

# The “Semiotic Animal” in Roland Barthes: A Reflection on Calculating the Self as “Difference in Man”

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## Abstract

The animal metaphor in poststructuralist thinkers like Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, offers an understanding into the human self through the relational modes of being and co-being. The present study focuses on the concept of “semiotic animal” proposed by John Deely with reference to Roland Barthes. Human beings are often considered as “rational animal” (Descartes) capable of reason and thinking. By analyzing the “semiotic animal” in Roland Barthes, the intention is to study him as a “mind-dependent” being who discovers the contrast between *ens reale* and *ens rationis* through his writing. For Barthes “it is the *intimate* which seeks utterance” in one and makes “it cry, heard, confronting generality, confronting science.” Roland Barthes attempts to read “his body” from the “tissues of signs” that is driven by the unconscious desires. The study is an attempt to explore the semiological underpinnings in Barthes which are found in the form of rhetorical tropes of cats and dogs and the way he relates it with the ‘self’.

**Keywords:** Semiotic animal, Roland Barthes, rational animal.

## Introduction

Human Beings are the primate of *Homo sapiens*, “a living, breathing organism” (Bailey, 2015, 867). The theory of creationism suggests that both Universe and life originated from the holy act of Gods. The Christian belief<sup>i</sup> on the theory of evolution says that man originated from the original sin and atonement. The evolutionary biology on the recent debate on “descent of human animals” (Gleb, 2008) says that “human animals transitioned from “*homo erectus*” and “*homo neanderthalsensis*” through “*Homo Sapiens*” and “*Homo personal*” (Blatti, 2012, 686). Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1936) contradicts the Judo-Christian narrative in the Genesis<sup>iii</sup>. His significant work, *The Descent of Man* (1871), theorizes the anthropocentric assumptions of humanism. Nevertheless, the Big Bang theory rejected the Aristotelian and Newtonian science and paved way to “fine thing (s)” (Hamilton, 1975, 6) in the world. The scientific theory of the evolution provides a strong evidence of the physical and psychological design derived from pre-human ancestors. Also, the typology of human and animal defines the perspective of human animals within the specific constellation of instinct and behaviour. Contemporary studies on animal and human offer a groundbreaking debate into Zoosemiotics which is a communication of science specifically based on “signaling behaviour in and across animal species” (Sebeok, 1986,142). Thus it is a context depended semiotic process that includes different forums of

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representation and communication. Moreover, it takes into account the animal perception, communication, feelings, and experiences which are also a part of semiotic and empirical findings.

### **'The Animal Question' in Philosophical Discourse**

The preoccupation with the human self has always been at the centre of philosophical discourse from the earliest times. The fine line that divides or rather differentiates the human from the animal has always been intriguing and has invigorated discussion on "animal question" (Lundblad, 2004, 1125) which has given rise to debates on "ethical environment" and existence of human-animal in semiosphere<sup>iv</sup>. The term "animal species" covers both human species as well as other animals in the animal kingdom. According to Giorgio Agamben, "the relation between man and animal marks the boundary of an essential domain in which historical enquiry must necessarily confront that fringe of ultrahistory which cannot be reached without making recourse to first philosophy" (Agamben, 2002, 21). Moreover to him, it is the fundamental "meta-physico-political operation in which alone something like "man" can be decided upon and produced" (Agamben, 2002, 21). Thus the animal question suggests that man has emerged as "animal subject" (Taylor, 2014, 113) and "a concrete phenomenology that is at once evolutionist, hermeneutic, interactionist and animist (with) speculative dimension" (Taylor, 2014, 114). Susan Petrilli, Augusto Ponzio and Thomas Sebeok call for "semiotic animal" (Deely, 2003, 1) and "semioethics"<sup>v</sup> (Deely, 2010, 33) that studies sign processes between human culture and the non-human animals. Aristotle<sup>vi</sup> in his 'Metaphysics' defines human beings as "political animal" (Danta and Vardoulakis, 2008, 3) which differentiates human beings from all animals as it is the only species that possesses logos<sup>vii</sup>. Thomas Aquinas<sup>viii</sup> resolves the quibble of semiotic animal by emphasizing on ontological being. His priority on *ens reale* over *ens rationis* suggests the difference between being and non-being:

