



### Animal Presence and Human Identity in Modern Literature

(Dis)figurations of Humanimality from Shakespeare to Desai

By Kimberly W. Benston

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**Explores literary representations of the human-animal encounter in modernity that press human “being” to its limits.**

*Animal Presence and Human Identity in Modern Literature* is an exploration of literary representations of the human-animal encounter in modernity that press human “being” to its limits. Texts studied include Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Atwood’s *Surfacing*, and Desai’s *Clear Light of Day*.

#### Key selling points

- Makes an original contribution to the burgeoning field of critical animal studies, with a particularly fluid interaction of philosophical, cultural, and literary vocabularies/perspectives.
- Highlights in a fresh way the core thematic importance of the human-animal encounter in representative masterpieces of the Anglo-American literary tradition.
- In advancing the conceptual framework of critical animal studies, weaves together often separated strands of humanistic inquiry: in formal terms, philosophical critique, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and literary analysis; in thematic terms, the intersections of subjectivity, socio-cultural identity (vis. race, gender, and nationality), narration, and embodiment.
- Offers distinctive readings of major Anglo-American texts from the Early Modern to Post-Modern periods, hopefully changing how we see them functioning within their canonical and historical contexts.

#### About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Kimberly W. Benston is Francis B. Gummere Professor of English and Africana Studies at Haverford College, where he has also served as Provost and President.

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