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## Hearing Animals' Stories: Interspecies Bond in Sanjeev Upreti's *Hansa*

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### Abstract

*This paper analyzes Sanjeev Upreti's Hansa (Duck), published in 2076 BS (2019 AD) from the perspective of Literary Animal Studies with a major objective of unveiling the author's awareness of the exigency of an equitable and sustainable animal-human bond in the contemporary Anthropocene. The novel unfolds twin narratives in which one is a human protagonist and another a duck. In both narratives, stories of animals are foregrounded. Animal characters narrate their own stories that consist of their grievances of cruelties and indifference they face at the hand of humans. The human protagonist hears and understand these stories. It raises a question: why does he hear their stories? After analyzing the textual evidence through the theoretical perspective of Literary Animal Studies by focusing on Susan McHugh's concept of animal narrative agency, the paper finds the answer that the human protagonist hears the animals' stories because they underscore narrative agency. Unlike conventional roles of animals as metaphors and symbols for the making of human identity, these animals play an active role in resisting human exploitation against them. Finally, the paper claims that by offering narrative agency to animal characters, the author highlights the need of building an entangled interspecies bond among human and*

*nonhuman animals. With this, the study expects to be useful for those readers and researchers interested in the field of Literary Animal Studies.*

**Keywords:** interspecies bond, literary animal studies, narrative agency

### **Introduction**

Sanjeev Upreti's *Hansa* (Duck) unfolds the author's realization of the urgency of forging a solid symmetrical animal-human bond in the contemporary Anthropocentric age. Offering narrative agency to animals for narrating their feelings, emotions and experiences, he attacks on the existing human activities against animals. Exploiting twin narratives of two protagonists, one a human and another a duck, the novel foregrounds animals' stories. In both narratives, the human protagonist, Prem, hears the stories of nonhuman animals who have narrative agency. Narrative agency offers due space for characters to express their feelings, emotions and experiences. Prem is a writer whose wife has left him and remarried Anuj Pandey. He often goes to Taudaha (a pond) for birdwatching and contemplating on writing.

One day, Prem gets stuck at an eatery by a heavy rainfall. There he drinks alcohol to warm up and listens to the mythical stories about Taudaha and the nonhuman animals inhabiting it from an old woman. After unfolding the story of the animal protagonist, *lahade hās* ("whimsical duck"), the old woman disappears from the scene offering space for the animals to tell their stories by themselves. Their stories consist of their grievances of cruelties and indifference they face at the hand of humans. The whimsical duck attempts to learn how to fly and also trains his fellows with an assumption of keeping them safe from humans. Besides this story, Prem also hears the animals' stories directly from them. Drenched in the rain, he falls into a feverish delirium. In this state, and added by insobriety, he enters into the realm of unconscious and hears different species' stories expressed through silence instead of words or sentences. Why does he hear their stories? This is the major question the study endeavors to solve. After analyzing the primary text through Susan McHugh's concept of animal narrative agency within Literary Animal Studies, the study finds that he hears animals' stories because they underscore narrative agency of animals, which they enact for resisting human exploitation by going beyond their conventional role as metaphors or symbols for the formation of human identity. Finally, the study argues that by offering narrative agency to the animal characters, the author emphasizes on the necessity of forging a strong equitable interspecies knot between human and other species.

### **Literature Review**

*Hansa* has received a few book reviews and research articles published on daily online papers and research journals. Indira Acharya Mishra has published a research article reading the book from the perspective of masculinity studies. Dadhi Ram Panthi has also published a research article reading the book from the ecocritical perspective. Besides

these, some other reviewers such as Bibek Adhikari, Rajani Dhakal, Ashwini Koirala, and Susma Barali have published their book reviews in national daily online papers.

While reading the book from the masculinity studies perspective, Mishra claims that the male characters suffer because of their adherence to conventional belief systems. She puts, "The major male characters, along with the protagonist of the novel are assigned traditional male gender roles. . . . These men suffer because they try to maintain the status quo; they are rigid and do not acknowledge the changes" (57). Panthi, on the other hand, reading the book from the ecocritical perspective, regards the book as a testimony of the bad consequences of anthropocentric ideology. He contends, "*Hansa* can be taken as the true testimony to prove that the globe is facing the problems of different crises . . . due to destructive practices of human beings. As a result, global home has been inhospitable place" (97). The environmental concern has been raised by other reviewers too. For example, Adhikari reckons the book as a "foray into environmental literature," and further views it "juxtaposes realism and surrealism, portraying a myriad of issues—from diaspora experience to anthropomorphism to human sentimentality" (para. 1). Adhikari observes that the book decentralizes the existing anthropocentric way of storytelling by foregrounding the marginal "voices of the birds and animals into considerations" (para. 12). Adhikari's argument approximates to mine in the present study but he links the animal stories to the troubled love stories of "Prem, Seema and Anuj" (para. 12), which departs from mine.

