

The theme of the wild  
animal and  
interaction between  
women and animals  
essay



The themes of the wild animals, magical transformations of men into beasts and relationships between women and animals are developed in "The She Wolf" by Giovanni Verga, "Tale of the Mouflon" by Grazia Deledda and "The King Stag" by Carlo Gozzi. The depiction of the wild animals in their comparison to humans in these works depends upon the dominating beliefs characteristic of the depicted periods of time.

The main protagonist of the story "The She Wolf" by Giovanni Verga is compared to a wild animal because of her immoral behavior. The beauty of her dark eyes, her charms and ability to seduce men frighten the inhabitants of the village. Verga does not give a name to the main protagonist and she is referred to only as "she" or "She-wolf".

In contrast to the main protagonist, her daughter Maricchia and daughter's husband Nanni with whom She-wolf falls in love with have names. This woman does not comply with the norms which are generally accepted in the nineteenth-century Sicily. For this reason, people who are unable to explain her behavior and strong influence on men, interpret it as magic.

The She-wolf is always alone, never gets tired and goes out during hours when all noble women have to stay at home. She has no fear and the sense of guilty conscience is unknown to her. An example of her enormous power over men can be seen in her relationships with Nanni who is unable to resist her charms and temptation. "He'd [Nanni] have liked to tear out his eyes to avoid seeking those of the She-wolf, because when they stared into his they made him lose body and soul" (Verga, "The She Wolf", p. 155).

Even in the final episode when Nanni comes with an axe to kill her, the She-wolf has no fear, does not lower her eyes and tries to seduce the man.

Developing the theme of the wild animals, Verga focuses on the negative traits of the beasts to describe the behavior of a woman not complying with the society norms.

Touching upon the theme of the wild animals in “ Tale of the Mouflon”, Grazia Deledda emphasizes the positive features of animals as compared to those of humans. “ The hunters who shoot them [mouflons] are crueller than the wildest animals (Deledda, “ Tale of the Mouflon”, p. 23). Therefore, comparing the behaviors of people and the wild animals, it can be stated that in certain situations the latter show more intelligence.

Comparing the depiction of people and the mouflon that makes friends with the main female character, it can be stated that the behavior of a beast is even more intelligent than that of the woman’s husband or other inhabitants of the village. He comes when the young woman is lonely and needs his support and disappears when her husband returns. The sense of superstition comes over the young woman who doubts if it is a wild animal who comes to her house or a human who has transformed himself/herself into an animal.

Taking into account the fact that the novel *Cosima* into which “ The Mouflon Story” was included is regarded as autobiographical, the depicted period of time can be dated back to the late nineteenth century, and beliefs into magic and supernatural power is typical of this historical period.

Another example of magical transformation of a man into an animal can be found in the eighteenth century tale “ The King Stag” by Carlo Gozzi. “ I <https://assignbuster.com/the-theme-of-the-wild-animal-and-interaction-between-women-and-animals-essay/>

wanted to know more than the gods permit man to discover. Heaven has punished me by turning me into an animal” (Gozzi, “ King Stag”, p. 105).

Therefore, the depiction of the wild animals which is inseparable from the theme of magic can be explained with the superstitiousness of the community. The author chooses a mouflon, a harmless creature to emphasize his positive traits though when the narrator mentions wolves at the beginning of this story, his attitude to them is negative. Therefore, the negative attitude towards wolves is typical though other animals can be depicted as rather intelligent and harmless creatures.

The touching relationships between a young woman and a mouflon are an important theme raised in “ Tale of the Mouflon” by Grazia Deledda. There is mutual understanding and trust between a woman and a wild animal.

The protagonist of the tale speaks to the mouflon and cares of his well-being. “ She was very fond of it and would have liked to keep it in the house; however, she didn’t want to keep him prisoner” (Deledda, “ Tale of the Mouflon”, p. 25). In other words, the mouflon is depicted as a human with the only difference that he cannot speak.

The fact that after the mouflon is killed not far from the wife’s house, she gives birth to a deaf and dumb boy is rather symbolical. The theme of relationships between a woman and a wild animal is developed in the tale “ The King Stag” by Carlo Gozzi. In one of the episodes, the king is transformed into a stag, but looking at his reflection in the water, he thinks that he will be unable to explain the situation to his fiancée because the stag cannot speak.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-theme-of-the-wild-animal-and-interaction-between-women-and-animals-essay/>

Then, the king decides to transform into an old man lying dead nearby so that he could speak and establish a contact with his beloved even being in this old and deformed body. Therefore, “ Tale of the Mouflon” by Grazia Deledda and “ The King Stag” by Carlo Gozzi develop a similar theme of relationships between a woman and a wild animal, but choose different answers to the question whether this relationship is possible.

In general, it can be concluded that the depiction of positive or negative characteristics of the wild animals, the transformations of humans into beasts and the relationships between women and animals in the tales under analysis depend upon the philosophies dominating in the society of the depicted periods of time.

Deledda, Grazia. *Cosima*. Milan: Mondadori, 2008. Print.

Gozzi, Carlo. “ The King Stag.” *Five Tales for the Theatre*. Eds. Albert Bermel and Ted Emery. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989. 75 – 124. Print.

Verga, Giovanni. “ The She Wolf.” *Sicilian Stories*. Ed. Stanley Appelbaum. New York: Dover Publications, 2002. 148 – 155. Print.