2 lines are very powerful and truthful: “There is no one breathing outside jail./ Inside the jail is Nelson Mandela”. (p.296)

As Gandhiji was for India, Nelson Mandela has been for the African Continent. When he was imprisoned for a very lengthy period who could breathe outside the jail? So everyone was expecting eagerly his release from the jail.

Meena Alexander (1951) in her “Deer Park at Sarnath” (p.383) bemoans the conditions of the deer park at Sarnath. Indirectly it reflects the poor conditions of the park meant for deer. There is terrible kindness of the dead in that deer park. Who wants terrible kindness? Everyone wants pleasing / pleasant kindness. Is it not so? Tourists used to inscribe (their name, place from where they hail and the date on which visited that place) on brick, bone or slate. Do deer live there happily? Doubtful only! “Clouds consume the palaces / of the gods / stone chariots stir inside all Sarnath is covered in dirt / there is no grief like this” (p.383).

Once the famous Sanchi Sarnath, is now in poor condition. Who will take care of them? Either State Government or Archaeological Survey of India has to take care of Sarnath and deer park. Will the deer there complain? They can’t speak. They will live / tolerate as long as they can. Later on they will breathe their last, leaving their dead bodies and bone. Man has to be humanitarian in his approach to animals.

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Puppy in Poetry

Can a man be always a man? Some times some have to play the roles of animals too. Here is a husband who plays the role of a puppy before his wife. Yumlembam Ibomcha Singh (1949), a Manipuri poet has written a poem, “Metamorphosis of a Puppy” in which the husband metamorphoses himself as a puppy. He, every night after their (he and his wife) children’s sleep, discusses things with her. He asks her,

“How could we exist as puppies
among the dogs, jackals and monkeys.

I would change myself into a big tiger” (p.375)

Who are the dogs, jackals and monkeys? No one but their own children. She agreed to metamorphose him, gleaming with pleasure. She collected their children’s sketch pens. She undressed him laughing, painted him on his chest, belly, face and eyes; planted him, with a tail made from her blanket. She kissed the flap of his ear and told him, “Let you be changed to a big tiger/ Tomorrow at the break of the dawn.” She covered him with her petticoat from his head to toe.

During the whole night he was under the warm clothes in sleep and meditated. Next day morning she ordered him, “Awake”. He took off the clothes from the face and it was a great pleasure. “My goddess [wife] stood / smiling before me / Said she: Roar, my dear roar/ Go and catch hare and deer/Like others” (p.376).

Jumping out of the bed with all his strength, with pride before a woman he began to bark like a puppy, but his voice betrayed him, for, there was no ‘loll, loll’ but only ‘mew, mew’. On hearing this his wife furiously looked at him and chased him with a stick! “Go away, I hate you”. Fleeing from her, he takes refuge among his friends. Thus the poem is like a comedy. It is not the metamorphosis of a puppy but of a man - who is a combination of all the animal qualities in him -- that of a dog, jackal, monkey, tiger, lion, deer, cat and puppy! So one can’t predict when a man will become like these animals. Those animals have their real face. But man assumes all these faces (with their respective qualities) that is not known to others many a time, when one assumes/becomes a tiger or a cat only he knows it. Others can’t or can come to know later only. The concept, man came from monkey, is proved realistically in this poem.

Calf in Poetry

Calf of a cow always commands people’s love and respect. As children are loved by all, calf is loved. Will anybody kill a calf? Here is a poet O. N. Gupta who has penned a poem, “Killing the Fattest Calf” (p.142). He narrates how people differentiate between their sons and daughters.

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Generally people like and love male children, if it is a female baby they welcome it very sadly or badly.

The birth of a son in a Hindu family is a happy occasion. The male baby is treated as sapphire, a cash crop and bonanza. If it is a female baby, it is a white elephant to people because much money, jewels, dowry and other things have to be given during her marriage. The son at all times cannot become a good addition to the family concerned. "He may turn out a bull dog/ or a bloody fool" (p.142). He imagines himself as a great hero like Chiris Gaille. He is ambitious to marry the great actress, Sonam Kapoor,/ a scientist like (Madame) Marie Curie who did not like to get married!