Similarly, Dhakal acknowledging the environmental theme of the book contends that it makes a foray into the deficiency of human consciousness in matter of dealing with nonhuman flora and fauna. She presents, "yo akhyanle manabiya 'hansa' ma apug raheka anek chetanaka tahalai pani kholeko chha" ("It has opened up different deficiencies inherent in human consciousness '*hansa*'"; para. 1). While conversing with the author Upreti, Ashwini Koirala confirms that the book attacks the human insensibility towards flora and fauna from the duck's perspective. He states, "yas aghika Nepali upanyasharu manchhelai kendrama rakhera lekhiyeka thiye. Yo upanyasle hāsle afulai kendrama rakher manchhele gareka upadrohko pol kholeko chha" ("Unlike previous Nepali novels' centralization of the human, this novel keeps the duck at the center and attacks on human trivialities"; para. 4). Like Koirala, Barali, in her conversation with Upreti, signals at the book's emphasis on the importance of flora and fauna. She presents, "Sansarlai chalayaman banairakhna manab jatiko jati bhumika chha uti nai bhumika banaspati ra pashupanchhiko pani chha" ("Flora and fauna have equal share with the human in sustaining the earth"; para. 10). So, the human needs to understand this.

As the above discussion shows there are different reviews on *Hansa* through different angles. Some reviewers have touched upon the animal issue but none has made an in-depth analysis from the perspective of Literary Animal Studies. So, this study reads the

book from this perspective.

### **Research Methodology and Theoretical Perspective**

This study is a qualitative research based on analytic and interpretative approach. It analyzes and interprets the data from the primary text, *Hansa* by Sanjeev Upreti. For that purpose, it engages various secondary sources available in the net, published journals, newspapers and books. For the theoretical perspective, it employs Literary Animal Studies. Since the text is originally written in Nepali, all the translations are my own.

Under a broader context of posthumanism, Animal Studies (also called as Human-Animal Studies) gained its currency as an interdisciplinary inquiry into the animal-human relationships in various fields by the last decade of the 20th century. Within Animal Studies, Literary Animal Studies (LAS hereafter) emerged as a sub-field to critically assess the representation of animals in literary texts. Turning away from the anthropocentric perspective of literary texts that featured animal characters as the other of humans, LAS began to investigate the meaningful presence of animal characters and interconnectedness of humans and animals. Despite their long involvement in literary texts since antiquity, their presence has always been “marginal” (Robles 1). Susan McHugh makes the point clearer as: “Although animals abound in literature across all ages and cultures, only in rarified ways have they been the focal point of systematic literary study” (6). Animal characters always received subsidiary roles to human characters and that was also for underscoring human voice. They were instrumentalized merely for affirming the identity of humans distinctly as “*not* animals” (Robles 2, emphasis original). LAS, which is one of the “innovative approaches” (Herman 2) in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, attempts to dismantle the binary opposition between humans and animals, and reconfigure unavoidably interdependent relationships between them and among all the species or ‘companion species,’ to use Harraway’s term, that have occupied this planet.

LAS rejects the involvement of animals as mere metaphors or symbols in literary texts that are employed just for the purpose of “metaphorically speaking of and for the human” (McHugh 6). It rather seeks to give agency by making the voice of animals, hitherto subsumed, distinctly laudable. It explores the “articulation of the animal world and the relationship of humans with that world” (x) as John Simons avows. LAS advocates for a companionly relationship of humans with the animal world which is possible through the realization of hearing the animal voice attentively and recognizing animal subjectivity and agency. It looks for animals to be in the roles of active agents unlike the historic “symbolic role in particular and reductive roles in general” (Shapiro and Copeland 345). Literary animals have their own individuality and subjectivity, and experiences and stories, or “their own material or experiential reality” as McHugh, Robert McKay and John Miller depict (2). But animal’s material reality and subjectivity have always been denied and reduced to the symbolic level to designate the humans as *not* animals. LAS reapproaches literary texts

