THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANIMALS IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF LORD BYRON

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Throughout the ages man has regarded animals with a mixture of awe, respect, affection, and uncertainty. Because of man's inability to fully understand the nature of beasts, he has been unsure as to what position animals hold in the universe. Many of the ancient peoples saw great similarities between man and the lesser creatures and even believed that there was no fundamental difference between the soul of an animal and that of a human being. Numerous important intellects have expressed the conviction that animals possess a certain worth or value in the world of men. Aristotle maintained that most animals have "traces of psychical qualities or attitudes, which qualities are more markedly differentiated in the case of human beings..."¹ In his essay "Sweet Reason," Montaigne stressed man's duty to be humane to all creatures and to protect and to care for weak and suffering beasts.²

During the later eighteenth century, often referred to as a part of the Age of Romanticism, there was in England an emphasis on animals and on their more engaging qualities.


There have been various different reasons offered for this preoccupation with animal life. Lytton Sells in his study of animal poetry explains that the pervasive element of humanitarianism in the eighteenth century had replaced the doctrine of love for God. Thus, quite frequently this "love of humanity" was expanded to include the animal world.\(^3\) In an article about Lord Byron's love of one of his dogs, B. R. McElderry puts forth a conflicting hypothesis. He holds that the philosophies which denounced man during the Romantic Period provided fertile ground for the "contrast of perfect brute and imperfect man."\(^4\) Still another explanation for this stress on animals is made by George Brandes in his discussion of nineteenth-century literature. Brandes maintains that a characteristic of the English naturalism of this period was the poets' knowledge of animal life and fondness for stately animals. Furthermore, their love for domestic animals was the result of their affection for home. When they had to leave their geographical home, they took as much of their residence with them as they could in the form of their domestic beasts.\(^5\)

Such opposing explications for the emphasis on the worth of animals may shed some light on this study, but the general

\(^3\)Sells, p. xxv.


\(^5\)George Brandes, Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature (London, 1924), pp. 8-9.
attitude toward animal life during the Romantic Age is not the concern of this thesis. Rather it is the purpose of this research to explore the role that animals played in both the life and writings of Lord Byron. The first areas of concentration are on the specific examples of Byron's affection for animals and on the psychological aspects of this love. Secondly, the thesis attempts to explore the symbolic importance of animals in relation to Byron and his works. This metaphorical study has been divided on the basis of the concrete and the abstract. Initially, the emphasis is on the similarities that Byron saw between animals and human beings, most of which are of a physical nature. Finally, the research is focused on Byron's concepts and ideas, which he frequently illustrated and clarified by animal symbolism. Of course, there is an occasional overlapping between the two parts of the symbolic study, for there is little that can be classified as strictly abstract or completely concrete. But insofar as it is possible and desirable, this division has been made in the hope that it will facilitate the reader's understanding of the complex role that animals played in Byron's thought and life.

Although most perceptive biographers, such as Thomas Moore and Leslie Marchand, and readers of Byron comment on his unusually strong affection for animals and on the abundance of his animal poetry, an intensive and extensive study of animals in his life and works has not been made.
G. Wilson Knight in his scholarly book, *Lord Byron: Christian Virtues*, makes the best attempt at such a study when in the first chapter he refutes the criticism of Byron expressed in Peter Quennell's *Byron in Italy*. Quennell's hypothesis that Byron had little genuine love of animals is challenged at some length by Wilson, who cites an impressive amount of evidence to prove Quennell's inaccuracy.6 Besides Knight's book, other sources have proved of great use in this research. In addition to his poetry itself, Byron's various journals and letters have been of paramount importance, as have been the two studies by Ernest Lovell.

The subject of this study is of particular importance and significance because Byron's love of animals and attitude toward them reflect so many of his other feelings and beliefs. For example, his hatred of cruelty to animals is connected with his disgust toward any ill-treatment of human beings. Furthermore, this research is important because to better understand Byron is to better understand various facets of man himself. As Edward Bostetter keenly discerns:

> In Byron the antithetical characteristics of human nature existed unrepressed, unresolved, each expressed dramatically and unpredictably with equal power and sincerity. When he said to Lady Blessington, "If I know myself, I have no character at all," he was in a sense right; he had the character of Everyman.7

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CHAPTER I

BYRON'S AFFECTION FOR ANIMALS

In Don Juan Byron revealed his fondness for animals when he wrote:

He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore
For cats and birds more penchant never displayed.  1

This affection for animals was not merely a passing quirk. Despite the distractions arising from his successes and failures in later life, Byron always enjoyed the company of animals.  2 In 1818, when he moved into the Piazzo Mocenigo in Italy, the entire ground floor housed his menagerie. When Byron settled at Bologna, his huge collection of animals was part of the household.  3

The size and the members of Byron's menagerie greatly startled visitors, particularly Shelley, who described it as consisting of "ten horses, eight enormous dogs, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon." Only the horses were not permitted complete freedom in the house, and one day on the staircase


2Knight, p. 4.

Shelley met "five peacocks, two guinea-hens, and an Egyptian crane." Later he confided to Mary, "I wonder who all these animals were before they were changed into these shapes." When Thomas Moore visited Byron at his house in La Mira and was led by his host down a darkened hallway, he was warned by Byron, "Keep clear of the dog. . . . Take care or that monkey will fly at you." E. J. Trelawny was greeted at Byron's abode in Pisa in a similar manner by a "surly-looking bulldog."^5

The problems involved in moving such a large number of animals from place to place as Byron traveled were certainly proof of his affection for them,^6 for they caused him continual worry. He told Thomas Medwin that although it was a problem to travel with so many pets, he did not trust strangers to care for them. An even stronger motive for taking his animals with him was simply his unwillingness to part with them. In a letter to Richard Hoppner, Byron demanded, "Why did Lega give away the goat? a blockhead—I must have him again." Moreover, he did not hesitate to add more pets to his collection and eagerly accepted Murray's proposal to

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^4Ibid., p. 224.


^6Knight, p. 4.

send him several English bulldogs. Since he could not bear to leave his strange pets behind on his journeys, such as the one from Ravenna to Bologna, he traveled in the company of "saddle-horses, and domestic animals, basketed birds, caged monkeys, and dusty enormous dogs." On this trip, however, he did consent to leave in his banker's care "a Goat with a broken leg, an ugly peasant Dog, a Bird of the heron type which would eat only fish, a Badger on a chain, and two ugly old Monkeys."