The patriarchal society in India is like an albatross having two wings – dowry and fetus killing. But times have been changing. Though generally, parents prefer sons, it is daughter who brings prestige "...daughters demonstrate decorum/grant privileges to males/but daughters deliver dreams/grow greenery and grace." The poet is outright in calling a son, "He is neither a phoenix / nor a Kohinoor", and a daughter, "she not a shuttlecock/to be hit from one to other court." The poet is very strong in his argument, "No use killing the fattest calf for the prodigal son" (p.142). He even advises the society it is not good if one kills fattest calf (a daughter) for the prodigal son. So here calf is used as a symbol for a daughter. Indirectly he requests the society not to kill a calf. Though the poem is simple in 26 lines, its effects are unimaginable and timely!

Horse in Poetry

Horse has been of immense help to mankind. It is considered as one of the domestic animals. During war soldiers on horseback tried their level best to defeat their enemies. "Horses" poem (p.115) by Sadanand Rege (1923-1982) (written in Marathi, translated by Dilip Chitre) is a very small poem of 8 lines which speak of a Horse statue made up of iron and bronze, brushing" a menstruating mane against the sun." In its feet, eagle's wings blaze out. His ideas are far fetched. "The stag from the moon sands on the cliff of the eyes / Caressing the downy storm in the blood" (p.115). A jewel gleams in its raised hood.

Harbhajan Singh's poem, "The Brass Horse" (pp.99-100) translated from Punjabi by S.C. Narula) is again about a statue of Brass Horse in the middle of the great plaza but with a difference - an ancient ruler was on its back. About his name neither the horse nor the poet knows. Yesterday there was a flaming torch procession crossing this horse statue. Children skewered to bayonets. Seeing this the brass horse was completely shaken; it began to gallop fiercely, plucking off from stone all four hoofs, shaking off the ruler of ancient times on its back.

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“The mad horse / Ran through the streets all day and night”. Without a rider on its back it neighed like flames. The horse wanted to say something! But who would listen to a horse? The poet’s eye is keen.” Those sleeping on the roadside/ Did not awake / Those awake inside/Did not emerge” (p.100). People who are not sleepy did not come out to see its fiery galloping.

“The horse is mad” according to the poet; it babbles again and again. It seems to speak; “I have paid the price/Whatever it be for a bare back/ Does one have to pay/ Even for rider on the back/ Are all denizens of this town” (p.100). From the reader’s point of view, the horse is not mad because it has its own principle. One has to pay the price if one wants to mount on it. That principle is – only people (dwellers) who live in that town can mount on it. It won’t allow any stranger (foreigner). Its patriotism is admirable and laudable. There is a second principle it has though it has been made of brass. i.e. “One who wants to ride my back/must mount today / For who knows weeds/may sprout here tomorrow”. It is very cute when it says this; for, only the brave can mount on it and that too who thinks fast. If the rider delays or postpones for tomorrow, tomorrow may not come. Tomorrow weeds may sprout there. The Brass Horse shines not because of its metallic frame but because of its mental frame by pronouncing its preference for the natives and today, rejecting the foreigners and tomorrows.

“The Circus Horse” poem (p.165) by Balraj Komal (1928) translated from Urdu by David Paul Douglas & the poet presents a different picture of a horse. It was grey and white, picked at a country fair; brought under the whip and rod of the trainer. From the trainer it had learnt some rare gimmicks; It would whirl in widening circus; spring across a maze of blazing frames; carry waltzing apes on its back; bounce at the whip crack.

When there was no circus, in the resting time, the horse roamed through the respective towns, followed by its fans. It took the laughter with majesty. Life had its usual course. It returned to the country fair. Its youth had gone to native sun and native air. “The strangers flocked / to watch a visiting stranger there” (p.165). It was not a stranger since it was out of that place to work in a circus and returned to its original place (may be it has become old or lost its spirit.) The strangers (the onlookers / public) came to watch it. The same strangers thronged to see it when it was young and majestic. This is applicable not only to horses but also to girls who join a circus-- they will be there as long as they have beauty, skill and youth. Once when these three bid good-bye to them they have to return to their families.