from other-than-human perspectives to discover “rich untapped sources of information on both human relations with and attitudes toward other animals” (Copeland 92). LAS invokes for “more just and thoughtful, and less harmful and anthropocentric, ethical relationships between humans and other species” (Parry 5). LAS is a remedy for the existing anthropocentric view. A reader or a critic of a literary animal text attempts to find such a non-anthropocentric view by going beyond “reading animals as screens for projection of human interests and meanings” (Armstrong 2). Following this line of argument, this paper reads Upreti's novel, *Hansa*, focusing on Susan McHugh's concept of ‘narrative agency’ of literary animals.

In *Animal Stories*, Susan McHugh discusses about animal narrative agency. Though she does not offer a clear definition of it, she rather means by it to be the expression of animals' voice for transformation. This voice is essential for bringing a dramatic shift in the existing cross-species relations. She sees some good signs in recent novels that embrace animal-centric perspective going beyond anthropocentric perspective because of animals' prevalence in different disciplines. Animals have become the major subject of studies not only of creative writers but also of scientists, animal rights advocates, cultural theorists and historians. This interdisciplinary richness has, MaHugh argues, propelled animals to “become important not as supplements to human subject forms but rather as actors” (3). In the literary and visual narratives, animals are now not just the “substitutes for human subjects-in-the-making” rather they are the “key players in all sorts of cultural productions” (7, 11). Animals' narrative agency has been foregrounded and duly heard by the human. McHugh elaborates that animals' narrative agency has begun to gain due acknowledgement by decentering humanistic ideology. Going beyond narrating or speaking figuratively or metaphorically of and for the humans, animals are being reconceptualized as active “social agents” that have their share in the transformation of the social or ecological life itself (12). McHugh's concept of literary animal narrative agency, as she expects, offers “a hope for more sustainable and equitable patterns of engagements between species” (219). Upreti's *Hansa* offers narrative agency to the birds in Taudaha. Prem hears their voice of resistance against ongoing human exploitation.

### **Narrative Agency of the Non-human Species in *Hansa***

Sanjeev Upreti provides due space to non-human characters in his novel *Hansa*. Acknowledging their intrinsic values, he offers them narrative agency to tell their own stories. Non-human species such as ducks, heron, fish and others narrate their stories which the human protagonist, Prem (the author himself), attentively listens. Recognition of agency in literary animals is essential to understand the interspecies companionship. Susan McHugh argues that literary animals with agency can reflect as well as influence “ongoing social changes” by not becoming “as supplements to human subject forms but rather as actors” (1, 3). Marion W Copeland echoes McHugh's acknowledgment of literary animals

as independent actors with this statement: “nonhuman animals are not only significant but are in fact foregrounded as important characters even the protagonists (main characters) or narrators (story tellers)” (92). As these scholars contend, the animal characters in *Hansa* feature as important characters in the role of protagonists and narrators as well as the actors of social change. Their stories question the ongoing anthropocentric ideology that has been sustaining the animal-human divide.

As said in the introduction section above, the novel, *Hansa*, unfolds twin narratives of two protagonists of different species—one a human and another a duck. Both have the similar stories of tragic love: the human protagonist, Prem, who is a writer, has missed his wife, Seema, and the non-human protagonist, *lahade hās*, has missed his lover, *udante hās* (“flying duck”). Prem has turned to alcoholism after Seema chose Anuj Pandey as the second husband. The novel begins at an eatery at Taudaha where Prem takes a shelter after a heavy rainfall. Taudaha is doubly significant for Prem: his love with Seema progressed there, and in the aftermath of tragic separation with her, it has become a resort for him for contemplating on past memories, birdwatching and collecting materials for writing. Moreover, Taudaha stands out a secured place for Prem to carry out revenge upon Anuj by beheading him. In his visit to Nepal, Anuj anxiously wants to see Prem and share the story of Seema so the guilt of his misdeeds with Seema and Maya will be purged out. Though astonished by such an uncanny invitation, Prem okays, though with a concealed ill intention.