...'being' is predicated by something existing in the nature of things, whether it is a substance, as a man, or an accident, as a color. In another sense 'being' signifies the truth of a proposition; as when it is said that an affirmation is true when it signifies to be what is, and a negation is true when it signifies not to be what is not; and this 'being' signifies composition produced by the judgment-forming intellect. (Klima, 2002, 159)

Human being as species is not merely capable of reason but is an expression of "metasemiosis"<sup>ix</sup> (Urban, 2006, 89). Kant's<sup>x</sup> iconoclastic view on human species suggests that the particular nature of human beings is cognized by experience. Descartes<sup>xi</sup> deals with "semiotic consciousness"<sup>xii</sup> (Deely, 2010, 11) as an object of direct experience. He questions the place of human being in nature and the way they stand contrastive to the non-human animals. His Bible<sup>xiii</sup> reference says that animals were born through divine intentional creation whereas human being was created resembling deity and therefore enjoyed a special, privileged role in the intended workings of the cosmos. Bertrand Russell's critique on human as "rational animal"<sup>xiv</sup> and "vegetable souls" possesses both the attributes of plants and animals. John Locke<sup>xv</sup> explores rational being which is influenced by the experiences of self and the extent to which it affects the thought process of the other animal. Wittgenstein's ideas on animal communication: "if lion could speak, we cannot understand him" (Wittgenstein 1989, 302) brings in the exegetical account of "animal language" as untranslatable. This view of Wittgenstein is widely rejected by recent anthropologists, environmentalist and semioticians.

While explaining the relationship between the human and the non-human, Thomas Sebeok expanded the purview of semiotics to include non-human signaling and communication systems which is known as zoosemiotics. To him, when two *umwelten* (environments/surroundings) interact they create a sphere of *semiosis* which provides a field of sign systems and it is in this field that communication and signification takes place. Drawing ideas from Sebeok, Agamben defines the “*umwelt*”<sup>xvi</sup> as “constituted by a more or less broad series of elements for carriers of significance or marks” (Agamben, 2002, 40). Deely, too, emphasizes the communicative signification between the human animal and anthroposemiotics. Carrying forward the idea of communicative signification, Uexküll comments on the physical environment which is based on the “suitedness.”<sup>xvii</sup> And this “suitedness” is devised from the cognitive organs, sensory modalities which are rather “objectified” or the “objects of experience” (Brentari, 2015, p.89).

Poststructuralist thinkers as various as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes interpreted the relation between the human and the animal more so to focus on the self as the centre both of the lived experience and of discernible meaning. Jacques Derrida in “The Animal that Therefore I am” reflects on “The autobiographical animal” (Derrida, 2002, p. 372). His essay largely rests on the logocentric thesis of animal. He defines human as *Zoon logon* (rational animal) that is capable of reasoning and therefore makes him exclusive to the rest of the animal. Moreover, Derrida comments on erasing animality in human by “speech, reason, experience of death, mourning, culture, institutions, technics, clothing...gift, laughing, tears, respect, etc.”(Derrida, 2010, 10) Julia Kristeva<sup>xviii</sup> opines that both animal and human are repulsive to self/other. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s<sup>xix</sup> chief idea of “becoming animal” (Bruns, 2007, 703) tries to capture human-animal relationship which inclines towards the affinity between the two. Jacques Lacan’s observation on “animal hood” is based on the Cartesian understanding of animals as “machines” but he considers human as a “thinking thing”. His concept of ‘Aha experience’ seems to express the Gestaltist psychology of fragmented body and sensation that converges with pre-linguistic sense of self. Nevertheless, it also results in “imaginary, alienated self, grounded in the perception of the external image, an imago or gestalt, providing merely an illusion of identity and control” (Lacan, 2004, 162).

Thus the above philosophical discourses offer provocative view on the issues of inter-specific and intra-specific relations between human and animal. The semiotic behaviour of the human ethology encapsulates the complementary elements of natural and cultural components. It investigates the field of knowledge that does not necessarily delve on the biological determinism but on complex amalgamation of cultural inheritance.

