

A Heart for Animals: Puran Singh's Zoophilia in Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*

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Abstract—This research paper explores Puran Singh, a character in Anuradha Roy's novel *The Folded Earth*, with a particular emphasis on his function as zoophile- someone who has deep affection and love for animals. The term "zoophilia," which is sometimes overshadowed by its contentious connotations can be reinterpreted to examine deep human animal bonds marked by affection, compassion, and understanding. Puran Singh, whose bond with animals provides a distinctive viewpoint on this subject in Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*. In order to redefine zoophilia as an ethical and emotional tie rather than a taboo term, this research looks at how Puran Singh's interactions with animals reflect a caring worldview. This study explores the wider ramifications of animal love in literature through Puran Singh's story, highlighting how it promotes moral cohabitation and ecological harmony. The study makes the case that Roy's depiction of animals not only humanizes them but also enhances their status as sentient beings with inherent worth. This research emphasizes the power of fiction to elicit empathy, question social norms, and advance a more inclusive view of human-animal relationships by placing this analysis within the context of current literary debate.

Keywords— Zoophilia, Zoophile, Empathy, Animal love, Compassion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term zoophilia originates from the Greek words "zoo," meaning animals, and "philia," meaning love or affection. It is commonly defined as a deep emotional or physical attraction to animals. However, the term has historically been associated with unethical or derogatory connotations, particularly in relation to sexual activities involving animals, which are widely condemned as harmful and exploitative. This association has cast a shadow over the term, overshadowing its potential to represent a healthy, ethical, and compassionate bond between humans and animals. In its most controversial context, zoophilia refers to deviant behavior, specifically the sexual exploitation of animals. This practice is not only considered immoral but also unethical, as it disregards the well being and consent of animals. Most societies and legal systems around the world condemn such act, recognizing them as abuse. As a result, the term zoophilia is often stigmatized, carrying a negative meaning in public discourse.

Despite its controversial history, the term zoophilia can be reclaimed and redefined in a way that emphasizes a profound and ethical love for animals. This involves shifting the focus from exploitative behavior to the emotional and spiritual connections human share with animals. Such a redefinition

aligns with values of empathy, care, and respect for animal life. By using the term zoophilia to describe an ethical and affectionate relationship with animals, it can take on a positive and meaningful dimension. This redefinition aligns with principles of kindness, respect, and the ethical treatment of all living beings, encouraging humans to deepen their connection to the animal world in ways that are uplifting and harmonious.

The advantageous feature of zoophile can be used effectively in writing to examine the complex interactions that exist between people and the natural world. Puran Singh, a character in *The Folded Earth*, by Anuradha Roy, is a prime example of this positive zoophilia. His relationship with animal shows a deeper knowledge and connection which enhance both his personality and the story overall. Puran Singh presents a more peaceful and integrated way of life by challenging the traditional lines that divide humans and nature through his actions and attitudes towards animals.

Marc Bekoff writes in *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, "Animal emotions are a matter of important in their own right, but the very presence of animal – with their free-flowing emotions and empathy- is also critical to human well- being" (Bekoff 14) The profound acknowledgement forms the foundation of zoophilia whose core characteristic is empathy for animal. Such empathy nurtures a deep bond and understanding between humans and the animal kingdom, manifesting as genuine care of their well- being. It motivates actions that safeguard and protect animals involves comprehending their feeling and needs, fostering a profound respect for each animal's perspective, inspiring a more compassionate and ethical relationship with non – human being.

Anuradha Roy's novel *The Folded Earth*, effectively illustrates this quality in the persona of Puran Singh. Puran's unmatched empathy and care of animal demonstrated his strong bond with nature. He was confused and babbling in human encounters, but he spoke fluently and gained the trust of animals. He buried deceased birds and bats with tenderness, demonstrating respect for event he dead. Foxes responded to his call, and monkeys felt secure enough to remove lice from his head. Knowing that he would assist them, injured birds and dogs with broken legs naturally sought safety in his care. His relationship with animals remained unbroken even during his time of seclusion in the bush, when he ate little and smoke gas. By giving animals in need, a safe refuge and demonstrating the purity of his heart, Puran demonstrated his deep empathy. As Diwan Sahib rightly said, "Puran's affinity

to animals was a lost treasure”, (Roy TFE 74) a rare gift in a world that had forgotten such profound connections with nature.

A key component of Zoophilia is a active participation in animal welfare, which demonstrates a strong dedication to the care and protection of animals in addition to love for them. Meaningful activities that attend to safety and needs of animals, frequently in difficult situations, serve as example of this trait. People who are zoophilous takes concrete actions, such saving injured animals, housing stray animals, or speaking out against abuse and exploitations. Their activities are motivated by a desire to protect animals and a moral conviction in their inherent worth. As George Eliot beautifully said in *‘Scenes of Clerical Life’*, “Animals are such agreeable friends – they ask no question; they pass no criticism.” (Eliot 123). This unconditional loyalty and trust from animals make it even more important for us to be their voice and protectors. In additions to individual acts, active involvement can also involve taking part in large efforts such as advocating for animal protection legislation, educating the public about human practices, and wildlife conservation projects. This commitment guarantees that animals not only live but flourish in safe, neglect-free habits. Animal welfare professionals exemplify zoophilia by turning compassion into intentional action, showing that genuine love for animals is manifested in action that enhance their safety, dignity, and quality of life.