Affectionate remarks about animals and information concerning his menagerie were substantial parts of Byron's conversations and letters. During his visit to the house of Petrarch, Byron saw the Italian's embalmed cat and remarked that "the hearts of animals were often better than ours, and that this animal's affection may well have put Laura's coldness to shame." In writing to Edward Le Mesurier in 1823, Byron expressed his appreciation for Lyon, the Newfoundland dog that he had given Byron. He wrote to his friend John Hobhouse that he had "two monkeys, a fox, and two mastiffs" and added that "the monkeys are charming." To John Murray he explained the fact that despite their strength and

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9 Peter Quennell, Byron in Italy (New York, 1941), p. 192.
10 Marchand, II, 940-941.
11 Knight, p. 9.
fierceness, the bulldogs in Italy did not have the persistent
grip that the English species possessed. Augusta Leigh was
informed by her brother:

I have got a flourishing family, (Besides my
daughter Allegra); here are two Cats, six dogs, a
badger, a falcon, a tame Crow, and a Monkey. The
fox died, and a Civet Cat ran away. With the excep-
tion of an occasional civil war about provisions,
they agree to admiration, and do not make more noise
than a well-behaved Nursery. I have also eight
horses, ... and go prancing away daily.¹²

A little later Byron wrote to his sister that Allegra was
well, although the monkey was coughing and the crow had a
severe headache.¹³ Denying any romantic ideas concerning
Lady Webster, Byron wrote that he had no desire "for anything
but a poodle dog."¹⁴

Not only was Byron fond of his pets, but he was fond of
people who also liked animals. His zealous regard for
Vittorio Alfieri was in large part due to their mutual
affection for animals of all kinds, particularly horses.¹⁵

Many of Byron's female correspondents alluded to his
fondness for animals. Elizabeth Pigot wrote to him an account
of his dog Boatswain's mischievous prank at a tea attended by

¹²Peter Quennell, Byron: A Self-Portrait, II (New York,
1950), 443, 499, 530.

¹³Ibid., p. 537.

¹⁴Francis Gribble, The Love Affairs of Lord Byron (New
York, 1910), p. 158.

¹⁵Countess of Blessington, A Journal of Conversations
with Lord Byron (Boston, 1859), pp. 116-117.
old maids. The dog, she related, jumped into the room through an open window, an action that greatly alarmed the ladies. Only by exclaiming, "Cats, Bos'en!" was she able to persuade him to leave the party. In the same letter she informed Byron that Ann Becher was sending some hair from the dog's tail as a gift, since the poet enjoyed collecting locks of hair. Lady Caroline Lamb wrote to warn him against having attacks inspired by grief, as did Sir Samuel Romilly, who died from such a fit. "Never do you do this," she pleaded with him, "if even a dog is left on earth who loves you."

Pining because of her frustrated love for Byron, Henrietta D'Ussières expressed her desire to see his room once more. But this could never be, she wrote. Neither would she behold "the bookcase nor the Parrot's corner," and how she did envy "the Parrot."^16 Indeed, many times Byron demonstrated more affection for his animals than for his mistresses.

Revelations of Byron's preoccupation with and affection for animal life are numerous in his private writings. In his journal he wrote of his visit to a zoo:

Two nights ago I saw the tigers sup at Exeter' Change. Except Veli Pacha's lion in the Morea,—who followed the Arab keeper like a dog,—the fondness of the hyaena (sic) for her keeper amused me the most. . . . The handsomest animal

^16Emily Morse Symonds and Peter Quennell, "To Lord Byron" (London, 1939), pp. 8, 82, 140.
on earth is one of the panthers; but the poor antelopes were dead. 17

He often mentioned his pets in the diary he kept at Ravenna:
"Gave the falcon some water." "Played with my mastiff,—
gave him his supper." "Beat the crow for stealing the fal-
con's victuals." 18 In his diary was also recorded this account of his menagerie:

The crow is lame of a leg—wonder how it happened—some fool trod upon his toe, I suppose.
The falcon pretty brisk—the cats large and noisy—
the monkeys I have not looked to since the cold weather, as they suffer from being brought up.
Horses must be gay—get a ride as soon as weather
serves. 19

It is already obvious that Byron's interest in animal life was not limited to the usual household pets. When his tortoises were ill, he was seriously concerned about them and hired a hen to hatch the eggs of his pets. 20 When he set sail for Greece from Italy, his last words consisted of a shout to Charles Barry, his banker, to look after his geese. 21 Hobhouse believed that Byron was playing a joke on the banker, for he could not understand such anxiety over animals. But Byron was definitely in earnest, since he had

20 Knight, p. 8.
21 Gordon, p. 216.
exerted much effort in preserving the geese long before he decided to go to Greece.  

While Byron was a student at Cambridge, he kept a bear and several bulldogs. He devoted so much more attention to his bear than to his studies that some of the college residents contemptibly "pronounced Byron and Bruin to be both brutes of the same genus." According to Hewson Clarke, Byron was quite fond of the bear and was said to have often squeezed it affectionately. Only when the bear roughly hugged a somewhat unathletic student was Byron forced to part with his grizzly friend. Finally he had "Poor Bruin" sent to Newstead as an addition to his growing menagerie.

In his description of Newstead Abbey, the residence that Byron inherited with the lordship, Horace Walpole remarked that there were many pictures, all of animals, in the hall. Indeed, Byron had a painter brought to Newstead to paint his bear and wolf.

23Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, p. 118.
25Marchand, I, 137.
26Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, pp. 11, 141.
Throughout his life Byron maintained a particular affection for dogs, a fondness he alluded to in Don Juan when he wrote, "The memory reposes with tenderness" on things such as "a small old spaniel." Some of his dearest memories were of the enjoyable moments he spent with his dogs. When he lived at Newstead Abbey, Byron frequently took his two Newfoundland dogs boating with him. It was his habit to jump into the middle of the lake. The dogs would unfailingly follow him, grab his coat collar on each side, and swim with him to the shore.

During the time he spent at Missolonghi, his main entertainment, besides riding his horses, consisted of playing with his dog Lyon. He often talked to Lyon and showed his affection for him by such phrases as "Thou art more faithful than men, Lyon; I trust thee more. I love thee, thou art my faithful dog." Byron spent much time engaged in such talk and seemed more satisfied on these occasions than on most others. He was lively and witty in conversation with people, but in his calm moments with Lyon, he was "perfectly happy."


28 English gentleman, Life, Writings, Opinions of Byron, I, 60.

29 Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, p. 632.