Stuck at the eatery run by an old woman, *Aamai*, Prem chances to enjoy the local alcohol as well as listen to the stories about the ducks. Along with the additional sips of the drink, Prem inwardly travels to the past: “Dosro chuskile ta malai jhan aafnai bigatma dubauna thalyo” (“The second shot of the drink drew me to my past”; 5). He recalls his happy days with Seema as well as his refrainment from beheading Anuj notwithstanding the latter’s nonstop irritating narration about Seema. The past persistently hunts him adding to the misery in the present. In this miserable state, outwardly, he listens attentively to the story of the ducks from the old woman with a hope of attaining solace. “Jibanko lavama pilsiyeko manma pokharika kathale malam lauchha ki katai?” (“Can it be expected that the stories of the pond heal the mind crushed by the lavas of life?”; 13), he anticipates. Connecting his story to that of the ducks, Prem offers due value to their stories.

Immediately after the old woman opens up the story, she goes absent from the narration offering a narrative space for the animal characters. They appear as, what McHugh calls, the active “actors” involving in different activities (3). Taudaha is the contact zone where domesticated and wild flying ducks meet. The animal protagonist, a domesticated whimsical duck, is fascinated by the freedom of flying ducks. He wishes to fly and be free like them: “Yiniharu jastai udna paye po! Yesai daha woripari bādhiyer basnu parne thiyen” (“If only I could fly like them! If so, I would not have been entrapped



within this pond"; 21). Crazy about flying, he even falls in love with a wild flying duck and practices flying every morning.

The whimsical duck's wish for freely flying in the sky is connected with the freedom of the domesticated animals. Days after remaining unsuccessful in flying despite his constant practice, he receives the truth about the disappearing ducks from the uncle duck. Uncle duck, who has returned from the bottom of the pond by discovering the real history about the young ducks' disappearance, unravels that they are living in false consciousness. They believe, on the days of *jatra* ("fare") they get called by the God to His pond in the sky. Uncle duck reveals, "Timi sãchchai sunna chãhanchhau haraeka hãsharu kahã jãda rahechhan? . . . Tinlai ta manisle katda po rahechhan" ("Do you really want to hear where the disappearing ducks go? . . . They are indeed butchered by human beings"; 167-68). But in fact, they are not taken there rather to a butcher's shop. This statement straightforwardly evinces resistance from the ducks against human exploitation.

Influenced by the words of the uncle duck, the whimsical duck tries to convince his fellow beings to come out of the false belief about the God's pond. Going there is merely a man-made story. Once when a *jatra* for picking up some young ducks is about to take place, he thinks of disclosing the fact so as to save them. But he hesitates with a suspicion that no one will believe him. He rather plans to save them by teaching them how to fly: "Sayad, udnu nai samasyako samadhan ho. Udna sikema Man Sarovar pugne chhu. Teti matra kahã ho ra, aru sabai hãs lai udhna sikauna sakchhu. Sabailai khukuriko dharbat bachanuna sakchhu" ("Perhaps, learning to fly is the solution to the problem. If I knew to fly, I would get to Man Sarovar. More than that, I could teach other ducks to fly and save them from the blade of knife"; 171). He continues flying practice himself as well as teaches others.

But one day, after a long flight, he hurts himself against a spiky stone while trying to land on the pond. Gradually, he becomes weak: cannot fly nor train others nor talk with them. He even gives up eating. Flocks of ducks frequently visit him. They even elevate him to the position of a "*mahatma*" ("saint"; 211). Three young ducks self-claim to be his devotees and misinterpret his condition. When he is at his last breath and coughing badly, they miscommunicate: "Aba uhã manab ra hãs bichko atat premko barema boldai hunu hunchha. Manchheko janma hãskai sewako nimti bhaeko ho re ani hãsharule manchhelai sadai prem garnu parchha re! Yas sansarko rachana manchhe ra hãs bichko premmi aadharit chha re" ("Now, he is speaking about the unbreakable love between humans and ducks. Humans' birth is for the service of the ducks and the ducks are always required to love humans. The formation of this world is based on the love between humans and ducks"; 215). Although, this expression sounds good regarding the love relationship between humans and animals, in reality, it implies the long-held exploitative ideology of humans. Humans serve animals with food and shelter just because they need flesh in the

kitchen. Ducks love humans because they inhere a misconception that humans are serving them. The whimsical duck opposes this ideology. He detests having his fellow beings chopped off for human craving.

