

Anthropomorphism

Definition of Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism is a literary device that can be defined as a technique in which a writer ascribes human traits, ambitions, emotions, or entire behaviors to animals, non-human beings, natural phenomena, or objects.

Difference Between Anthropomorphism and Personification

Anthropomorphism is also a type of [personification](#) that gives human characteristics to non-humans or objects, especially animals. However, there is a slight difference between these two. Personification is an act of giving human characteristics to animals or objects to create [imagery](#), while anthropomorphism aims to make an animal or object behave and appear like it is a human being.

Pinocchio, the famous wooden doll, was anthropomorphized when he was given the ability to talk, walk, think, and feel like real boy. Fables and fairy tales usually have characters that can serve as anthropomorphism examples.

Examples of Anthropomorphism in Literature

Example #1: *The Jaguar* (By Ted Hughes)

“But who runs like the rest past these arrives
At a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized,
As a child at a dream, at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom –
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,

By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear –
He spins from the bars, but there's no cage to him

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
Over the cage floor the horizons come.”

This poem is based on a jaguar, a fierce animal. Hughes is showing the world to his readers through the eyes of a jaguar that is thinking like a human.

Example #2: *Animal Farm* (By George Orwell)

“Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later. I have something else to say first. I do not think, comrades, that I shall be with you for many months longer, and before I die, I feel it my duty to pass on to you such wisdom as I have acquired. I have had a long life, I have had much time for thought as I lay alone in my stall, and I think I may say that I understand the nature of life on this earth as well as any animal now living. It is about this that I wish to speak to you ... Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough.”

Animal Farm is one of the perfect examples of anthropomorphism. In this excerpt, one of the pigs named Old Major is delivering a political speech to his fellows against the evils imposed by the human rulers. Here, Old Major is instigating them to rise to rebellion against a tyrant human. This entire use is a good example of anthropomorphism.

Example #3: *A Dog's Tale* (By Mark Twain)

“My father was a St. Bernard, my mother was a collie, but I am a

these nice distinctions myself. To me they are only fine large words meaning nothing. My mother had a fondness for such; she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised and envious, as wondering how she got so much education ... When I was well grown, at last, I was sold and taken away, and I never saw her again. She was broken-hearted, and so was I, and we cried; but she comforted me as well as she could ...”

The [protagonist](#) of this story is a dog, which is describing his life as a puppy. The story is told from the loyal pet’s [perspective](#). The dog possesses human traits like emotions, shame, fear, anguish, happiness, and hopelessness.

Function of Anthropomorphism

There are various reasons for using anthropomorphism. The primary one is to make a wider appeal to the readers. With the use of objects or animals, the story can become visually appealing and non-threatening to readers. Hence, it could attract the attention of a wide [audience](#) (including children) by presenting animated characters in tales and animated movies. In literature, it serves as an effective tool for creating political and social satires. Hence, it has a wider scope than merely to entertain children.