

Animals as Healers & Totems in Literature



Quillian the Were-fey - [Quantum Encryption](#)
by Kim Falconer

Byron Bay Writers' Festival

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**Animals as Healers and Totems in
Literature** With

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Notes from [Kim Falconer's](#) desk

Reverence for all life



- *The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. – Mahatma Gandhi*

In the Beginning



The first stories ever told were about the animals and the places they went to when they died.

In Western cultures, our connection with Earth, our bodies, plants, animals and the sacred feminine has been deemphasised.

It was not always so.

Animals as Sacred



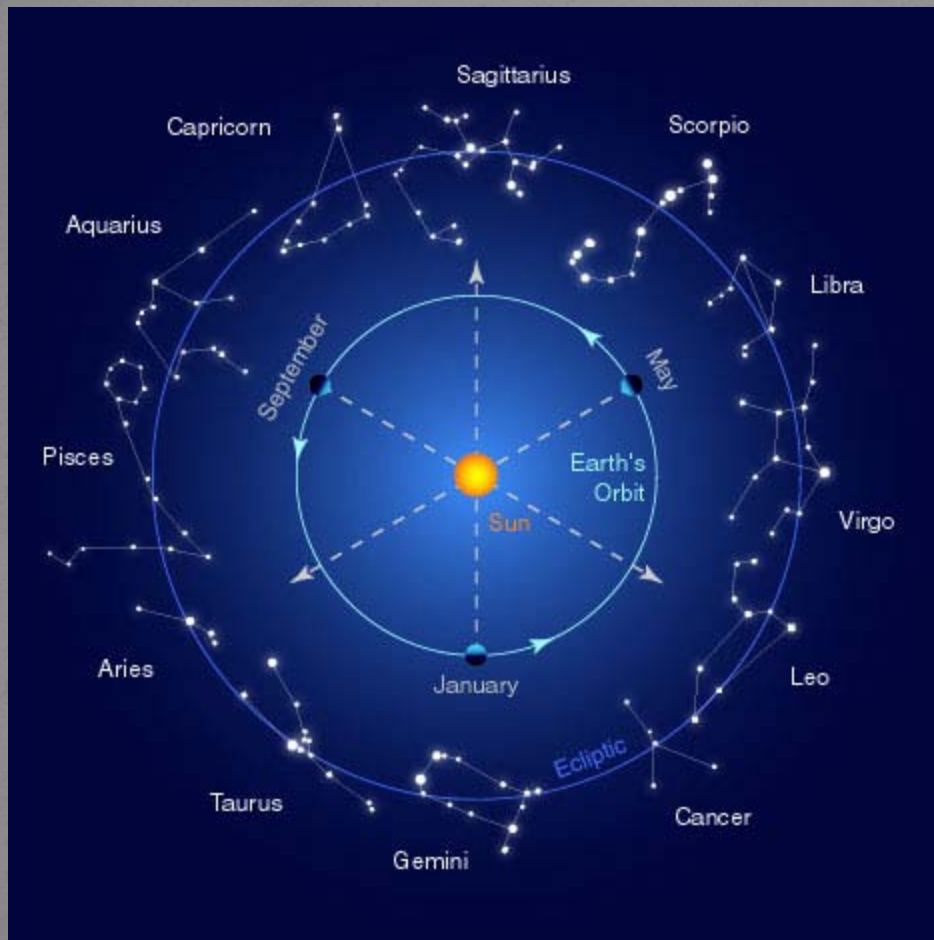
- The experience of the numinous is beyond portrayal, but we feel compelled to try to describe it.
- We speak of the unknown through art and storytelling, to personify the divine (that which is beyond language to describe).
- Our most ancient ways of doing so are through the animals and their stories.

Animals as Unconscious



- Animals can represent wild instinct, intuition and elements of the unconscious.
- They know nature's way
- They can lead us (or lure) us onto the 'right' path.

Animals in the Night Sky



- Domestication of animals led to the development of cities and writing.
- Recording the stars and planets meant they were no longer seen as disturbing influence but highly mathematical and organized.
- Constellations were named for the animals honoured by the gods.
- Preliterate – exceptional animal and tree.
- Post literate – inevitable order (sun moon etc).