In 1818 Byron's favorite dog Boatswain died in a fit of madness. Unconcerned about the danger to himself, Byron wiped the saliva from the dog's mouth with his bare hands. He announced the death in a letter to his friend Hodgson:

Boatswain is dead!—he expired in a state of madness on the 18th, after suffering much, yet retaining all the gentleness of his nature to the last, never attempting to do the least injury to anyone near him. I have now lost everything except old Murray.31

Hobhouse found it impossible to comprehend the depth of feeling that Byron had for his dog, and in order to emphasize the absurdity of his extreme grief, he jestingly wrote these words:

Near this spot
Are deposited the Remains of one
Who possessed Beauty without Vanity, Strength without Insolence,
Courage without Ferocity,
And all the Virtues of Man without his Vices.32

Byron's reaction to these words, however, was quite contrary to Hobhouse's expectation, for he was so moved by the tribute that he had the words inscribed on a monument dedicated to Boatswain. The monument, the only improvement Byron made on the grounds at Newstead, remained a permanent decoration.33

Byron wrote a further tribute to the dog in "Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog," which stated: "To mark

31Byron, Letters and Journals, p. 120.
32Marchand, I, 161.
33Byron, Letters and Journals, p. 120.
a friend's remains these stones arise; I never knew but one, --and here he lies."34

It is surprising that Hobhouse did not understand his close friend's feelings toward his lost dog. Certainly he should have realized that Byron was a man of extreme passions and consuming emotions. Whenever he felt grief or love or hate, that emotion fully possessed him and excluded for a time any other feeling.35 Such excessive feeling is illustrated in a letter to Hobhouse in which Byron wrote that his emotions were so raw that he cried "over a cistern of Gold fishes, which are not pathetic animals."36 Thus, when he lost a creature for whom he felt much affection, he was completely consumed with sorrow. Because of this grief, for several years he always kept miniatures of the dog with him,37 and he often expressed a desire to be buried beside the animal.38

Even without considering Byron's tendency to emotional extremes, his great love for Boatswain is understandable, for the animal's intelligence and devotion merited affection.

34Byron, "Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog."

35Ethel Colburn Mayne, Byron, I (New York, 1912), 131.

36Marchand, II, 810.

37Mayne, I, 131.

38Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, p. 44.
One particular story about him certainly made Byron's fondness for him justifiable. At one time Boatswain was in the habit of teasing a fox-terrier, belonging to Byron's mother, so that she feared for her dog's life. To protect the animal she sent Gilpin to stay with a tenant at Newstead. One morning after Gilpin's departure, Boatswain began frantically searching for the terrier. That night Boatswain returned from his search with Gilpin, whom he had fetched from Newstead.39

Boatswain's death left an emptiness in Byron's life, which could be filled only by another dog. Although the bear was fondly demonstrative despite his lack of gentleness, Byron longed for a dog and wrote to tell "Gentleman" Jackson, his boxing instructor, to purchase him as many greyhounds as he could at any price.40

Most of Byron's friends realized his great fondness for animals, especially dogs. Lady Holland confessed to him her deep affection for her dog because Byron too had dogs and possessed a similar fondness for his pets. Elizabeth Pigot incorporated Byron's love of dogs in a booklet that she wrote and illustrated, "The wonderful History of Lord Byron and his Dog Dedicated to that Right Hon'ble Infant the Lord Byron, by

39 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
40 Marchand, I, 164.
his very obedient Humble Sert The Authoress E. B. P." The
booklet was a parody on the story of Old Mother Hubbard and
contained numerous watercolors of Byron with his dogs.42

Even after his death, Byron's body for a time remained
in the company of his dogs. When Hobhouse went on board the
Florida to claim the coffin of Byron, he found Lyon at the
foot of the precious remains, "lying on guard, as he had lain
steadfastly all through the voyage."43

Thus, from the days of reckless youth when he kept a
bear to his last days at Missolonghi when his dog Lyon was
his constant companion, Byron spent his life surrounded by
animals of all kinds. Although a certain fondness for some
animals in particular is somewhat universal, Byron's affec-
tion for all animal life exceeded the bounds of normality.
Even though Byron's extremism in all feelings partially
explains the importance of animals in his life, there are
deeper reasons for this passion, which will be discussed in
the next chapter.

42Willis W. Pratt, Byron at Southwell (Austin, 1948),
pp. 68-69.

Animals were not only a source of enjoyment for Byron, but they also helped to compensate for certain inadequacies in his character and in his environment. Because his early home life offered little sympathetic response to his sensitive, passionate nature, the friendships that he did make became "passions" to him, including his friendships with animals.

As a child, Byron actually had no friend he could fully trust; so quite naturally he turned to animals for affection. His parents, who are usually a child's main source of comfort and solace, were totally untrustworthy. During their six years of marriage, his father spent his mother's large fortune and mortified her in every conceivable way. After his father's death, his mother told young George stories of fact mixed with fiction, most of which praised his dead father. He was told to always remember his father's courage as a soldier in active service and to disregard any tales of scandal that he heard about Captain Byron. He was to be proud of being a member of the Byron family, which had come to

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1Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, p. 22.
England with William the Conqueror. Inevitably his mother contradicted these stories with tales of her husband's savagery and cruelty, which she said were characteristic of the whole family. Bewildered and determined not to believe the brutal stories, Byron never completely trusted his mother from that time on.2

Had his mother's ravings been exceptional occurrences, Byron probably would have forgotten them. However, because of her uncontrollable temper and the frequency of these emotional scenes, the young boy had no opportunity to forget. She not only reiterated her denunciations of the Byron family, but she also taunted George about his deformed foot. It is said that on at least one occasion she cried, "Ye lame, brat, get out o' my sight," and threw some object at him. A few minutes later she exhibited sentimental repentance and attempted to explain the cause of his lameness.3 It seems almost certain that Byron was inspired by such an outrage to write the first lines of The Deformed Transformed, in which Bertha yelled to her son Arnold, "Out, hunchback!" And Arnold pathetically replied with a feeling of misery well-known to Byron, "I was born so, mother!"4 In a description of his mother, Byron wrote:

3Ibid., pp. 29-30.
4Byron, The Deformed Transformed, Part I, Scene 1, ll. 1-2.
But she flies into a fit of phrenzy, upbraids me as if I was the most undutiful wretch in existence, rakes up the ashes of my father, abuses him, says I shall be a true Byrrone (sic), which is the worst epithet she can invent. Am I to call this woman mother? Because by nature's law she has authority over me, am I to be trampled on in this manner? Am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy, and suffer by feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a Son, But I renounce her as a Friend.5

In almost every aspect of life, Byron's mother was a handicap to him. Not only did she constantly attack his sensitive feelings in private, but also she hindered him socially. Her rotundity, her conceit, her unrestrained temper, and her bragging about her Stuart ancestry were traits that did not recommend her to polite company.6 Dr. Glennie of Dulwich described her as "a total stranger to English society and English manners," with an unattractive appearance, "an understanding where nature had not been more bountiful," and an uneducated mind.7 In Aberdeen she had few friends other than Mary Duff's family, for she did not have the ability or the desire to be attractive to cultured people.8 During Byron's school years at Dulwich, his mother demonstrated an amazing lack of good judgment in


8J. D. Symon, Byron in Perspective (New York, 1925), p. 66.
her relations with his instructors. Often she would keep him at home a week longer than his vacations allowed. Such excessive mothering certainly embarrassed the boy and irritated the instructors. One of his classmates shrewdly evaluated her when he told him, "Byron, your mother is a fool," to which Byron morosely replied, "I know it."9

Although Byron's father died when his son was only three, the fact that he was hardly more stable than Byron's mother is illustrated by an event of the poet's babyhood. Once in a spontaneous overflow of fatherly affection, his father took the baby to his living quarters, which were separate from his wife's. One night of his son's noisy company was enough to incense his father, and the child was returned the next morning to the mother.10

Not only did his parents fail to provide him with any security, but they and their families also made it difficult for him to find protection elsewhere. The reputation of both parental families did not make him attractive to the fashionable society that he desired. Although the Byron family was old and aristocratic, it had deteriorated because of its notorious acts of violence and spendthrift habits. Lord Byron's grand-uncle, from whom he inherited his title, had died a poor man, and except for the judges' clemency, would

9Thomas Moore, Life, Letters, and Journals of Byron, p. 16.

