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Talking Animals: A Literature Review of Anthropomorphism in Children's Books

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In children's literature, talking animals run rampant. These characters exhibit various levels of anthropomorphism, from talking or thinking like a human, to wearing clothes and riding bicycles. Through the examination of ten of the most commonly seen animals in children's books and a selection of 120 titles, the role and importance of anthropomorphic animals in children's literature is assessed.

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Abstract

In children's literature, talking animals run rampant. These characters exhibit various levels of anthropomorphism, from talking or thinking like a human, to wearing clothes and riding bicycles. Through the examination of ten of the most commonly seen animals in children's books and a selection of 120 titles, the role and importance of anthropomorphic animals in children's literature is assessed.

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Anthropomorphism in Children's Books Leads to Less Factual Learning About Animals. The example shown is the White Rabbit in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." The article attached to this image discusses how the use of anthropomorphism in children's books has on our perception of animal behavior and biology even into adulthood. Animals In Children's Literature Scientists believe that the Anthropomorphism with animals in children's literature could actually be damaging to the view those children have when they are adults. Children who grow up reading about the wolf eating the sheep have a prejudice view of wolves as killers when they are adults even in situations where they are not a danger. Samantha Spencer. HuffPost is now a part of Verizon Media. Significance of Anthropomorphism in Literature. Examples of anthropomorphism have been a part of human culture for millennia. Many ancient tales and fables feature animals or deities as main characters who speak, have feelings, and make complex decisions. Examples of Anthropomorphism in Literature. Example #1. Oh for shame, how the mortals put the blame on us gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they, rather, who by their own recklessness in a way, have what is given. Rudyard Kipling's novel The Jungle Book, later animated as a Disney movie, includes many talking animals as characters.

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