

## ANIMALISTIC GENRE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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**Annotation:** this article is about genre of animalistics and its history, the role of animalistics in English literature, relationship between humans and animals.

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In literature, **animalistics** refers to a thematic approach or literary device that explores human nature and society through the lens of animals or animal-like behavior. It typically involves examining the primal, instinctual, or savage aspects of human existence by comparing or contrasting human behavior with that of animals. The **animalistic genre** in English literature refers to works that focus on the depiction of animals, often exploring their symbolic significance, their relationships with humans, or even presenting animals as characters with human-like qualities. While this genre is not a formal category in the way genres like tragedy or romance are, it has emerged in various literary traditions throughout history and is often associated with themes of nature, survival, instinct, and the human-animal relationship. The animalism or animal studies is one of the most interesting genres in art, the art type, the main motive of which is the depiction of animals. Animal studies open a rich and diverse world, the endless space for creativity, give a huge number of images, teach to observe, to study and embody in the works amazing and beautiful images created by nature.

The animalistic genre (lat. animal - animal) refers to fine art when the main subject is an animal. Based on natural science and art. The animal painter's major goal is to authentically describe the animal's traits and activities. Adding personal traits, such as parables, enhances the creative figurativeness of the piece. "Legends about birds and beasts, tales of cunning creatures, parables about strange creatures and works of a fantastic nature, epics and satirical stories about the animal kingdom are incomplete artistic forms of animalistic literature" R. Kipling and K. Graham wrote fairy stories, whereas Krylov's parables use animals as primary characters. Animalism specialize in the visual portrayal of animals and their behavior. The animalistic genre has a lengthy history, since depictions of animals and birds date back to prehistoric art and many peoples' monuments. Many ancient cultures featured gods, demigods, and heroes with animal characteristics or the ability to transform into animals. These stories helped to establish the idea of humans and animals sharing a deeper connection. The **Greek gods** often had animal forms or associated with certain animals—Zeus could transform into a bull, swan, or eagle, while Artemis was the goddess of hunting and

was often depicted with animals. In Egyptian mythology, gods like Anubis were depicted with animal heads, blending human and animal traits to symbolize different aspects of life, death, and the natural world. **Folklore** and **fairy tales** across cultures often featured shapeshifters—human characters who could transform into animals or vice versa—symbolizing the fluid boundaries between the human and the animal realms. For instance, in **European fairy tales**, wolves, bears, and other creatures often played central roles, either as menacing figures or magical beings. Images of animals may be found in ancient cultures, and during the Middle Ages, figurative and folkloric depictions of birds and animals were common. The depiction of animals in literature, the relationships between humans and animals, and the role of animals in human life are not new phenomena in world literature. The animalistic genre has gone through a long historical development. Its roots stretch back to ancient times, to the periods when life first emerged on Earth. Humans and animals have been united through long evolutionary progress. During this development, animals closely assisted humans in overcoming challenges. For this reason, humans praise animals, celebrate them, bow to them, and dedicate some of the finest works they have created in sculpture, architecture, visual arts, and finally, literature, to them. "Legends about birds and animals, tales about cunning creatures, fables about strange beings, and writings of a fantastic nature, as well as epic poems and satirical stories about the animal kingdom – these are some of the incomplete artistic forms of animalistic literature."

In the Middle Ages in Western Europe, animals, especially domestic animals and birds, initially became characters in works of small genres such as "le" and "fabliau" (France), "minnizang" (Germany). In these works, animals often spoke the same language as humans and were frequently depicted as outwitting or escaping from their human captors through cunning and trickery. "Estula" (The Star), "Le dit des perdrix" (The Partridge Story), and "Du vilain et de l'oiselet" (The Wicked Man and the Little Bird) are some of the famous medieval French fables that are still popular among the people today. One of the major works created during this time and later spread to other European countries is "The Roman de Renart" (The Tale of the Fox).