10Symon, p. 32.
have been hanged. The old lord had killed a neighbor in a duel, had plundered the land surrounding his estate, Newstead Abbey, and had become a bitter, malevolent hermit. The character of Byron's paternal grandfather had earned him the nickname "Foul-weather Jack." His mother's family, the Scottish clan of Gordon, was hardly more commendable, since two of her ancestors had killed themselves.

Since Byron could not rely on his family for security, he was left to his own defenses, which were sadly lacking. Because of his painful shyness as a youth, a quality that he never outgrew completely, the change from the serenity of Dulwich Grove to the chaos of a public school was difficult. During his first week at Harrow, he decided that he was retarded in the subject matter of his courses and constantly dreaded the moment when this failing would be discovered. He was surrounded by young aristocrats and did not relish the consequent feelings of insignificance, which were heightened by his lameness.

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14 Quennell, Years of Fame, p. 23.
The importance of Byron's physical deformity in contributing to his shyness and feelings of inferiority is difficult to exaggerate. Many times during his life he was made painfully aware of his lameness. Besides his mother's cutting allusions to his deformity, as a child he overheard a woman tell his nurse, "What a pretty boy Byron is! What a pity he has such a leg!" The child responded to this remark by hitting at the woman with his small whip and commanding, "Dinna speak of it!" He suffered another humiliation in regard to his lameness when he either overheard or was told that Mary Chaworth said to her maid of him, "Do you think I could care anything for that lame boy?" Such a reception from the girl he deeply loved was a blow from which he perhaps never fully recovered. Although in his later life occasionally he was able to ignore or even joke about his deformity, he more often was strangely sensitive about it.\(^{18}\) In relieving some of the embarrassment of his lameness, his horses were of great importance, for by riding them he was able to make an impressive entrance.\(^{19}\)

After finally becoming accustomed to Harrow and making a place for himself there, Byron moved on to Cambridge, where he had high hopes for fun and freedom. There his attempts to gain attention were pathetic. In an effort to lose weight,


\(^{19}\)MacKenzie, p. 44.
he boxed in an overcoat and numerous waistcoats. He developed the habit of remaining motionless at any assembly and staring at the gathered people with a look of disdain. When he talked, he used ridiculous little gestures to draw attention to his aristocratic-looking hands, and he annoyed everyone he saw with descriptions of the Byron family history. The other students were repulsed by such peculiarities and believed him to be vulgar and clumsy. Even John Hobhouse, later his closest friend, commented that a man who would wear a riding habit to match his horse was beyond toleration. For a while Byron was incredulous of his unpopularity, for at Harrow he had been generally well liked. Nevertheless, when people began pointedly turning their backs on him, he realized that he was unwanted.20

Besides his other handicaps, Byron's unsettled temper probably served to alienate him further from his classmates. He suffered seething, violent anger, which resulted in great inconsistencies in behavior. Somewhat like his mother, he could be raging one moment and full of regret and repentance the next. His eccentricity also was emphasized by his curious habit of speaking Aureately when in an emotional strain. In a discussion of his succession to the lordship, he told a group of classmates: "Well, it was not of my doing. Fortune had me whipped yesterday because another boy had done what he

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20Bigland, p. 49.
ought not, and today she makes me a lord because another man has done yesterday what he could not help."  

In 1807 Byron's first serious attempt at poetry, *Hours of Idleness*, was publicly printed. Although these poems were greatly lacking in excellence, they did not warrant the scorn they received. In its criticism of *Hours of Idleness*, the *Edinburgh Review* not only attacked the poetry but also made fun of Byron personally. The publication mocked Byron's pride in his aristocratic rank, possessions, and ancestors; his prolixity about himself; his condescending attitude toward writing for money; and his efforts to impress readers with his youth and his quick and easy composition. Although a certain amount of such censure was appropriate, it was carried beyond the bounds of good taste.  

Just as the world had been unreasonable in its condemnation of Byron, it was irrational in its acclaim of him. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* did not deserve the abundant praise that they received. Fame came riding on the coattails of the reviews, and suddenly, at the age of twenty-four, Byron was "hysterically thrust" into London society. Because of his shyness, self-consciousness about his lameness, inability to dance, and lack of friends in

21Symon, pp. 69-71.
22MacKenzie, p. 46.
23MacCaulay, pp. 5-6.
high society, he was ill-equipped for his new-found prominence. He and his position were on trial. Before the advent of his renown, his associations had been exclusively with the middle class, but now in a society accustomed to titles, his aristocratic inheritance was of little consequence.

From the towering heights of fame equal to that of Scott, Wordsworth, and Southey, Byron had a long way to fall in the public eye, but fall he did, almost as abruptly as he had risen. When the news of his separation from his wife became known, society's persecution of him began in earnest. From rejection to idolatry back to rejection—Byron was denounced as violently as he had shortly before been worshipped. Although ignorant of the details of the separation, the public became violently angry at him and began to originate stories which would vindicate its rage. The condemnation which assaulted him was beyond belief. Newspapers and theaters added to the foray by lampooning him unmercifully. Feeling himself compelled to leave England, Byron crossed the Channel, went up the Rhine, and crossed the Alps. By that time the clamor against him had grown weaker, and within a short time his poetry became even more widely read than before his self-exile.

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25 Symon, p. 164.
Byron's financial instability was another important factor in creating feelings of insecurity. His succession to the lordship was a disappointment, for he did not gain much income through his inheritance. Newstead Abbey was not fit for occupancy, and Rochdale Manor was even less of an asset, since the Fifth Lord Byron had sold it illegally. Thus, Byron inherited debts that had to be paid before the income from Rochdale could belong to him.\textsuperscript{27} At Piccadilly Terrence Byron's finances were so depleted that not only was his furniture seized but "even the birds and the tame squirrel" were confiscated by the bailiffs.\textsuperscript{28}

In Byron's unstable life he certainly had need of some form of security, which was provided by his pets. While the society on which his hopes were based was constantly withdrawing its offer of friendship because of his separation from his wife or because his poetry did not satisfy its standards, his animals were not swayed in their loyalty to him by every passing wave of popular opinion. In a world full of ever-increasing anxieties, his menagerie helped to divert his attention from his worries and gave him a source of affection and amusement with no demands.

Not only did Byron need animals because of his insecurity, but he also needed them to distract him from himself.