Roland Barthes, a prominent semiotician and philosopher, delineates the human subject by deciphering the critical perspective of the self and its relation with the world. Barthes in *The Preparation of the Novel* (2011) and *The Neutral* (2002) frequently converses using animals -cats and dogs- but these animals remain invisible to metaphorical phantoms; they are employed merely as examples of epistemological problems, metaphysical speculation or linguistic analysis. Animal as a cipher is employed to make a point about the self that is peculiar to the animal and therefore intrinsic or necessary to the philosophical argument. The animal metaphors in Barthes are the reflection of the self seeking to identify and to be identified by an anonymous amorous other.

### The “Semiotic animal” in Roland Barthes: Cat as the spillover and extension of the self

The semiotic animal in Roland Barthes tends to study the nexus between the human and the animal denoting the way animal plays a pivotal role in defining cultural metaphor, myths and identity which become both an object of desire as well as fear. Roland Barthes’s citation of cats<sup>xx</sup> posits an animal question that defines his libidinal being. The preferred semiotic animal showcases the fundamental psychological state that is entangled in suprasubjectivity of the relational being. The expression of cat as a biotope is not a monolithic thing rather it assimilates with the heterogeneous collection of drives that reinforces the isotope of experiences. Cat’s tendency for “point of comfort” (Barthes, 2002, 146) is a radical perception of fantasy that delivers indispensable schemas of transcendence. By stressing on the desire for comfort in cat, Barthes gives expression to his own desire for comfort which he seeks in his mother. Further elaborating on the idea of comfort, the cat in Barthes is presented as animal animated phantasmatic object that stands for “homey idea of “corner” (Barthes, 2002, 146), which normally occurs between mother and child. Carol Mavor comments on such umbilical connection as “Coming and going, Barthes would always return to her with his own pebbles and string. She was the peaceful center of his life” (Mavor, 2002, 130). Furthermore, cat “looking for a place to sleep: meticulously” (Barthes, 2002 146), is *umwelten* which is affected by the stimuli that enfolds existential possibilities curtailed in the truth of fantasy. Also, cat and its relation with the space in the verb “to sleep”<sup>xxi</sup> is an expression of “the pronominal I” that mirrors the self as sleeping. Cat while sleeping does not think hence there is an existential pause. An interesting parallelism may also be drawn in the movement of animal and the non-human animal; during a lecture at the College de France, Roland Barthes “came from the back of the hall and walked towards the platform (Mavor, 2007, 130) which was cat-like. The animal cat also stands for intimate imaginary; Barthes’s writings, too, are intimate imaginary that spring from the abyss, somewhat cat-like, to emerge to the fore.

To Barthes such precise linguistic observation remains transcendent to the “you” (the cat) and not “I”. It seems that structural difference with fixed nouns supplies the discursive prosopopeia (the figure of personification which is absent) where cat as a fictional character shows the ethological concerns analogous to cognitive and behavioural understanding. The function of the existential fantasy of self with the other (cat) as stereotyping becomes the foreclosure of truth. The difference of self and cat posits the uncanny hypothesis where cat acts as a pre-established machine for the repressive mechanism in self. Barthes does not follow Derrida’s expression of “I am, I follow, I (am) following myself”(Derrida, 2002, 373) rather he moves beyond this syllogistic expression which allows him to go beyond the boundary of cross-species, i.e. “the animal in itself, the animal in me, and the animal in itself”(Derrida, 2002, 373). The Barthesian cat is anti-Cartesian in the sense that it covers a dual space both of the self and the other.

This dual space generates a semantic ambiguity between “the correspondence” (Barthes, 2002, 146) and “relation” (Barthes, 2002, 146), i.e., cat/self. When Barthes says that the individual of “an animal species presents a relative stereotyping of localization, stemming in large part from physical factors of the milieu such as temperature, light...humidity” and that this observation results in “privileging the study of factors... taken separately or in association... to account for certain ‘preferences’ in spatial localization” (Barthes, 2002, 146) he intends to establish an affinity with the heterotopic space and the way he sees the internal psychic process of cats onto the external world. Diana Knight in *Barthes and Utopia: Space, Travel, Writing* (1997) says that “the space of doxa, dominated as it is by the arrogance of language; this ‘maternal space’ constitutes literally the alpha and omega of Barthes’ oeuvre” (Knight, 67). Cats search for the idyllic space