“Sea Horses” poem (p.328) by Sitanshu Yashaschandra (1941) (translated from Gujarati by Saleem Peeradina, Rasik Sha, Jayanta Parekh & Gulam Mohammed Sheikh) narrates sea horses and the poet pleads for their place and position. Boats sprout across ocean fields, “Sailors may take

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root/but what of sea horses?" Hoofless sea horses graze on green pearls. "Riding sea horses, divers jump / high walls of confinement". If the sea horse finds a foothold on the hot spire of an adult female horse, the flare jumps like a colt! When the sailors drown, sea horses float inch along with fish! "Soon sea horses will come in schools/to receive the gifts of dead sailors" (p.328). The poet has a concern for the sea horses. "What of the hoofless sea horses / on the stony ocean fields?"

Dr.Srinivasa Rangaswami likes to ride on winged horses in his poem, "I Ride on Pinions of Winged Horses" (p.109). About which he is very proud because princes of the earth cannot. He delves into the depths of the luminous void where dark powers cannot grapple his soul. On the vitriol marsh he walks tiptoe as stars for his apron lap and scales the damask peaks.

With pride in his heart and mischief in his head, "Astride the mass of shy elephant rack" he boggles through the skiey street. He runs to forge the evening gold at the burning smithly in the Arabian sky. The concluding lines, "I come a song, a song I live/ A song in the wind to die" (p.109), are possible because he rides on the pinions of winged horses - he comes as a song the one in which he lives and the song dies in the wind! He indirectly tells that poets live in their songs. After their death what will happen? The songs may live or may die in due course i.e. people may forget it, for which he cannot do anything or he is helpless.

Have you ever heard a horse with one leg / two legs/three legs? This you can see in K.Ayyappa Paniker's "Horse Play" poem (p.192), (translated from Malayalam by the poet). The narrator draws the pictures: Four gallant horses galloped forth - one was in white colour, the second in black, the third in red and the fourth in brown. "One had four legs/ one had three/ one had two/ and the fourth/ had one leg".

"The one - legged horse/said to the others/the time for dance has come, / sweet friends, / let's dance on a single hoof!" All the other three horses liked the one - legged horse's idea. The dance began, The poet's observation:

The four -legged horse fainted outright,
the three -legged horse slipped and fell,
the two -legged horse limped to a fall;
only the -one legged one
danced on and on" (p.192)

According to the poet, only the one -legged horse danced continuously and the other three fell on the earth! Is this acceptable? There should be an iota of truth in what one writes or imagines. See the opening lines, "Four gallant horses / galloped forth". All the four horses are brave and chivalrous. How can a three - legged, two - legged and one - legged horses gallop like a four - legged horse? Is

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this not fooling the readers? This horse play (rough & boisterous play) might not have happened. Doesn't this poem sound nonsensical? Poetry should be reasonable and logical too. It is not enough if it is merely imaginative. Readers are not fools!

Pig in Poetry

When the word 'Pig' is uttered generally it brings nauseating feeling only. During driving in the road, one has to be very careful - the vehicles should not dash against a pig or cat because it is a bad omen and the vehicle will be involved in an accident. "Death of a Pig" poem (pp.39-40) by Dr. K. Balachandran narrates one such incident.

It was a black, small and busy pig. It doesn't retire; through out the day busies itself by grazing in the streets, market area and dustbins searching for its edibles, rotten fruits, vegetables and wasted victuals. After searching in these places, at last it came to a petrol bunk side opposite to a bus stop where people wait to catch their respective buses. A goods laden lorry after filling its tank with the diesel unexpectedly came out.

Like a demon came the lorry
Unexpected its sudden turn
The pig which came grazing got
Its body crushed under its wheels. (p.40)

It lay in the pool of blood. There was no one to glance it or question the lorry driver for his rash driving. Who will mourn for its death? Is it the mistake of the pig or the drive? Animals have five senses only, whereas man having sixth sense has to be careful, especially lorry/tank/auto drivers when they sit in the driver's seat.