\textsuperscript{27}MacKenzie, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{28}Peter Quennell, \textit{Byron in Italy} (New York, 1941), p. 18.
Throughout his life he was unusually fond of solitude and believed that it was essential to him. Even when in the company of someone he liked, he would eventually become melancholy and long to be alone.\textsuperscript{29} A woman he loved often could not even tempt him to reject solitude. He told his wife that despite his occasional enjoyment of company, he never went "two hours in mixed company without wishing myself out of it again."\textsuperscript{30} Surely he was not a man well-equipped to live with people constantly from one day to the next and could not help tiring of intimate, continual association. After a visit from Hobhouse, one of his closest friends, Byron wrote, "I am glad to be once more alone, for I am sick of my companion, ... because my nature leads me to solitude."\textsuperscript{31}

Byron's poetry is saturated with his preoccupation with solitude. Alp, the main character in \textit{The Siege of Corinth}, is essentially a man isolated from the rest of humanity, absorbed in his own profound thoughts:\textsuperscript{32} "He stood alone—a renegade! Against the country he betrayed;/ He stood alone among his band,/ Without a trusted heart or band."\textsuperscript{33} Another character

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\textsuperscript{29}Blessington, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{30}Albert Brecknock, \textit{Byron} (London, 1926), pp. 150-151.

\textsuperscript{31}Ernest J. Lovell, Jr., \textit{Byron: The Record of a Quest} (Austin, 1949), p. 118.


\textsuperscript{33}Byron, \textit{The Siege of Corinth}, XII, 11. 306-309.
\end{flushleft}
of solitude is Lord Conrad, the Corcor, an example of the 
self-aristocrat who intimidates the commoners. The primary 
figure of Lord is similar to Corcor in his aristocratic 
Isolation, and he is like Childe Harold, "the most unfit of 
men to bide with men." Lord is a man "born of high lineage, 
limb'd in high command," he mingled with the magnates of his 
but still he only saw and did not share ... 
around him some mysterious circle turned/ repelled approach 
and shrank him still more. While Corcor searches for 
release in adventure, Lord leaves his life of activity and 
becomes a hermit in his castle.

Perhaps the greatest figure of solitude in Byron's work 
is Ernesto, whose inclination to be alone is much like his 
creator's. Like Byron, Ernesto "disdained to mingle with/ 
a herd, though to be leader--md of wolves./ The lion is 
alone, and so am I." Even the reasons that Lord Manfred 
to seek solitude are reminiscent of Byron:

... From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, all my powers,
Rode on a stranger;

34Lefevre, pp. 472, 474.
36Lefevre, p. 474.
37Byron, Manfred, Act III, Scene 1, 11. 121-123.
38Ibid., Act II, Scene 2, 11. 144-150.
Just as Manfred became accustomed to solitude at an early age, as a child Byron was left to his own desires and was denied the restraining and guiding hand of a father. Thus, he grew to love the freedom and solitude which had been a part of his childhood. 39

Although habit was important in forming Byron's desire for solitude, his antipathy for mankind was also a significant motive. Men made him more conscious of his deformity and of his precarious social position. But besides the fact that other people often made him uncomfortable, he avoided men because he was acutely conscious of their infinite shortcomings. After reading John Locke's admonition against solitude, Byron wrote in his journal: "I can't see so much to regret in the solitude, The more I see of men, the less I like them." 40 His deep distrust of mankind was even more definite in his "Lines, Addressed to the Reverend J. T. Becher":

Dear Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind;
I do not say such a project is wise;
But retirement accords with the tone of my mind,
I will not ascend to a world I despise

I have tasted the sweets and the bitterness of love;
In friendship I early was taught to believe;
My passion the rectors of patience reprove;
I have found that a friend was profane, yet deceitive. 41

39 English Martyred, Life, Writings, Opinions, of Byron, III, 346.
A. Jain's dislike for Jews found expression in these words: "All men are intrinsical rascals, and I am only sorry that, not being a dog, I can't bite them." 42

Indeed, Byron's opinion of animals was usually much higher than his idea of human beings, whom he often regarded with the greatest contempt. His preference for animal life was stated throughout his writings. In the seventh canto of Don Juan he wrote, "Dogs, or men!—for I flatter you in saying/ That ye are dogs—your betters far..." 43 Then later in the ninth canto he described men as being inferior to jackals: "However, the poor jackals are less foul/ (As beings the lions' keen providers)/ Than human insects, catering for spiders." 44 In the second canto, Byron obviously meant his reader to be repelled by the shipwrecked crew's killing and eating of the spaniel. He seemed purposely to emphasize the "vulture" qualities of men in contrast to the weakness, dependence, and loyalty of the dog. 45 and still again in canto eight he made a comparison of the murderous soldiers to the most savage beasts of the earth: "... Scorn'd with them, / The meanest brute that roams Siberia's wild/ Has feelings pure and polished as a gem,—/ The bear

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42 [Source details here]
43 [Source details here]
44 [Source details here]
45 [Source details here]
is civilised, the wolf is wild." In a conversation with Shelley, Byron denounced his friend's idealistic view of mankind. Byron maintained:

"You might as well talk of implanting philanthropic sentiments in the child of a monkey, or tender sentiments in that of a tiger, as of developing man into an angel... In fact, one is a great deal worse than either. He is the only brute which kills for sickness or pleasure." 46

Shelley's idealism to the equality of human beings is monstrous, as it is to our own darkness, in which the only fitting is his own matter in the antithesis to the animal's sense:

He was faithful to the correct, his mark,
The birds and beasts and furnish'd a man to bay,

But with a piteous and personal morn,
For a quick seal to try, kicking the sand,
Which answer'd not with a caress--a died. 47

Aain in Sardanapalus men is described as being more fierce
tan ravens or wolves, and dogs are said to be more loyal
than men. 48 The same idea is expressed in these lines from
The Age of bronze: "Lass faithful far than the four-footed
beast. A cautious scent would lure the bipeds back." 49

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46 Byron, Don Juan, Canto VIII, 7-sca 52, ll. 716-720.
47 Shelley, Canto VIII, 7-sca 52, ll. 716-720.
48 Byron, Sardanapalus, Act I, Scene 2, ll. 923-924.
49 Byron, The Age of bronze, XIII, ll. 500-504.
Another contrast between the barbarity of men and the comparative innocence of animal life is found in *The Prophecy of Dante*:

... The nations take their prey, Iberian, Almain, Lombard, and the beast And bird, wolf, vulture, more humane than they are; these but gorge the flesh and lap the gore Of the departed and then go their way; But those, the human savages, explore All paths of torture, and insatiate yet, With Ugolino-hunger prowl for more.51

And still another expression of man's evil nature is contained in *Marino Faliero*: "... The man who dies by the adder's fang/ May have the crawler crush'd, but feels no anger: 'Twas the worm's nature; and some men are worms/ In soul, more than the living things of tombs."52 Once he told Trelawny, "Man is a two-legged reptile, crafty and venomous."53 Further evidence of his shunning of man was expressed in his letter of 1811 to Augusta: "So your Spouse likes children, that is lucky as he will have to bring them up; for my part (since I lost my Newfoundland dog), I like nobody except his successors, a Dutch Mastiff and three land Tortoises brought with me from Greece."54

At times Byron's misanthropy was manifested in his using his savage pets to frighten visitors. He was so repelled by Leigh Hunt's unbehaved children when they lived with him that he taught his bulldog to growl at them whenever they started to climb the staircase up to his living quarters. In fact, Marianne Hunt's goat lost an ear to the dog. Once when Samuel Rogers came to visit Byron, his approach to the billiard room, where Byron was waiting, was arrested by Moretto, a fierce-looking bulldog. The dog's growl terrified Rogers, much to Byron's delight, for Byron believed the visitor had written certain scandalous stories about him. Finally, Trelawny, who was no stranger to the dog, took mercy on the old poet and ushered him into Byron's presence.

