

Stalking The Subject Modernism And The Animal: Unlocking the Mysteries of Animal Representation in Modern Art

Throughout the history of art, animals have served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists, giving life to countless paintings, sculptures, and other artistic creations. While the depiction of animals in art is not a new phenomenon, what sets modernism apart is its unique approach to representing these subjects. Modernist artists sought to challenge traditional artistic norms and explore new ways of understanding the world and all its inhabitants. In this article, we will delve into the intriguing relationship between modernism and the animal, unraveling the mysteries and implications behind these extraordinary art creations.

What is Modernism?

Before we embark on our exploration of modernism and its connection to animals, it is essential to understand the movement itself. Modernism is a cultural and artistic movement that emerged in the late 19th century and gained momentum in the early 20th century. It is characterized by a break away from traditional artistic techniques, conventions, and subjects. Modernist artists sought to capture the essence of the rapidly changing world, embracing new forms of expression and pushing boundaries.

The Animal in Modernism

Within the realm of modernism, animal representation took on a new significance. Artists began to approach animal subjects with a fresh perspective, moving beyond merely capturing their physical appearance. Animals became symbols,

metaphors, and reflections of societal issues and human existence. The fascination with animals in modernism can be attributed to the transformation of our relationship with the natural world.



Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal

by Carrie Rohman(Kindle Edition)

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Industrialization and urbanization profoundly impacted human interactions with animals. As the world shifted towards urban landscapes, the once close relationship with animals became distant and fragmented. Artists in the modernist era sought to reconnect with the animal world, exploring themes of nature, ecology, and our place within it. The animal became a means to express primal instincts, desires, and anxieties, offering a glimpse into our complex relationship with the natural world.

Exploring Animal Representation in Modern Art

The emergence of modernism allowed artists to experiment with new styles and techniques, leading to a diverse range of representations of animals. From Picasso's abstract renderings of bullfighting scenes to Marc Chagall's poetic portrayal of floating animals, modernist artists defied traditional artistic conventions and brought animals to life in remarkable ways.

One prominent figure in the realm of modernist animal representation is Franz Marc. Marc believed that animals possessed a spiritual essence and sought to depict their purity and vitality through his art. His famous painting, "The Yellow Cow," serves as a prime example of his exploration of color, form, and symbolism in representing animals.

Another notable artist who delved into animal representation is Henri Rousseau. His dreamlike jungle scenes often featured an assortment of wild animals, presenting an idyllic and fantastical vision of nature. The intricate details and vivid colors in Rousseau's works transport viewers into a world where the animal reigns supreme.

The Significance of Animal Representation in Modernism

So, why did modernist artists become captivated by the animal world? Animal representation in modernism served as a means to address the anxieties and alienation caused by the rapid changes happening in society. By exploring the animal as a subject, artists attempted to restore a lost connection to nature and challenge the notion of human superiority.

The animal became a symbol of freedom, purity, and untamed emotions. It represented a return to primal instincts that were suppressed in the pursuit of technological advancement and societal progress. Through their art, modernist artists urged viewers to reconsider their relationship with animals and the natural world, highlighting the need for balance and preservation.

In delving into the subject of modernism and the animal, we have embarked on a journey to uncover the profound connections between art, nature, and society. Modernist artists challenged traditional artistic boundaries and reimagined animal

representation, using it as a tool to confront societal anxieties and reestablish a bond with the animal world.

By unlocking the mysteries behind these extraordinary art creations, we gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relationship between humans and animals. The animal, in all its forms, continues to captivate artists and viewers alike, reminding us of our inherent connection to the natural world and the importance of preserving it for future generations.



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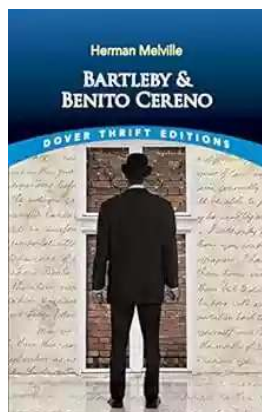
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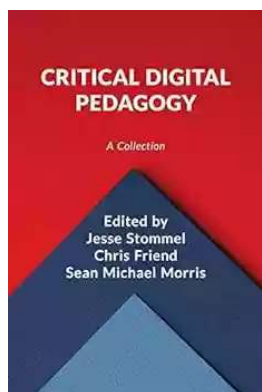
Human and animal subjectivity converge in a historically unprecedented way within modernism, as evolutionary theory, imperialism, antirationalism, and psychoanalysis all grapple with the place of the human in relation to the animal. Drawing on the thought of Jacques Derrida and Georges Bataille, Carrie Rohman outlines the complex philosophical and ethical stakes involved in theorizing the animal in humanism, including the difficulty in determining an ontological place for the animal, the question of animal consciousness and language, and the paradoxical status of the human as both a primate body and a "human" mind abstracting itself from the physical and material world. Rohman then turns to the

work of Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, and Djuna Barnes, authors who were deeply invested in the relationship between animality and identity. *The Island of Dr. Moreau* embodies a Darwinian nightmare of the evolutionary continuum; *The Croquet Player* thematizes the dialectic between evolutionary theory and psychoanalysis; and *Women in Love*, *St. Mawr*, and *Nightwood* all refuse to project animality onto others, inverting the traditional humanist position by valuing animal consciousness. *A Novel Treatment of the Animal in Literature, Stalking the Subject* provides vital perspective on modernism's most compelling intellectual and philosophical issues.



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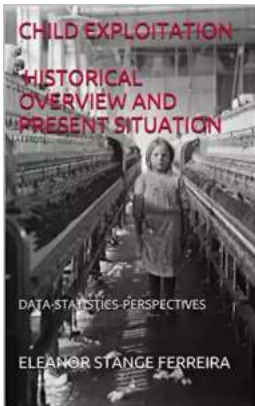
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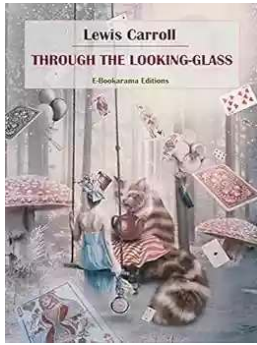
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