

Abstract

This thesis posits post-humanism as a philosophy that engages directly with the problem of anthropocentrism and is concerned primarily with the metaphysics of subjectivity. It studies five literary texts (James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's *Flush*, Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*, Brigid Brophy's *Hackenfeller's Ape* and J.M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello: Eight Lessons*) that challenge the humanistic or classical subject through critical engagement with what this subject traditionally saw as its antithesis – the animal. These texts contest various fixed assumptions about animality and disrupt the status-quo of the human. Breaking with the tradition that treats animals exclusively as a metaphor for the human, they attempt to see and understand animality outside the framework of anthropocentric suppositions.

This project aims to describe the strategies these texts employ to conceptualize animality as well as the methods they apply to delineate its subversive potential and to disrupt the human-animal binary. Its theoretical framework combines the work of thinkers belonging to the new but thriving field of Animal Studies with the ideas of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. It is this project's great ambition to contribute towards the development of new post-humanist ethics defined by its propensity for inclusion and disregard for binaries.

Keywords: animal, Animal Studies, carno-phallogocentrism, post-humanism, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, Brigid Brophy, J.M. Coetzee.