Although Byron usually preferred solitude to being in the company of other human beings, whom he distrusted and felt uncomfortable with, he would regularly tire of being alone. As a man who "lived on thought more than food," he certainly needed distraction from himself and his contemplative nature. In a letter to his friend Robert Southey, Byron wrote:

56Trelawny, pp. 30-31.
57Lovell, Record of a Quest, p. 176.
58Marchand, III, 1206.
My friends fall around me, and I shall be left a lonely tree before I am withered. Other men can always take refuge in their families; I have no resource but my own reflections, and they present no prospect here or hereafter, except the selfish satisfaction of surviving my betters.59

Surely Byron recognized that he needed some companionship, for he wrote in The Giaour, "We loathe what none are left to share;/ Even bliss—'t were woe alone to bear."60 Because he should not always be alone even though he felt a need for solitude, he sought to be with those creatures that would not disturb his solitude but that would provide him company—those that would submit to his desires.61

What more ideal companionship could there be for Byron than animal life? These creatures would not drastically interrupt his thought unless he chose to let them, for they could be easily dismissed without responding with arguments or tears. Yet when he needed distraction from himself and his brooding meditation, his pets would respond to him with eager affection or playfulness or some diverting behavior to capture his attention. Such satisfaction for one's need of companionship is vividly shown in The Prisoner of Chillon, in which the prisoner, like Byron, finds comradeship with the most insignificant animal life:

59Byron, Confessions, p. 49.
60Byron, The Giaour, ll. 941-942.
61Edschmid, p. 119.
With spiders I had friendship made,  
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,  
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
And why should I feel less than they?  
We were all inmates of one place,  
And I, the monarch of each race,  
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!  
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell—62

The macaw and parrot that Byron bought in 1814 fore-shadowed his peculiar menagerie of the future, which provided him company without the misunderstandings and complications of human relationships and "an outlet for his recurrent misanthropy."63 Often feeling like a hermit among his beasts, he described moments when he was "quite alone with my books and my Maccaw [sic]." At a time when he felt unable to write, he told that his main conversation was with his "Maccaw and Bayle."64 After his tour of the Continent, he returned to Newstead, where he lived and contemplated in solitude with "no one to love but the three live tortoises from the same tombs--and a hedgehog."65 William Parry observed that in Greece Byron trusted no human being and did not have a single friend. His need for companionship was satisfied almost solely by his dog Lyon.66

The use of animals as an escape from social contact was a part of Byron's use of nature as a whole to flee from

62Byron, The Prisoner of Chillon, XIV, ll. 381-388.  
63Marchand, I, 446-447.  
64Knight, p. 8.  
65MacKenzie, p. 72  
66Lovell, His Very Self and Voice, p. 507.
human company. Often he went to nature to get his mind off something besides himself and his own thoughts, just as he used animals to relieve his dark brooding.67 Thus, his love of nature and of solitude were completely interwoven68 as was expressed in these lines from the third canto of Childe Harold:

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;

The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's form,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.69

Obviously Byron's affection for animals of all kinds was deeper than the fondness that most people feel for pets. At times he expressed more love for the members of his menagerie than for the human beings closest to him. However, it is not difficult to appreciate the reasons for this uncommon attachment to the animal kingdom. His pets aided in filling the void left by a lack of strong and healthy relationships with people. This void was to a large extent a result of his parents' failure to provide him with a secure home life, based on mutual love and regard. Society also was fickle in its love of the enigmatic poet. Of course, Byron himself was

67Lovell, Record of a Quest, p. 130.
69Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III, Verse 17, l. 109-110, 113-117.
in part responsible for his failure to establish normal connections with human beings. His refusal to accept mankind with its many faults in his attempt to assume the role of
stranger made him soon the company of his fellows. His
hypersensitivity about his blemishes drove him from healthy
contact with society, where he believed he might be more even
more conscious of his disability. His various feelings of
inadequacy, since associated with neglect, often increased,
and continually the burden of ridicule, for those did not
understand his handicap. He did not care much for family's
reputation or his own. Even when proving in society's favor
better than whom he could him, he retained is effec-
tiveness in his everyday things because they had never deserted
him.
Chapter III

Animal Symbolism in Typhon: Corruption of Human Beings and Animals

Man are usually accused of attributing to instincts some every action or course of action resembles another act. Since man is presumptuous enough to believe in an act just as little as another and animals for just a little more is this? It has been said that "the world is the mirror of man as man is the mirror of God." In his capacity of the animal kingdom, Royal Glinn concludes that emotions have most of the same feelings and sensations, including "love, hate, joy, fear, courage, revenge, pain, pleasure, hope, and satisfaction."1 Bruce Fisher also maintains that animals possess their own peculiar personalities and emotions such as love for life, anxiety, jealousy, mistrustfulness, loyalty, craft, strength, and intelligence. For example, the dog barks in a "fear-of-the," the horse is "in -stomach," a cat is love of life, and men are intellect.


Indeed, many of the great intellects of history have believed that man has no monopoly on reason. Montaigne confessed that animals are able to think and to reason, and Alexander Pope held that a cat may even "consider a man made for his service." Lord Brougham shrewdly observed this tendency in some human beings:

I know not why so much unwillingness should be shown by some excellent philosophers to allow intelligent faculties and a share of reason to the lower animals, as if our superiority was not quite sufficiently established to leave all jealousy out of view. 3

The fact that most people recognize animal-like qualities in human beings and human traits in animals is shown by the numerous expressions of comparison which have become trite from frequent use. The characteristic of slyness in men is usually likened to that of a fox. Industrious work habits in a person are often compared to the hard-laboring beavers. The cat's habit of pacing back and forth gave rise to the phrase, "nervous as a cat." Imitation, a trait common to the monkey family, was responsible for the expression, "monkey see, monkey do," which is often applied to unoriginal human beings.

Despite these evidences of man's sympathetic observation of the animal kingdom, few people are perceptive enough to make the numerous and appropriate comparisons of one creature to another that Byron made. He often compared his acquaintances to animals and frequently addressed people by names.

