

A Study of the Humanistic Elements in the novel “Bodily Natures” by Stacy Alaimo

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Abstract

In a world of post-globalization and a mechanized existence, human beings have forgotten to exemplify their humane self. They have to exist in a material world, enjoy all its comforts, and deal with the disasters and trauma of diseased conditions while bearing the trauma of suffering. Nevertheless, they continue with the non-humanistic aspects of living. The Humanistic approach and the emotions attached to it have become nonexistent. The virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are in measured approaches. They need to be displayed consistently and situation-specific. If exemplified, it is for an ulterior motive.

This aspect of timeless significance is the ultimate end and goal of many literary works. The novel of Stacy Alaimo concedes three on the need for humans to be closely connected to nature and build up a bond. In religious ideology, too, the human body is considered to be the temple of God, where virtues are inherent. 'Going against nature' is a movement that is constantly existing. This novel examines the approach of the material as disconnected from the corporeal reality of life. If done in excess, it destroys the relationship between man and nature. The real sense of the self or identity is revealed through the value system of humankind. My paper seeks to examine the three aspects of :

- i) Humankind's connection with the environment
- ii) Humanistic elements of man's living.
- iii) The aspect of Trans-Corporeality or going beyond bodies.

Keywords: humanistic, elements, post-global, approaches, corporeal reality.

The debate of Literary Humanism began with the dawn of dedication to the debate of Humanities and Literary culture. This genre of thought began as part of the Middle Ages with the flowering of medieval thought patterns and charting out a clear distinction between truth and falsehood. There are several classifications of thought in this broad debate.

They are categorized as Literary Humanism, Renaissance Humanism, Western Cultural Humanism, Philosophical Humanism, Christian Humanism, and Classical Humanism. Literary Humanism is the aspect of devoting a litterateur to the aspect of literary culture or the various aspects of writing.

Renaissance Humanism reveals the idea of possessing the yearning to study various texts and helping the readers inculcate human qualities. The classical letters and learning were revived, and the people gained the confidence to determine truth and falsehood.

Western Cultural Humanism is a body of thought that originated in the ancient regions of Greece and Rome. This has been a formative part of the European society. This has become an essential part of the Western approach to science and political theory. The aspect of Philosophical Humanism is focused around the aspect of human needs and interests. All human's need is to meet the essential requirements of ideas and approaches. Philosophical Humanism diversifies itself into Christian Humanism and Modern Humanism.

Christian Humanism is a movement that fulfills itself with the idea of the self-fulfillment of man. It comes within the larger framework of Christian principles. The nature of love, faith, respect, and brotherhood was emphasized. The human-faith-oriented culture is springing up hopes of a good and eternal life, according to the human precepts. It is an inherent part of Renaissance Humanism.

Coming to the following genre of Modern Humanism goes by various terminologies like naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism, and democratic Humanism. The modern humanistic elements contest everything supernatural and depend upon reason, science, and democratic aspects of human compassion. Modern Humanism follows the aspects of both secular and religious Humanism.

Secular Humanism deviates from stringent Humanism and carries the aspect of Free thought. The Council for Secular Humanism and academic scientists follow this principle and help build a bridge between thought and feeling.

Religious Humanism has originated from Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, and Universalism. They follow the principles of Humanism largely. Many Universalist and Ethical Culture societies term themselves as being 'humanists. Religious Humanists always have a blend of secular and religious traditions. There is no stark difference between the two. It stresses moral values and ideals, crystallizing the real sense of purpose in life. The social requirement of a person needs to be met, and in order to exemplify this very aspect, the groundwork for moral values and ideals defines it. What is crucial to this body of thought is the idea of raising questions of faith and tradition. The clash between traditional and non-traditional religions is a valid debate in this genre. The separation of church and state was an essential development in this school of thought.