also reflects the psychosomatic expression of desire to escape and search for the maternal space where the idiorhythmic fantasy comes to play. Cat looking for “the preferandum” (Barthes, 2002, 146) is an extensive retreat creating space for the self where the subject lacks nothing but is protected by the invasive external world. Alongside, Barthes tries to stress on “arrogance of language” (Barthes, 2002, 146) where readers can allow themselves to read the imaginary space by resurfacing the phantasmatic space as expression of the idiorhythmic community. Nevertheless, Roland Barthes also claims that his spaces are always fictional and which he would like to “live”. Thus, cat looking for “stereotyping of the localization” (Barthes, 2002, 146) suggests that it is an illusion of the sovereign good that can be idealized for that space. It also reflects the fantasy which transforms place as a “thing” to the established “maternal space”. The indispensable schema for narrating the self through the expression of the cat, which is *Heimlich* (domestic, intimate, secret), becomes the subject that remains at the side of the mirror.

Thus cat represents Barthes’s inner psychic space which is played between the real and the unreal. Cat is “the psychoanalytic intertext” (Pint 2010, 89) which semiotically evokes the pre-oedipal space for him. To Barthes, cat is the “objective co-relative” that correlates the self with the anonymous cat. The active semiology becomes the medium of the conscious fantasies. It stands as the hyper-individual level where Barthes speaks about the basic fantasy which is a part of the personal history, aimed at the discursive line of flight. The transference of the self via the detour of writing becomes a mediating point for the symbolic reading of the text. To quote Lacan: “For objectification in psychological matters it is subject, at its very core, to a law of misrecognition that governs the subject not only as observed, but also as observer” (Lacan, 1999, 123).

### **Dog as the animal subject: Reflections on the wounds of Narcissism**

Roland Barthes’s distinctive choice of the metaphor of dog is an extension of the self. The animal subject and wounds of Narcissism is an extra-textual space that enables the phantasmic reading of self as the text. Roland Barthes posits a binary between plant and animal to relate the space between the utopia and the heterotopia. The image of animal as narcissistic expression pierces the shafts of cognition and dissolution of the visualized disconnection from the real object. The subjective expression of the veiled self-identity is attained through the active self-consciousness where the difference of “self” is held by unraveling the truth that other animal brings to oneself. Plant as a contingency of experience displays all focus of attention on its detail. Its meaninglessness strives for zero degree meaning which stays as a “recalcitrant remnant” (Pint, 2010, 208) behind the text. Roland Barthes observes plant as a text that is also compared with animals. For Barthes “animals: conspicuous =fascinating spectacle of pure effect” (Barthes, 2010, 62) turns into the ally of pleasure aroused by the fascinating spectacle of animals. This comparison made by Barthes seems to fill the lack of obtaining the desired object. Since the maternal space is natural for him, thus by pausing on the details between the nature and animal he seeks to fill the empty space<sup>xxii</sup> within himself with arbitrary linguistic sign. It tries to achieve a direct reference which is equated with invisible “reality effect” as he says:

I find dogs, in particular, interesting, fascinating; because they’re pure effect: they have no reason, no redans, no unconsciousness, no mask; in dogs, effect can be seen in its absolute immediacy and mobility; watch a dog’s tail: how quickly its movements respond to the solicitations of affect-no face, however mobile, could come close to matching the subtlety of its nuances; dogs are fascinating because, being saturated with man, they’re like men without the reason (and without the madness). (Barthes, 2010, 62)

In Barthes, Dog becomes a relevant trope to express the self. Dog as “intractable referent” is “what simply *there*, authoritative or indubitable” (Lacan 2004, 210). Here the expression becomes “the wound” that flags the self via the functions of analogy of dog as “satori” of meaning. The magical presence of dog as a referent “expresses the inexpressible being-there of the referent, it can only truly appear as ‘reality effect’”. Thus, the linguistic expression of dog is a central supplement to the “fundamental absence” as Barthes begins to remember the features of “dog” when it is absent. It seems that ‘dog’ suffices to qualify the criteria of “reality effect” as it doubles the portrayed image. Roland Barthes’s selection of the particular trope also suggests that it is a continuation of a specific fantasy which is also a reversal to the fantasy of the cat, when he says:

Dogs are fascinating because, being saturated with man, they’re like men without the reason (and without the madness). Imagine (true science fiction) a man endowed with a dog’s expressive powers, for whom affect would be literally *im-mediate*, each and every second: what craziness! I can watch dogs for hours (and regret not being able to own one)-error (I think) of those who, despising sentimentality, are repulsed by and reject a dogs’ love. (Barthes, 2010, 62)

It is an expression of *kairos*, a Greek word (‘refers to the speaker’s gift for finding the appropriate word). The discussion of dog with the “being saturated with man” (Barthes, 2010, 62) suggests the anachronistic link with the self through the rhetorical trope. It is found that Barthes is often indulged in exploring the link between the man “that-has-been” in himself and the symbolic function of dog falling prey to the experience of the being. To quote:

We each think that *our* animal is affect for ourselves. No doubt it’s pleasant-necessary?-for us all to believe that we’re loved; yet a moment’s reflection has to persuade you that you’re not loved *in yourself*, for yourself: it’s the place you occupy, not your *psyche* that’s animal’s object of affect; yet, narcissism is so entrenched it still surprises us to see dogs going wild with adoration, fidelity, affection for vulgar, brutal masters who “don’t deserve them” (so we think, bitterly). (Barthes, 2010, 62)

The paradoxical fitting of dog by Barthes is an expression of re-presenting the real, the fetish, a lack where the perversion of self denies tearing the referent by reading one’s own body. And the dog is examined in depth as a phantasmatic research. By representing dog as a host of “real presence” Barthes attempts to extrapolate the provocation of other and memory that leads to the transformation of self. Dog, thus, becomes the principle of repression by active and indispensable selection of excess of information provided by Barthes. The linguistic autonomy of accounting dog as “our animal” represents the symbolic order of the real. Roland Barthes’s personal “biographemes” (Barthes, 1977) articulates the problem of existence between three registers introduced by Jacques Lacan, i.e., the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Ungar in “last words and primal scenes” (Ungar, 1983, 150) suggests that Barthes “reviews the tradition of persuasion and elocution that lead to a new exploration of tropes within system of discourse open to the materialist revision” (Ungar, 1983, 153). Further Metz argues on the symbolic representation of the functions of writing and is of the view that the “word-based figures” is economically balanced at the “expense of both the sentence and the live moment of utterance” (Barthes, 153). The expression of dog and cat becomes both the condensation and the displacement and acts as a “psychotic experience” (Lemaire, 1970, 227) of reality. Thus the imaginary relationship between dog and the self is established through psychotic experience that builds up mediation between the self and the idea. It forms the triadic symbolic order, the third referent that author

consciously distances himself from the thing leading to the alienating trapping of dog as an imaginary. Lemaire in ‘Neurosis writes:

...the important point is that for the neurotic, the experience which is the object of repression is already structured, it has, that is, entered into the circuit of discourse and has already been spoken, or has at least been brought into existence before being rejected. As the neurotic has passed judgment of existence on the repressed signification, that signification will always be capable of being re-evoked by analysis and of being re-integrated into the flow of discourse. (Lemaire, 1970, 228)

Later, Barthes’s digression toward distinction of “the *animal* from the “beast” (Barthes, 2010, 62) associates him with the metonymic signifier where the beast like signifier is a metaphor to men. Such constitution of the personal code causes symptomatic storehouse of mutilated images. Roland Barthes considers animal to be “having a soul” (Barthes, 2010, 62) that posits affect on humans. Lacan, too, says “every symptom and every oniric symbol is a compromise: a wish fulfilled and mutilated, a discourse addressed to the other but codified, a speech pronounced but deformed” (Lemaire, 1970, 117). Roland Barthes offers the supplementary crack for reading obsessional production of “diffuse affective” that is hysteric in nature. The hysteric self-identity is rendered with the “*shimmering*”, which is “rapidly changing affective (always think of a dog’s tail, its super-face, as it were), an affective mode that is very specific and very rare (in the West)” (Barthes, 2010, 62). Dog as a site of desire is condemned as a denomination of the realized animal in the self confirming singularity of the being. Thus, when Barthes, says “in haiku: many animals, regarded with tenderness” he intends to suggest his primary illusion to “the metaphor of maternal phallus as an object of desire” (Barthes, 2010, 62). This metaphor, in Barthes, is metonymic in relation to the mother and also to the body which possesses it.