Dog in Poetry

Dogs are said to be faithful to their masters. Dog is believed to be a faithful domestic animal. Its role is very precious in the Police Department to find the murderer / thief / culprit. About dog, Balachandran's poem, "Experiment with Stone" (for a dog) narrates (pp.36-37) a different picture and experience. Are human beings sympathetic to it?

It was 8 a.m. The poet was riding a bicycle to university. In the street corner five or six boys with stones in their hands were trying to indulge in a cruel activity. "Two dogs / a male and female in their / copulation, each one dragging on / the opposite side!" / Laughed the boys/yelled indecently, chased them / From one corner to other / Their stones tasted the dogs' thighs!"

The dogs tried their level best to escape from the boys' cruelty but not with much progress, since their sexual congress was prolonging and unknowing to release from each other; like a car coming in a reverse they were moving. The poet implored the boys: "don't do it / They are suffering/

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It's a sin / In the next birth / You will be dogs / And it will / Stone you / Don't do/ It please" (pp. 36-37).

Next minute one of their stones hit the poet's forehead, blood flowing down. He heard one of them muttering,

Who wanted your preaching?
Don't we know what is sin and
What is not sin? Hey, friends
So for I didn't experiment my
Stone with a man! Today I had
The golden chance. This man is my
First experiment with stone! (p.37)

Are we kind to animals? If not at least let there not be cruelties to them. A.K Ramanujan's (1929-1993) poem, "On not Learning from Animals" (pp.187-188) is verily informative and instructive. The opening line itself sums up the gist of the poem, "Animals bring us tranquility". What cats do during war? He says, they "sleep through a war." About dogs, "Dogs ignore your sister's / cancer, forgive betrayals and rations". He compares dog's and man's activity. The poet cannot bear a man's betrayal after sleeping with two women. But a dog will not mount one bitch after another. Balachandran comments:

A man may have dogs and they don't bother if the master's sister has cancer. They forgive betrayals and rations. Even if there are betrayals in one's life, one has to learn to forgive. Even if one is not fed sufficiently by one's family, one should take it normally. Will this be possible? If a man sleeps with two women, he betrays himself. This shouldn't occur, for, it is not ethics. A dog will not mount one bitch after another! But when a man does it, the poet is very much pained to see it. He observes "quails are monogamous". When American game birds are monogamous, man is not, for, it is not Ethics. One has to listen to one's conscience as which is right and which is wrong. He is autobiographical when he writes that he quarreled with his father when he was just 17, for his mother's rights. A son has to remind his father of Ethics and human conscience!

I forget how troubled I was when I saw
at seventeen, after quarrelling
with my father about my mother's rights (p.217)

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Conclusion

As human beings are ill-treated (wife by husband and vice versa; boss and worker, teacher and student, leader and followers) animals themselves ill-treat each other; by human beings also. This trend should change. Animals also have the right to live in this world. Animals are used for testing the toxicity of chemicals. For this purpose cats, rats, squirrels, dogs and other animals are used. Recently this trend has a shift. Scientists have developed a low-cost, high speed algorithm to test the safety of drugs. "Toxicity testing -- determining the amount of exposure to a chemical that is unsafe for humans - is vital to the safety of millions of workers in various industries, according to researchers from the Rutgers University in the U.S." (*The New Indian Express*, p.16).

Animals are used for testing. According to the Rutgers University researchers, "Animal testing, in addition to its ethical concerns, can be too costly and time consuming to meet this need, according to the study published in the journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, (TNIE, p.16) Thus the portrayal of animals in the selected poems by Indian Poets throw a satisfactory aspect of animals and man's relation with them. 'Be animal friendly' should be the watch word.

Recommendation

Whatever the ambitions of man today and the growth of science today, we should live peacefully and should allow animals also live peacefully in this world. As a man needs understanding with another man, animals also need understanding not only with their own sects but also with human beings. Let us not torture them but be friendly and love them for a peaceful co-existence. Let us not be greedy that we (human beings) alone should live, prosper and breed. As we have right to live nature, birds and animals also have right to live and breed.

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