



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

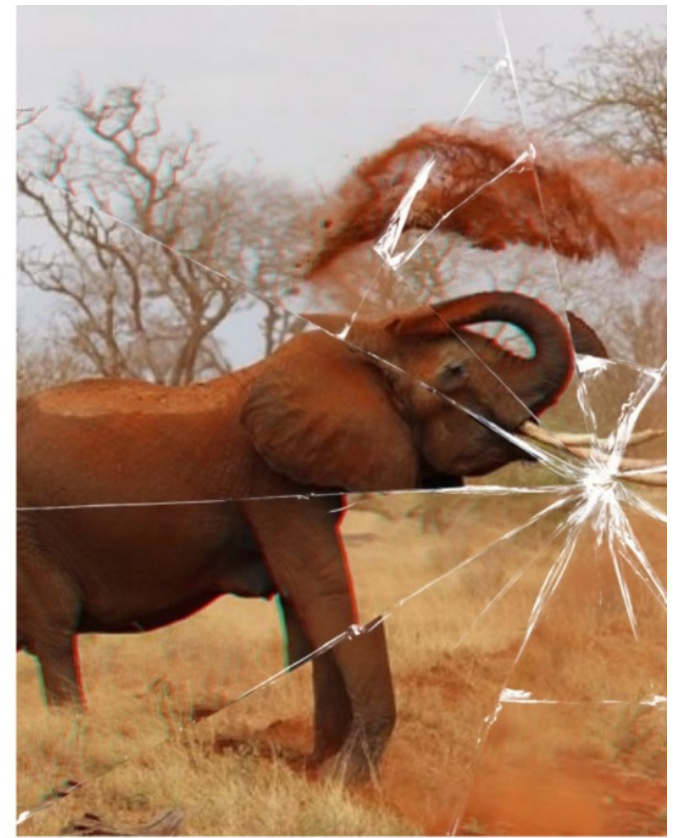
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**WRITING THE
NON-HUMAN:
ANIMAL
NARRATIVES
BEYOND THE
HUMAN LENS**



**ORGANISED BY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**IN COLLABORATION WITH
UNIVERSITY OF MILAN, ITALY**



DATE:

APRIL 04 & 05, 2024

**CONVENERS:
SUMIT RAY &
PRADIPTA SHYAM
CHOWDHURY**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**ALESSANDRO VESCOVI,
UNIVERSITY OF MILAN**



CONCEPT NOTE

Both Indian and Western cultures have deployed highly ambivalent attitudes towards the perception and care of non-human animals. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata feature tales of generalised slaughter in which entire groups of animals, humans and even supernatural beings are practically wiped out because they are perceived as harmful. A notorious example is the snake sacrifice performed in the first book of the Mahabharata, with the consent of the creator god Brahma himself, because the snakes are numerous, mordacious and vicious. At the same time, India is a country where cows are considered holy and where temples are entirely devoted to rats or monkeys. Vegetarianism, for many Indians, is primarily a choice of non-violence.

With the advent of intensive farming in the West, animals are considered products, and animal life has been commodified. On the other hand, over the last few decades, more and more voices in the West have been campaigning for fauna protection, less intensive farming, and even vegetarianism. Some books, like *Eating Animals* (2009) by Jonathan Safran Foer and *Animal Liberation* (1975) by Peter Singer, have exposed the treatment meted out to non-human animals, advocating new ethics.



Both European and Asian contexts are characterised by seamless cultural continuities with antiquity and major historical processes of interaction and/or conflict with different cultural facies, besides a historically poorly documented contribution from the subaltern social classes. An emotional history of the relationship between humans and non-humans has never been written, but literature has often addressed the question. In front of historical contradictions, literature from different countries offers a non-ideological way of reflecting on the relationship between humans and non-human animals. Literature may be the agorà that brings together different subjectivities and helps humans to create a healthier relationship with non-humans. Poetry and fiction may provide the sentimental education that global modernity has not yet developed to confront the animal alterity in the Anthropocene.

The conference will address the fraught issues of the relationship between humans and non-human animals as represented by a wide range of literary works. Abstracts for fifteen-minute presentations are sought on literary works within any literary genre that helps to understand the animal alterity and its relationship with humans, both in its genealogy and contemporary developments.

The conference primarily intends to address the following questions:

- Can animals be described?
- Can mutual love/hate exist between humans and animals?
- What are the ethical limits that humans must set for themselves?
- How are animals perceived by different cultures/epochs?
- Is it possible to describe the animal's point of view?
- Animal qualities in humans.
- Human qualities in animals.
- Animal as protagonist and/or antagonist.

However, related issues not covered under these questions will also be considered.

There will be a Special Panel for post-graduate students.

Timeline of the Seminar:

Last date for Submission of Abstracts: 18th of March, 2024

Notification of acceptance of the abstract: 20th of March, 2024

Last Date for registration: 31st of March, 2024

Registration Fees: 500 (INR) for Students, 1000 (INR) for Research Scholars, 1500 (INR) for Teachers.

Conference Dates: 4th and 5th of April, 2024

Submission Guidelines:

Send the abstract of your proposed paper in Times New Roman and 12 Font.

Word Limit — 300 words.

Give three to five keywords and a short bio-note of 50 words.

Please follow MLA 9th edition for formatting and citation.

Abstracts should be submitted via e-mail to english2@nbu.ac.in

Please write 'International Conference: Writing the Non-Human' as the subject of your mail.