Thus the recurrent trope of ‘Dog’ in Barthes is a metonymic signifier of self suggesting the two-fold of a *Dasein*. By drawing parallelism between ‘haiku’ and ‘dog’, Barthes attempts to sense the co-relation between the self and the environment. Through the ‘dog’ metaphor Barthes peeps into “the division between knowledge” to be friable and believes that aesthetic judgment has a liberatory critical power that complements the more deterministic type of thought to be found in cognition and morality.” (Meara, 2012, 54)

## Conclusion

Roland Barthes offers the predilection of animal ciphers- cats and dogs. Through the metonymy of such animal ciphers he attempts to crack the code of reading the self which is directly linked by the byproduct of personal history exchanged via phantasmatic involvement. As Barthes says, “only writing can gather together the full depth of subjectivity, for in writing there is an agreement between indirect expression and the truth of the subject.” (CVE, 2002, 178) Barthes’s writings on the animal species create a non-arrogant discourse that offers him the freedom to express the intimate truth of his desire. Through the cognitive ethology of animalism, Barthes tries to map out the phantasmatic relation between the animal which is a pure metonymic signifier. While rethinking on the issue of the subjectivity of the self through the expression of the human-animal binary, Barthes puts forth the issue of representation of animal that affects the human consciousness and language. Unlike other theorists such as, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, Stanley Cavell, Georges Bataille, René Girard, Michael Taussig, Etienne Balibar, Katherine Hayles, and Evelyn Fox Keller (ix-x), he

researches on the cognitive ethology of cats and dogs and frames the presence of difference within oneself.

Animals play a vital role in formulating the multiplicity of the reference and fantasy of reference. Cat as the phantasmatic reference becomes the sign of transference that constitutes the detached identity from the original performativity. During the transference from cat nature to imbibing self, Barthes focuses on “inner iconicity and indexicality” (Tarasti, 2000, 24) to show cat as the “sending modality” (Tarasti, 2000, 25) whereas Barthes remains at the receiving end. Therefore, cat is the phantasmic desire that expresses the comfort and selection processes and also the space between the two. In fact, this animal desire is an intermediate state of repressed landscape within oneself. The expression of cat is a Nietzschean “self- overcoming” (Pint, 2010, 210) that embraces the ego split of new envisions of the altered stigmatized sexual behaviour. The metonymy of cat is a double-sided entity which is polemic to the relation between the process of signification and the signifier that recognizes the intrinsic power of sign. Both cats and dogs offer a chain of signifiers that label the necessary and intimate communications. The praxis of structure is an “affixation” which is expressed by contiguity of both synonyms and antonyms. Thus the two animals discussed in Roland Barthes are the nodal points that give vent to his/the repressed thoughts. The ‘semiotic animal’ (‘cat’ and ‘dog’) in Barthes always conceals the subject’s ego while reestablishing the censored via semantic evolution.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> The term “semiotic animal” was defined by John Deely who expresses it as a usage. It is subjected to the new understanding of human being as “thinking thing”. Deely’s idea of “semiotic animal” echoes Aristotle’s “nutritive life” and Derrida’s “autobiographical animal”, Agamben’s “human” and Descartes’s “rational animal” to illustrate how human being is a relational sign in context of the gamut of species in the Universe.

<sup>ii</sup> The Christian belief regarding ‘Theory of Evolution’ says that the universe is created by God. Genesis 5:2. “He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them man.” <http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/how-do-christians-explain-evolution/#ixzz4A4MMrIVK>

<sup>iii</sup> Genesis (2006) suggests that “human race is something to be studied by post-apocalyptic chimp, android hybrid species which is physically devolved, but sufficiently advanced intellectually to have conquered humanity.”

<sup>iv</sup> Semiosphere is a term coined by Juri Lotman in 1982. The term is being largely used in the context of *umwelten*. Jesper Hoffmeyer suggested its effect on the community of organism that also inhabits “semiotic niche” which is partially independent of the *umwelt*. Kalevi Kull suggests that organisms transmit signs as the constituent part of the semiosphere.