The Decline of Reverence



- Originally, the gods took the form of animals (to hide, spy, trick or observe). The people then naturally began to worship the animals that their gods had disguised themselves as and continued this act even after the gods returned to their normal state.
- Animals have become less and less important and symbolic in cult rituals and religion as Christianity and Islamic religions have spread. When a religion is against 'nature' animals become 'it' and no longer 'thou'. – [Joseph Campbell](#)

Tricksters and Gods



- In many early fables and traditions, animals represent human traits or qualities. In Western folktales, a fox is cunning, a hare cowardly. In the Native American tradition, the fox, crow and hare can all represent images of the Trickster archetype (smart, cunning, wily).
- Animals can represent a 'transcendent' quality or processes in story. And in life.

Animals Awaken the Intuition



- The mind removes us from our body and nature. We lose a sense of wholeness, completion. The assimilation of (qualities) and communion with animal is transcendence. It takes us to a new state of awareness.
- Heart life and spiritual life can then align with holistic Self. Animals help us listen to our intuition and heal the divide.

Animals in Literature



- Cave paintings
- Oral traditions and storytelling
- Homer's *Odyssey*
- Aesop's *Fables*

From Achilles' horse to Black Beauty, from Aesop's Mr. Fox to Jack London's White Fang, animals provide guidance, social commentary, moral authority and sympathy in fiction, often giving voice to the silenced and oppressed

Animals in Literature

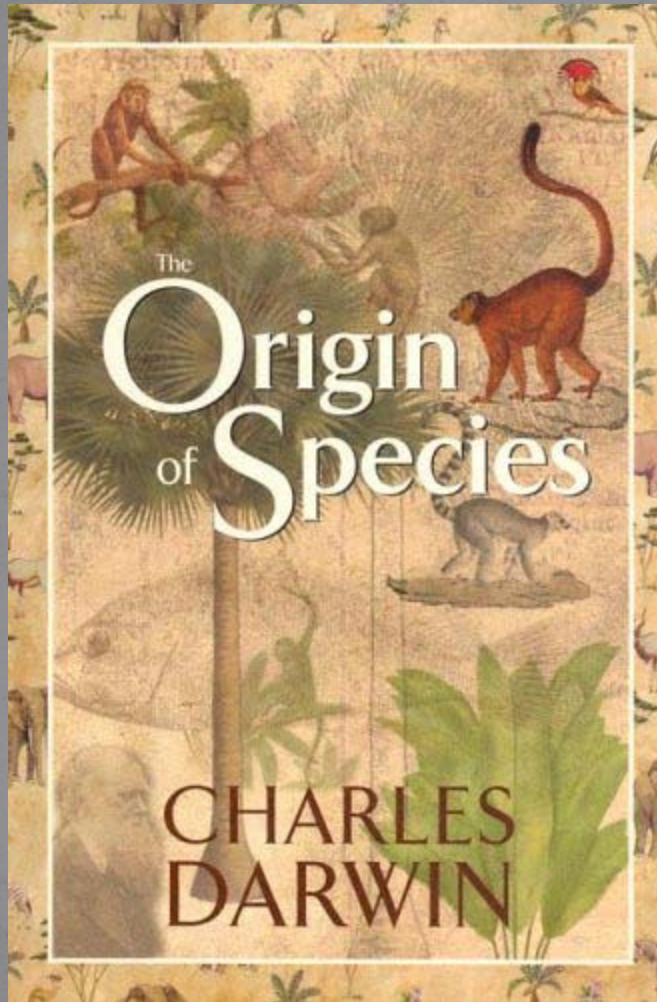


In the European Middle Ages literary animals were listed in the *bestiary*, categorized according to a single trait or ‘moral lesson’.

In the late 17th – 18th centuries—the Age of Enlightenment—moral allegories turned to social satire – no longer teaching but portraying human foibles and political corruption.