Literary Animal Studies aims at foregrounding animals' resisting agency to the front so as to prevent the impending dark future of species' extinction. Sarat Collings illustrates the upcoming scene as: "A small segment of the human species has now destroyed over 80 percent of all wild mammals and half of all plants, with two hundred animal species now going extinct each day, and thirty times the number of farmed animals than there are humans on this planet at any one time" (10). This is a very bleak picture that the earth is likely to face soon if the ongoing trends of human exploitation keep going unheeded.

Animal agency against human exploitation resurfaces in the conversations among different nonhuman species in the chapter "Luwa nalauneka katha" ("Stories of Those Who Do Not Wear Clothes"). The human protagonist, Prem, falls into feverish delirium and feels of descending toward the bottom of the pond. This descent corresponds to that of the uncle duck who discovers the true history there about the ducks and advises the young ducks to be safe from the humans. Like the duck, Prem discovers the reality about the animal world and their attitude towards human species. The deeper he goes, the more blurred the line between the conscious and nonconscious levels gets. It hints at the decline of human exceptionalism that privileges "human consciousness and freedom as the center, agent, and pinnacle of history and existence" (Weitzenfeld and Joy 5). Beyond consciousness, Prem 'becomes animal' in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's term. Becoming animal, according to them, occurs not through "descent or filiation" but through "alliance . . . in the domain of symbioses that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms" (238). Entering into the domain of symbiosis with animals, Prem hears the voices of different species such as herons, frogs, crows, fish, ducks and many others who are making stories about themselves and other species including human. He hears: "Ti sabai praniharū maunātama boldai thiye. Ma tinlai manle sunna thale. Manle sunda farak bhashaharu pani bujhīdo rahechha. Yas aghi manisle chara, janawar, machha aadika barema socheka, lekheka thuprei kathaharu suneko thiyē. Tyas din bakulla, bhyguta, kag lagayatka pranile manis bare banaeka kathaharu sunna thalē" ("All these animals were speaking in silence. I began to hear them via the mind. While hearing this way, it was not that difficult to understand languages of other species. Before this, I had heard stories about animals imagined and written by humans. That day I began to hear stories about humans made by animals such as herons, frogs, crows and so on"; 192). By becoming animal, Prem hears the animals' stories through silence not through the linguistic expression unlike most other humans. He reads their language through feelings.

Further, Prem hears the animals conversing in heteroglossiac expressions of



language by replacing initial consonants with vowels. While beyond conscious state, he feels of lying like a wooden log on the wetland, upon which different species perch and converse with each other. For example, one of the flying ducks speaks, “luwa laune harulai bujhna garo chha. [h]ās, [j]aleba, [j]ureli, [b]akulla sabaile ek arkako kura bujhchhan tara luwa laune haru matra afno bahek aru kasaiko bhasa bujhdainan” (“It is hard to understand those who were clothes (i.e humans). Ducks, cormorants, bulbuls, herons and so on understand each other’s language but humans do not understand any language other than theirs”; 192). Further, an old duck makes a sharp criticism on the human exploitation of nature as: “Luwa launeharu fataha chhan arulai dukh dinchhan. . . . Pahile yo [p]okhari nikkai farakilo thiyo. Chheuchhauma thulo [j]ungle pani thiyo. Luwa launeharu [r]ukh katdai gaye, [j]ungle haraudai gayo. [kh]olanala suk dai gaye. Luwa laune haru jati lovi hudai gaye, dukh badhdai gayo” (“Humans are selfish. They trouble others. In the past, this pond was very wide. There was a big jungle all around. Humans constantly chopped down the trees. Rivers went dry. The more the humans became selfish, the more we suffered”; 193). From their language, Prem comes to realize how resistant animals are against human exploitation. Becoming animal, as Mathew R Calarco points out, unsettles “standard human-centered perspectives and modes of existence” (26). By becoming animal and hearing animals’ stories, Prem deconstructs the human-centered perspective towards nonhuman animals.