<sup>v</sup> Semioethics is the semiotic domain of ethics that explores the anthropocentric ‘doctrine of signs’ and the communicative behaviour from a biosemiotic perspective. It studies sign as a process “in human cultures as well as among non-human animals; their world view, orientation, perception and communicative activities, the metabolism of all living organism generally, therefore the behaviour of all living beings. In relation to human culture, it deals with the social institutions, everyday human communication, information processing in machines, knowledge and scientific research, the production and interpretation of works in literature, music and art.

<sup>vi</sup> Aristotle’s idea about political animal defines human as “wingless biped” (dipous apteron).



<sup>vii</sup> Logos is speech that empowers human beings to “rationalize, normalize and eventually codify their behaviour” (Chris Danta and Dimitris Vardoulakis). This politics allows human beings to stand between the active “human” which is also legislative and passive “animal” which is collective in gesture. The cornerstone of such policies subscribe to multiple unconscious alliances that eventually become “social fantasies” (Chris Danta and Dimitris Vardoulakis).

<sup>viii</sup> Thomas Aquinas in the text *Summa Theologica*, highlights the lack of rationality which is also connected by the lack of freedom.

<sup>ix</sup> Metasemiosis is a framework proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce that explores that human beings have the ability to make contact with the external reality resulting into the complex layer of the sign process. Although Peircean hierarchy is based on the trichotomies, such as, icon, index and symbol but underneath this trichotomy the icon stands closest to the experience whereas the symbol remains closest to the knowledge. In metasemiosis the signs are closer to knowledge. Thus, the sign-vehicle deciphers meaning in the spatio-temporal order.

<sup>x</sup> To define the fundamental question on “what is human beings?, Kant says “an organized being is . . . not a mere machine, for that has only a motive power, while the organized being possess[es] in itself a formative power, and indeed one that it communicates to the matter, which does not have it (it organizes the latter): thus it has a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained through the capacity for movement alone (that is, mechanism)” (Louden)

<sup>xi</sup> Descartes suggests that human beings are thinking individual. The dualistic notion of being is a composite of mind and body.

<sup>xii</sup> Semiotic consciousness is the new understanding of the self as not merely “the thinking thing” but “cognitive”, “cenoscopic” or “ideoscopic” self.

<sup>xiii</sup> And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” (Genesis 3:22 New International Version (NIV))

<sup>xiv</sup> Bertrand Russell critiqued the idea of rational animal by saying that “the man is the rational animal-so at least I have been told. Throughout the long life I have been looked diligently for evidence in favour of this statement, but so far I have not had the good fortune to come across it”. (Russell, 2005, p.45)

<sup>xv</sup> John Locke in his seminal text, *Essays Concerning Human Understanding* disagreed with Cartesian understanding of man’s ability of the perception, memory and ability to think in the abstract and general terms.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Umwelt* is the semiotic theory propounded by Uexkull and Sebeok, which means environment and surroundings. It is the epicenter of communication and signification between the human and non-animals.

<sup>xvii</sup> Uexkull’s idea of the suitedness suggests the “non-mimetic resemblance” of the external world and empirical analysis of the knowledge structures that generates the transcendental sense between stimuli signs.

<sup>xviii</sup> Julia Kristeva emphasizes on the psychosexual development of the primitive effort of self to separate ourselves from the animals, “by way of abjection, primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representation of sex and murder” (Kristeva).

<sup>xix</sup> Felix Guattari’s idea of becoming animal is enfolded in triangular notion of human, animal and technology that potentially draws human being as anthropological machines.

<sup>xx</sup> Cats as a trope in the Twentieth Century stood for lust, desire and sexuality. The authors used it as a metaphor to admire its superiority. Baudelaire’s cat poem is an expression of erotic.

<sup>xxi</sup> The metaphor of the sleeping cat refers to the healthy sleep, hyperarousal. Cats are comfort savvy and sleep for almost 12-16 hours per day.

<sup>xxii</sup> The empty space is defined by Peter Brook to interpret the four modes in the theater. These are deadly, holy, rough and immediate. For Roland Barthes empty space is the vacuum generated in him after the death of his mother which is equally deadly as well as holy.

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