In *‘The Folded Earth’*, Anuradha Roy portrays Puran Singh as a sympathetic protector of creatures in need, eloquently examining the nature of zoophilia. Singh’s altruistic and courageous actions, such racing into a burning forest in the middle of the night to save a fox cub that has been signed or rescuing a young monkey from the flames only to be confronted by the frantic cries of its family requesting its return, demonstrate his active engagement in animal care. These incidents demonstrate his unwavering dedication to defending weaker animals. Singh’s attention goes beyond standard care when the cow, Gouri Joshi, falls into a deep ditch and suffers a potentially fatal wound. Singh’s unceasing efforts- sitting by the cow, calming it with his touch, administering herbal treatments, and whispering words of consolation – bring a glimmer of life into the animal’s waning spirit as the veterinarian and traditional healer are unable to restore hope. Roy portrays Singh as a guy whose relationship with animals is based on love, respect, and constant care, using these moving experiences to highlight the profound empathy and responsibility that characterize zoophilia. Roy skillfully crafts a story that honours that noble nature of people who dedicate their lives to the well-being of animals that are sometimes disregarded through Puran Singh’s persona, establishing him as a living example of zoophilia.

One essential component of zoophilia is a close relationship with animals, which reflects a profound tie that crosses species boundaries and promotes affection and trust between people. Empathy, comprehension, and an awareness of animals as sentient with feelings and need are the foundations of these connections. As Walt Whitman expressed in *‘Song of Myself’*, “I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self – contain’d” (Whitman

36). This quotation highlights their innate ability to live harmoniously and without the complication of human ambition or deceit. This close relationship with animals fosters a sense of calm and mutual understanding, where individual find comfort and companionship in non-judgmental presence of these beings. By providing constant love and care, zoophile fosters this connection and builds a foundation of respect and affection that improves the lives of both people and animals.

Anuradha Roy portrays Puran’s unusual, zoophilistic attachment to a fawn he names Rani. His reserved nature melts away as he tenderly cares for her- creating a soft bed, cooing at her delicate features. And feeding her milk. Their bond, build on empathy and trust, transforms his loneliness into solace. Once clerk of Ranikhet said, “Puran has a lover at last, a princess no less, she is playing as hard to get as any pretty women.” “O Sanki, shall we arrange a wedding?” (Roy TFE 70). Since it is against the law to keep wild animals as pets or food, Puran’s relationship with Rani is severely disrupted when the police constable arrests him for doing so. Puran is ordered to stay in detention until she is sent to the zoo in Nainital, while Rani is taken away and placed in a cage. The law prioritizes regulations over compassion, even though Puran clearly loves and cares for the fawn. Respected Ranikhet elder Diwan Sahib begs the constable, saying Puran saved the deer from harm and had no malicious intent. His attempts to use compassion and reason, however, fall flat, underscoring the system’s inflexibility in the face of a genuine bond. He said, “Puran was not raising the deer with a view to eating it. He had rescued it from the forest. If he had not rescued it the lost deer would have been devoured by other animals.” (Roy TFE 170). After his release, Puran withdrew into his shed, refusing food and suffered with grief. In Nainital, Rani mirrored his suffering, motionless in her cage and refusing to eat or drink. Despite the zoo veterinarian’s constant attempts to save her, she weakened, a plea to reunite her with Puran was denied. On the thirteenth day, she succumbed to heartbreak and malnutrition, underscoring their profound, unbreakable bond.

II. CONCLUSION

In a nutshell the idea of zoophilia provides significant insights into the interdependence of life when it is reinterpreted to emphasize moral and sympathetic interactions between people and animals. Anuradha Roy’s *‘The Folded Earth’* explores zoophilia through Puran Singh, a man whose deep affinity for animals sets him apart in a society that often overlooks such connections. Struggling to communicate with people, Puran finds solace and purpose in caring for animals, displaying profound empathy and innate sensitivity. Mocked as "Sanki Puran," his actions reveal wisdom and compassion beyond societal norms. Through his bond with the fawn Rani and other animals, Roy highlights the emotional reciprocity and trust between humans and animals while critiquing a culture increasingly detached from nature. Puran’s love for animals emerges as a rare and invaluable treasure.

Roy’s depiction of Puran Singh challenges readers to reevaluate their attitudes toward and interactions with animals by highlighting the transformational power of zoophilia. *‘The*

Folded Earth', questions social conventions and promotes a more peaceful coexistence with nature by honouring Puran's compassion and understanding. In the end, Puran's existence is a reminder of the depth and significance that arise from appreciating and valuing the relationship between people and animals—a treasure that, when embraced, may impart important lessons in empathy, trust, and the interdependence of all living things.

III. REFERENCES:

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