The human-centric perspective has also been undercut by the old man’s attitude towards animals. The old man who looks like a primeval man, possesses a depth of knowledge about nonhuman species and understands their languages. He is one of the three people Prem comes across at the eatery. Prem mentions, “Unlai chara churungi ra janawarko bare athaha gyan rahechha. Tinko bhasa samet bujhtere. Anya pranika kurakani manchheka bhasama ultha garer bhanna sakte re” (“He knows a lot about birds and animals, and understands their languages. He could also translate them into human language”; 4). The old man highlights the need of keeping both the ear and the mind open to understand the language of other animals. When the keeper (of Taudaha) inquires if humans can understand the animals’ language, the old man responds, “Tar tesko lagi kanmatra khulla rakher hudain, man pani farakilo parnu parchha” (“But for that you should keep your mind open along with your ear”; 25). But unfortunately, humans are not doing this. On this, the old man shows his discontent as: “Āfu bahek aruko bhasa nabujhne manchhe matra ho” (“The only species that does not understand other species’ language is human”; 25). The old man further explains the way the animals use their language: “Chara janawarharu ghatibat kam ra manbat badhi boldachhan. Tara bhasakai kura garda hāsko bhasama swor arthat vowel badhi hunchhan. Hamile prayog garne kayiyeū byanjan arthat consonant ko satta tingle vowel nai bolchhan” (“Animals speak more through the mind than the throat. But regarding their language, ducks have more vowels than consonants. They

use vowels in place of consonants that we humans use"; 26). Vowels are closer to feelings than consonants are. So, human language is inadequate to understand their language.

To truly understand animals, their feelings and emotions should be understood: "Tara chara janawarko bhasalai manabka sabda bakya bat byakhya garna asambhav chha. . . Manle nai chhamnu parchha" ("It is impossible to understand animal language by the words and sentences of humans. One needs to feel it"; 26). This echoes Collings' postulation about animals' language: "Animal speaks in the languages, songs, movements, gestures, and rhythms of their own species. . . . We may not know what it's like to experience the world as another species, but drawing on our knowledge and senses to better understand their perspectives and emotions, we can make out best attempts to comprehend animals' voices" (vii). Thus, it is imperative to discard sense of human exceptionalism to understand animals' language.

Finally, the whimsical duck dies. Various species gather around him to mourn his death. One of the farmers who has witnessed all the happenings from the farm remarks, "Uniharu pani hami jastai hun ni! Aafna marda hamro jhaī tinko pani man runchha" ("They are like us! They also mourn the death of some relative"; 219). As Collings contends, "Animals feel joy or suffering, mourn their loved ones . . ." (xxiv), these animals mourn the death of their companion. Although, the whimsical duck cannot fly across the sky nor can teach others to fly, he leaves a message of resistance against human exploitation. Prem on the other hand is taken to the hospital.

Finally, both the animal and human protagonists transcend the outer reality. Prem goes beyond the level of supposed human rationality and understands the language of animal species. The whimsical duck understands the historical truth about the ducks' stories woven for human exploitation and thus resists. In both narratives, narrative agency of animals is foregrounded so that the voice of the voiceless has been heard.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has read Sanjeev Upreti's *Hansa* from the perspective of Literary Animal Studies focusing on McHugh's concept of narrative agency of literary animals. *Hansa*, exploits double narratives: one of a human and another of a duck. Prem, the human protagonist narrates his own story. After his wife chooses Anuj Pandey as the second husband, he turns to alcoholism and often goes to Taudaha for birdwatching and composing poems. One day, he gets stuck at an eatery there and enjoys alcohol. The additional sips of the alcohol fetch him to the blurred space between the conscious and unconscious levels. In such a state, he feels of lying on the wetland as a wooden log which has been a contact zone for different species. By 'becoming animal' in Deleuze and Guattari's term, he hears them conversing with each other and making a satire on human beings.

On the other hand, the narrative of the animals is unfolded by the old woman who immediately disappears from the narration. The narrative moves along with the

conversations of the animals. The protagonist, the whimsical duck, is fascinated to fly in the sky. He loves a wild flying duck. Despite his constant practice and efforts, he cannot fly a long distance. The uncle duck, who has reached the bottom of the pond and known the history about the false story, convinces him to be safe from the human beings. The ducks falsely believe to be taken to the God's pond across the sky. The whimsical duck teaches them to fly to prevent from being chopped off. Although he fails in doing so, his resisting agency deserves acknowledgment. It calls upon the human beings to rethink of their exploitative activity against animal species.

Finally, the paper concludes that Upreti's *Hansa* offers a narrative agency to animal characters with a major thrust of building an equitable and sustainable bond between the companion species residing in the universe. With this conclusion, the study expects to be useful for those readers and researchers who wish to know about animal-human relationships.

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