However, in the Middle Ages, under the influence of religion, a "Great Wall" was erected between humans and animals in Europe. While the theologian philosopher Thomas Aquinas taught that "animals have no soul," in the East, on the contrary, animals were treated differently. In epic literature, horses were depicted as the closest companions of humans. In his famous work "Shahnameh", the Persian poet Abu Qasim Ferdowsi created the immortal image of the mythical Simurgh bird. Sanai Razavi in his work "Tasbih-i Tuyur" (The Rosary of the Birds), and Haqani Shirvani in his "Mantiq ut-Tayr" (The Conference of the Birds), were among the first to write about the lives of birds and their languages. Later, this tradition was continued by Sheikh Farid al-Din Attar in his "Mantiq ut-Tayr", and Alisher Navoi in his "Lison ut-Tayr"

(1499). The great poet Navoi, in his "Lison ut-Tayr" ("The Language of the Birds"), artistically described the relationship between humans, nature, and divinity. He expressed his views metaphorically through the speech, actions, and adventures of over thirty birds, including the parrot, peacock, and nightingale.

In the 16th century, in Europe, Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) created his novella "The Dialogue of the Dogs" (*Las Dialogas des Cañes*). In the 17th century, the French writer Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), continuing the traditions of Aesop, used metaphorical representations of animals in his "Fables" (which consists of twelve books) to expose the vices between society and humans.

The late 17th century and the first half of the 18th century were the golden age for the development of the French literary fairy tale genre. During this period, famous French fairy tale writer Charles Perrault (1628-1703) published his "Mother Goose Tales" (*Contes de ma mère l'Oye*), also known as "Stories or Tales of Times Past" (*Histoires ou contes du temps passé*), Comte de Lafosse (1650-1724) published "Fairy Tales Followed by Tales" (*Contes suivis des contes*), and Countess de Murat (1670-1716) released her "Fairy Tales" (*Contes merveilleux*).

In the 18th century, the English author Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) created his famous satirical work "Gulliver's Travels" (1726) and introduced the hippic (from the Greek "hippos" meaning "horse") genre into animalistic literature. In this well-known satirical work, Swift used the despicable **yahoos**—noble horses—as a counterpoint to the vices of his contemporaries. The term **yahoo**, coined by Swift, refers to humans who have descended to an animalistic level due to their most base sins, while **guignol**—Swift's creation—imitates the neighing of horses.

In the 20th century, the animalistic genre became more diverse, with authors taking different approaches, from using animals as characters to addressing broader environmental and ethical issues. George Orwell's "Animal Farm" (1945): Orwell's "Animal Farm" is one of the most famous works that uses animals to critique political systems. In this novella, farm animals overthrow their human owners and set up a society based on equality, only to see it corrupted by the pigs, who gradually assume human traits. Orwell uses animals as an allegory for the events leading to the Russian Revolution and the rise of totalitarianism. Environmental Literature: Authors like Barbara Kingsolver, Richard Adams, and Peter Matthiessen have incorporated animals into their works as symbols of environmental concerns. In Kingsolver's "The Bean Trees" (1988), animals and nature serve as metaphors for the interconnection of life, while Adams' "Watership Down" (1972) follows a group of rabbits on a journey to find a new home, tackling themes of survival and the natural world.

Environmental Fiction: Authors like J.M. Coetzee in "Disgrace" (1999) have used animals to explore human relationships with nature and the ethics of animal rights. In

Coetzee's work, animals are used as metaphors for the marginalized and oppressed, while also prompting readers to question human treatment of non-human creatures.

The **animalistic genre** in literature has evolved from ancient fables and allegories to a rich and varied tradition, encompassing everything from the moral lessons of Aesop's Fables to the environmental concerns of modern fiction. Animals in literature have served as metaphors, symbols, and even central characters, reflecting the changing human relationship with nature. Whether used to reflect human virtues and vices, to critique society, or to delve into philosophical and ethical issues, the genre continues to thrive and evolve, exploring the boundaries between the human and non-human worlds.

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