

ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND ANIMAL IMAGERY

Mamura Melibayeva Klichboy qizi

Teacher, Oriental University, Samarkand Campus, Samarkand

Email: mamuramelibayeva810@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines anthropomorphism as a cognitive, linguistic, and literary strategy rooted in archetypal structures, focusing on the works of Jack London and Normurod Norqobilov. The study analyzes how animal imagery becomes a medium for expressing human emotions, ethical concerns, and existential experiences. It argues that anthropomorphism functions as a meaningful interpretive mechanism that connects instinctual behavior with cultural values, thereby enriching the semantic role of zoonyms in literary discourse. The paper also highlights how anthropomorphic representation varies across literary traditions while maintaining a universal cognitive foundation.

Introduction

Anthropomorphism is one of the most persistent and universal features of human cognition. From early mythological thinking to modern literary expression, humans have consistently attributed human-like qualities to animals in order to interpret the surrounding world. This tendency is not accidental; rather, it reflects deep cognitive mechanisms through which individuals organize experience and construct meaning.

In literary discourse, anthropomorphism becomes a powerful artistic and semantic device. It enables authors to transform animals into narrative agents capable of reflecting complex psychological, social, and ethical realities. In Jack London's works, animal figures frequently embody survival, adaptation, and instinctual intelligence. These representations often highlight the tension between civilization and nature. In contrast, Normurod Norqobilov's narratives tend to emphasize social relationships, moral responsibility, and collective identity, where animals function as symbolic extensions of human society. This contrast provides an opportunity to explore how anthropomorphic strategies operate within different cultural frameworks and how they contribute to the formation of meaning in literary texts.

Methods

The research adopts a qualitative and interdisciplinary methodology. The primary sources include Jack London's "The Call of the Wild" (1903) and "White Fang" (1906), as well as selected prose works by Normurod Norqobilov. These texts were chosen due to their rich use of animal imagery and their relevance to the study of anthropomorphism.

The analysis combines three main approaches. First, discourse analysis is employed to examine how language constructs anthropomorphic meaning within narrative contexts. This involves identifying descriptive patterns, narrative perspectives, and stylistic devices that contribute to the humanization of animals. Second, cognitive linguistic theory is applied to explain how readers interpret these representations, focusing on conceptual metaphor and mental mapping. Third, archetypal criticism is used to identify recurring symbolic patterns that reflect collective human experience.

Additionally, contextual analysis is incorporated to account for historical and cultural influences on the texts. This ensures that the interpretation of anthropomorphism is grounded not only in linguistic structures but also in broader socio-cultural frameworks.



Results

The analysis reveals that anthropomorphism is realized through several distinct yet interconnected mechanisms. One of the most prominent is emotional attribution. In Jack London's narratives, animals are described in terms that evoke human emotional states, such as fear, loyalty, aggression, and attachment. For instance, Buck's transformation in "The Call of the Wild" reflects not only physical adaptation but also a form of psychological development that parallels human experience. His gradual shift from domestication to primal instinct illustrates a complex interaction between environment and identity. Another important mechanism is behavioral alignment. Animals in London's works often exhibit decision-making processes that resemble human reasoning. White Fang's ability to learn, adapt, and form bonds with humans demonstrates a level of cognitive complexity that invites readers to interpret his actions in human terms. However, these representations remain grounded in instinct, maintaining a balance between realism and symbolism. In Norqobilov's works, anthropomorphism operates differently. While emotional and behavioral elements are still present, greater emphasis is placed on ethical and social dimensions. Animals frequently function as symbols of moral values, reflecting themes such as responsibility, empathy, and communal harmony. Rather than focusing solely on survival, these narratives explore relationships between individuals and their environment, using animal imagery to highlight social dynamics and cultural norms.

These findings indicate that anthropomorphism is not a uniform phenomenon but a flexible strategy that adapts to different narrative and cultural contexts.

Discussion

The results of the study suggest that anthropomorphism functions on multiple levels. At the cognitive level, it reflects a universal human tendency to interpret unfamiliar phenomena through familiar frameworks. This explains why readers are able to relate to animal characters and perceive them as emotionally and psychologically complex beings. At the cultural level, anthropomorphism becomes a tool for expressing specific values and worldviews. In Jack London's works, it reinforces themes associated with individualism, resilience, and adaptation to harsh environments. These themes are closely linked to broader philosophical ideas about natural selection and survival. In contrast, Norqobilov's use of anthropomorphism reflects a cultural emphasis on social cohesion, moral responsibility, and interpersonal relationships. This dual nature highlights the importance of considering both universal and culture-specific factors in the analysis of literary texts. Anthropomorphism serves as a bridge between instinct and meaning, allowing authors to explore fundamental aspects of human existence while also addressing particular cultural concerns. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that anthropomorphism enhances the functional-semantic role of zoonyms. By transforming animals into symbolic agents, it expands their meaning beyond simple reference and integrates them into complex narrative structures.

Conclusion

Anthropomorphism is a central mechanism in literary discourse that enables the construction of rich and meaningful representations of animal imagery. Through the projection of human characteristics onto animals, authors create narratives that resonate on both emotional and intellectual levels. The comparative analysis of Jack London and Normurod Norqobilov shows that while anthropomorphic strategies share a common cognitive foundation, their realization is shaped by cultural context. This confirms that anthropomorphism is both universal and variable,



reflecting the interaction between archetypal structures and national mentality. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, cognition, and culture interact in literary texts and highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in the analysis of zoonyms.

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