Religious Humanism integrates ethical philosophy with its focus on human needs, interests, and abilities. In addition to this, the congregational rites and human needs and interests center themselves on the aspect of a humanistic life stance. This is regarded as a non-supernatural religion by itself.

In the 21st century, the connotation of Religious Humanism began being addressed as 'Ethical Culture.' This group initially crystallized itself on an ideology of secularism but constituting the elements of atheism. On the whole, they did not believe in the aspect of deism. Their thinking was solely based on the ideology of the great thinker Auguste Comte. Comte's thinking patterns delved into positivism and altruism. Altruism is also an ideology that refers to

an individual's actions as having a base for the rights and wrongs of life. An action is considered to be correct if its consequence is also suitable.

My research paper seeks to examine the three aspects of:

1. Humankind's connection with the environment.
2. A humanistic element of man's living.
3. The aspect of Trans-Corporeality or going beyond bodies.

The writer I have chosen for my study is Ms. Stacy Alaimo, who is a recognized scholar of American Literature. She is also a critic and scholar of the critical debates of Blue Humanities, cultural Theory, Environmental Humanities, and the Anthropocene Cultures. Her notion of humankind's connection to the environment is still maintained eternally. Human activity has always influenced the actions of humanity. The Anthropocene is highly dependent on the rest of the ecosystem. Stacy refers to the insect apocalypse, which means using pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals beneficial in food-making. She is concerned with the disappearing insect species. They are going extinct. She reaffirms that environmentalism is never an externalized aspect; on the other hand, it is an internal concept evolving gradually. The body is an ever-evolving concept and merely a space with little scope for development.

Matter is neither a blank slate nor a perfectly shaped material; it is not even a passive thing. It is a wholly disengaged sustainability without connection with the natural world. This is only being used by environmental scientists for the sake of experimentation. It is a lost word because it lacks attachment to the surroundings. Both the critics of environmentalism, Karen Barad and Joy Williams, reassert the bad treatment of the environment and matter in the twenty-first century. The attitude of coldness dominated in their perspective. The matter has only been subdivided into manageable chunks or a blank slate for the sake of writing. The result of this is the aspect of human development. Critics like Barad foresee many different interpretations of materiality. Barad's interpretation of the ecology of human nature and the immateriality of contemporary social theory is an isolated parallel drawn between the forces of society and humanity. Dematerializing networks or communication through popular culture and contemporary thought bears a complex conception of the materialism of the human body. The intersection between the connectedness of the human body to the environment is explored from the realms of use and abuse. There is a material and a non-material juxtaposition of the elements of the human and the non-human world. In this wholly embedded philosophy of the intrinsic elements of the universe, the condition of a person or thing is the sole matter of concern. The landscapes are unmappable and produce reactions while interacting with the zone between human corporeality and nature. Exploring the 'beyond nature' kind of activity is the zone of inseparability between man and nature.

The connection or relationship between the human body and nature should be as close as the body and skin itself. One cannot be detached from the other. They have their claims and needs. The relationship of individuals with the agents of the ecosystem, ecology, and chemicals is an undeniable aspect of humankind's connection. The epoch-making ideologies of the twentieth century are environmental justice and environmental health. The material world becomes the substance of the body and the self. The most burning problem in the 21st century is multiple-chemical sensitivity. Elizabeth Wilson, a critic, says, "The body at the center of these projects is curiously a biological—its social, cultural, experiential, or psychical construction having been posited against or beyond any putative biological claims."

The interpretation of this quotation by the critic justifies the idea of the human body lacking

anything biological or chemical; instead, it is a natural process by itself. It happens without any time or reason. The environment is a natural substance of the human body and our physical selves. Bodily nature connects itself with social theories, environmental ethics, science, and the human self. The idea that the external environment is not located in other places but within ourselves is the embedded philosophy emphasized in this very book.

Transcorporeality refers to the unpredictable actions of human bodies (2), and it is similar to the human skin. It affirms the idea that humans are ultimately unpredictable in the environment.

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