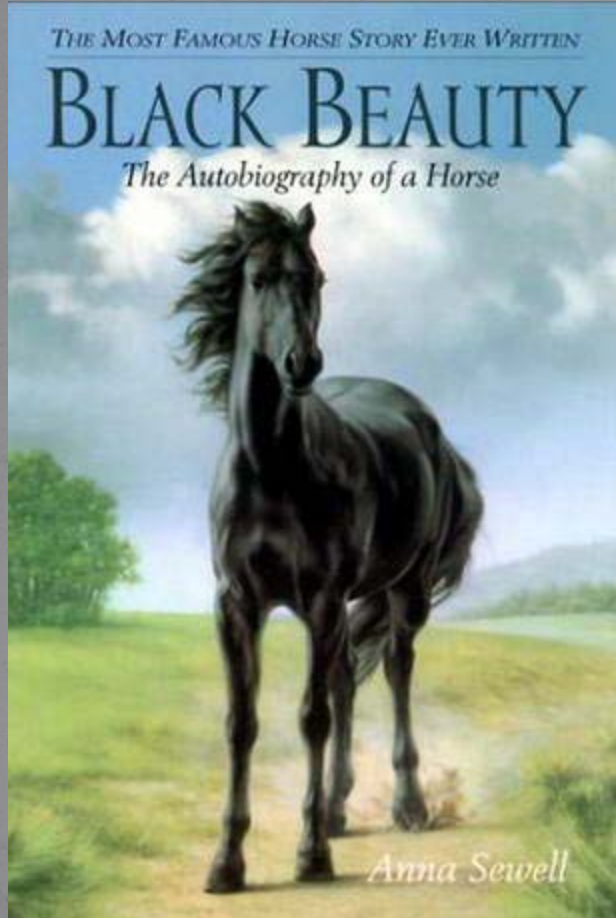
In the 19th century, animals were romanticized for their wildness and beauty. We seek to commune with them to unleash the creative spirit (animals as Muse). We tell stories from the animal as hero POV.

Darwinism



- Darwin's *Origin of the Species* created controversy over our place in nature.
- Many still questioning metaphysical and ontological beliefs.
- Spreading industrialization exploited both humans and animals. Concern for animal welfare became a major social issue.

19th & 20th Century Literature



- Tales of animal abuse arose, in which animals were seen as the victims of human greed, ignorance, and industrialization.
- Black Beauty, Jungle Book, The Call of the Wild, Animal Farm, Charlotte's Web, Watership Down, Redwall.
- In the twentieth century many writers turned to old animal stories and genres to produce new works dealing with modern themes of paranoia, alienation, and futility.

Animals in Speculative Fiction

- There is less Speciesism—the assignment of worth and rights based on species alone—in SF/F than other genres.



- In my [Quantum Enchantment and Quantum Encryption series](#), the animal familiars not only move the story forward, they add spirituality, a connection to nature, to the divine.
- Through animals I am free to investigate human verses non-human thought and examine consciousness from a different (less subjective) perspective. How else can the ‘I’ of human reflect on their own consciousness?

Power, Medicine, Healing



- Some Native American traditions teach that each soul can find its personal pathway through the *medicine* of animals.
- *Medicine* is anything that supports our connection to the life, mind, body, spirit, personal power, strength, understanding, awareness and consciousness.
- We can learn to call on the *medicine* of an animal when in need of specific talents, which is based on the concept of unity - the *law of oneness* and the *law of attraction*.

Animals and Law of Attraction



We talk much about the power of animals to guide and aid us, but what are we doing for them? Millions of creatures without a voice can use our support.

- Law of Attraction says that everything is energy and everything vibrates. We attract to us a like vibration.
- Our thoughts determine our vibration – our thoughts become the things we experience in the world
- Focusing our thoughts on an animal (as ancients did when in a state of reverence) brings us into alignment with what that animal represents (vibrates). Animal healing is the alignment of energy to a particular vibration.
- Putting our thoughts on reverence for all life, seeing everything as a ‘thou’ and not ‘it’ raises our consciousness, heals us, and heals our world. It all starts with appreciation.



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