3Dixon, p. xxii.
which their civil duties demanded on his part.

In his youth Byron had great admiration for
his mother, and wrote a sonnet on her called
"My love." He also described his first
child, Byron, as "the first and finest child
of those people closest to me." His first
daughter, he called "Dinah." Although his
father pointedly tried to
be in all the habit of "cry," the boy continued to
associate the bird's carriage, which boy, in stupid movements with
his father. Once he called his mother "Crew." When young
George attended a circus in Athens, he saw a boudouchee: the
makut, a long-legged wading bird, perform. The crippled
bird's superior airs drew laughter from the crowd, much to
the small boy's dismay, as he too walked with a limp. Thus,
he connected the bird's irritability with his own.

Throughout his life Byron continued to identify himself
with various animals. Usually he associated himself with the
more fierce beasts of the animal world. "In the wild," he
once remarked, "I am always irritable and violent; the very
noises of the streets of a populous city affect my nerves.
I seemed, in a London house, confined,crushed, confined, and
felt like a tiger in too small a cage." 6 When he was abroad:

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4Gordon, p. 47.
5Crawford, p. 25, 38.
6Gordon, p. 3.
7Dischaid, pp. 5-35.
Gordon, p. 48.
E. W. Boscot, "The Inception and Reception of Byron's Don," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXVI (April, 1927), 110.

11 Knight, Christian Virtue, p. 7.

12 Byron, Lefond, A. II, p. 133.


14 Ma chante, I, 191.
cind'ad," like those serpents, when assailed, Byron's feel-
ings conformed all the "norities of those animal animals." 15
In describing his "severe liberty" that resulted in peculi-
arity, Byron remarked, "I have not a new skin, and in my close as-
a snake in its new suit, all.

Occasionally Byron identified himself with more gentle
animals than those just mentioned, as when he professed to be
a scalp of having only one companion for life just as the
bird and the snake have but one. 17 When he was an officer of
Sir Missolonghi, he was wont to wear a coat that was too small
for him. Perceiving the humour in his appearance, he compared
himself to an "eagle in the eagle's snug.

Just as in his childhood when he compared his mother to
a cow, he continued to associate those close to him "with
animals. He often addressed his sister Augusta as "Geese;" and
he called his wife "cold-blooded animal." 19 During the
more sublime period of their marriage, Lady Byron called her
husband "Snipe, Duck." Later when Byron wished to escape
the sentimental element connected with war, he exclaimed
that while he was "near to duck must ever wander by
himself." Also in a letter to Hobhouse, he inquired, "How

15Quennell, Self Portrait; II, 471-72.
16Byron, Letters of Byron, p. 394.
17Richardson, Byron: The Lost Plac; (London,
1941), p. 257.
18Hobhouse, p. 88. 16 to 15 to 16, Self Portrait; II, 497.
is Doug? the dog, and duck?" Once when he was lamenting his fiery relationship with his mother, he admitted to Augusta, "I am sorry to say that the old lady and myself don't agree like lambs in a meadow." Although he recognized his daughter Allegra's admirable qualities, he compared her obstinacy to that of a mule and her voraciousness to a vulture's. His first Italian mistress reminded him of an antelope, and his second resembled both a pythoness and a tigress.

Even Byron's acquaintances were not exempt from his perceptive, if not always complimentary, comparisons. He often referred to Shelley as "the Snake," an allusion to the fascination that the serpent held for the younger poet. Although Shelley's physical characteristics were not the main reason for the comparison, his slenderness, quiet motion, and glowing eyes reinforced the metaphor. Shelley's subtle mind, which is reminiscent of the serpent in Genesis, made the analogy even more accurate. Byron's contempt for his mistresses' husbands was apparent when he described Count Guiccioli as a pig and when he told Augusta that his present

21 Marchand, I, 88.  
22 Quennell, Self Portrait, II, 510.  
23 Knight, Christian Virtues, p. 7.  
24 Lovell, His Very Self and Voice, p. 271.  
25 Knight, Christian Virtues, p. 6.
mistress' husband bellowed "like a bull calf." Near Venice he admired the women who wandered about his estate, and he was attracted by the wild, uncivilized part of their natures. He referred to them as "these splendid animals." In describing Madame Contarini, Byron wrote, "Her joy at seeing me was moderately mixed with ferocity, and gave me the idea of a tigress over her recovered cubs." He reported the grandchildren of Ali Pasha to be "the prettiest little animals I ever saw," and called the Italian peasants bipedal leopards. Noting the Turkish High Admiral's fierce expression, Byron remarked that when appearing before people in his official position, his whiskers would twitch with anger as would a tiger's. Robert Southey, a poet whose writings and person Byron regarded with contempt, reminded his peer of an undesirable bird. In The Vision of Judgment Byron described him as, "A good deal like a vulture in the face,/ With a hook nose and a hawk's eye." Again in Don Juan Southey fell victim to Byron's critical mind when Byron

26Quennell, Self Portrait, II, 437.
27Du Bos, p. 39.  
wrote: "... you overstrain yourself, or so, and tumble down as a fish on deck, because they soar too high, too! And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a dry, dry!" Coleridge also failed to escape Byron's sharp wit when in Don Juan his latest poetry was said to have been as successful as the flight of a hawk "accompanied with his hue." In another of his playing moods, Byron declared that Mr. C. Dallas was so "sagacious" that the goddess of wisdom would "discard her favorite owl," and take Dallas "for a brother owl." After a visit to the zoo, the poet found further similarities between the manners of the animal kingdom and his acquaintances. A hippopotamus he found to resemble Lord Liverpool. "The brains bloomed" sounded and acted like Byron's valet, and the manners of the elephant made the poet wish it were his butler.

From comparison of animals to his friends, relatives, and acquaintances, Byron extended his analogies to the world and mankind in general. Observing that all men have something of the fierce in them, he made the following analysis of human nature:

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33 Byron, Don Juan, Canto IV, III. 74-75.
34 Ibid., II, II. 13-14.
35 Byron, Mr. C. Dallas.
36 Knight, Christian Virtues, p. 6.
do you ever observe that all people in a violent rage
think or act in the same fashion? we will see
so in their acts? I have particularly remarked this,
and it agrees far more with my experience, than it does
much of the animal and the ferocious in our natures.\textsuperscript{37}

in \textit{Don Juan}, byron observed that great men are destroyed
by less than just as insects disturb the lion.\textsuperscript{38} such
parallels between men and beasts are especially frequent in
\textit{Don Juan}. the poet remarked that men "like the shark and
tiger, must have prey."\textsuperscript{39} in describing hadith's father,
byron comments that a father's anger with his offspring is
more difficult to assuage than "the useless tigress in her
jum is raging."\textsuperscript{40} in the same work the poet perceived that
"men follow their leaders as cattle,"\textsuperscript{41} and that the power that
great men have over common people is like the bull's sway
over the heifer or the dog's heeling of a blind man.\textsuperscript{42}

the statement of the bull's domination of a herd is an
eexample of byron's accuracy in describing the habits of the
mammal kingdom. in another part of \textit{Don Juan}, he remarks
that bulls live just as we do. some men choose to live in
locks, as birds like the crow and the gull prefer.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Don Juan}, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Don Juan}, Part II, scene 1, l. 137.
\textsuperscript{39}byron, \textit{Don Juan}, Part II, verse 1, l. 36.
\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Don Juan}, Part III, verse 1, l. 407.
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Don Juan}, Part V, verse 8, l. 126.
\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Don Juan}, Part III, verse 1, l. 3 - 4, 304.
Other people like to live in pairs, as do "the sweetest song-birds." And a few admirable creatures elect to spend their lives in solitude like the soaring eagle.\(^{43}\) Byron's greatest respect was certainly for the loner, an attitude which was not unlike that of a modern scientist. According to the zoologist Munro Fox,

> Herding animals are of all the higher animals the most devoid of social instincts; maternal care is with them poorly developed, they are lacking in affection and sympathy, they are the most stupid of quadrupeds, and are in every respect greatly inferior to the solitary carnivores.\(^{44}\)

Thus, perhaps Byron's need to be alone was evidence of his highly developed social feelings. In any case, he was observant enough of animals to be aware of their practices and to recognize the nobler members of the animal kingdom.

Again in *Don Juan* Byron demonstrated his keen understanding of the needs and habits of all animals, including man. All creatures, he maintained, desire as well as require a place of shelter. Like men who yearn for their homes, a baby bird longs for its mother's protective wings, and the "o'erlabour'd steer" looks forward to the end of the day when he can rest in his stall.\(^{45}\)

Besides being entertaining, Byron's comparisons usually contain a ring of truth. Certainly there is an element of

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\(^{43}\)Ibid., Canto IV, Verse 28, ll. 221-224.

\(^{44}\)Packard, p. 192.

accuracy in the following lines: "The world is a bundle of hay,/ Mankind are the asses who pull,/ Each tugs it a different way."46 A poet who is addicted to writing consistently bad verse, such as the one described in Hints from Horace, would probably be "fear'd like a bear just bursting from his cage!"47 What man who has had to refuse a lady's request would deny that the frustration of a lady whose will is rejected is similar to a "tigress robb'd of young."48 Again, how frequently does one meet an individual such as "the honourable Mrs. Sleep,/ Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep"?49 Moreover, there is probably a familiar echo that sounds from these lines in which Byron evaluated a rather nonsensical lecturer: "I'd inoculate sooner my wife with the slaver/ Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two hours/ To the torrent of trash which around him he pours."50 Another amusing, though fairly precise, comparison that Byron made in Don Juan concerned the fluttering, excited ladies of the harem in canto seven. According to the poet, they were flinging their arms about "as hens their wings about their young."51

46Byron, "The World Is a Bundle of Hay."
47Byron, Hints from Horace, ll. 833-838.
48Byron, Don Juan, Canto V, Verse 132, l. 1049.
49Ibid., Canto XIII, Verse 79, ll. 631-632.
50Byron, The Blues, Eclogue I, ll. 47-49.
51Byron, Don Juan, Canto VII, Verse 67, l. 536.
Despite some such ridiculing pictures of womanhood, most of the women in Byron's poetry were likened to more graceful and attractive creatures than hens. Because he admired the characteristics of "gentleness of the antelope" and "timidity of the gazelle" in women, many girls were compared to animals such as these. In her frustrated love for Juan, Gulbeyaz, the Turkish sultana

... stood a moment as a Pythoness
Stands on her tripod, agonised, and full
Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
The heart asunder.53

Again in Don Juan Byron described certain women as possessing a combination of suppleness and wild beauty. The girls of Cadiz reminded him of "an Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb/New broke, a cameleopard, a gazelle." The poet had a particular weakness for dark eyes and frequently compared a woman's eyes to those of a gazelle. In The Giaour he likened Leila's dark, penetrating eyes to the eyes of that graceful animal, and also in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage he described the wild eyes of Ianthe as resembling those of a gazelle.56

52Origo, p. 175.
53Byron, Don Juan, Canto VI, Verse 107, ll. 849-853.
54Ibid., Canto II, Verse 6, ll. 41-42.
56Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, "To Ianthe," l. 28.
Some of the heroes in Byron's poetry were compared to certain beasts, a majority of them being strong and wild animals. In the third canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Napoleon was described as a lion, and the nations which defeated him were said to be wolves. In these comparisons it is evident that Byron employed the analogies of animals in order to pass a value judgment on the human characters. Thus, when he wrote, "Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we/ Pay the Wolf homage?" Byron was favoring Napoleon over his enemies, since the lion is considered to be a nobler animal than the wolf.

Such comparison for the purpose of evaluating the characters was frequently used by the poet. The stranger in The Deformed Transformed likened Arnold's unworthiness to the meanest game that is left by the pettiest hunter. Furthermore, the stranger maintained that he should have sought a greater man to insult, just as men seek such animals as a lion or boar or wolf. In this analogy the stranger, speaking for the poet, gave Arnold the value of some small prey in comparison to more desirable, larger game. In Werner Ulric chided his father for aiding the Hungarian and told him what to expect as a reward; Gabor, Ulric said, would repay him

57Ibid., Canto III, Verse 19, ll. 168-169.
58Byron, The Deformed Transformed, Part I, Scene 1, ll. 124-126.
"like the wolf."\textsuperscript{59} Ulric was later said by a retainer of the court to be "strong and beautiful as a young tiger."\textsuperscript{60} Using animals as metaphors, Byron emphasized Marino Faliero's noble nature as contrasted with his contemptible colleagues:

\begin{quote}
\textit{... Thy vile accomplices have died}
\textit{The dog's death, and the wolf's; but thou shalt fall}
\textit{As falls the lion by the hunters, girt}
\textit{By those who feel a proud compassion for thee,}
\textit{And mourn even the inevitable death}
\textit{Provoked by thy wild wrath and regal fierceness.}\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

The physical action of the male characters in Byron's poetry was often described as being like that of powerful beasts. Ulric's prowess in battle was likened to the boar's "... gnashing/ His tusks and ripping up from right to left/
The howling hounds."\textsuperscript{62} When Ulric pressed Idenstein with the necessity for quick action, he used this analogy: "Your great men/ Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound/ Of the stung steed replies unto the spur."\textsuperscript{63} While Werner thought himself like a deer seeking protection from the hunters, Gabor believed that he more resembled a maimed lion searching for "his cool cave." Gabor told him, "... Methinks/

\textsuperscript{59}Byron, Werner, Act III, Scene 4, l. 523.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., Act IV, Scene 1, l. 24.
\textsuperscript{61}Byron, Marino Faliero, Act V, Scene 1, ll. 564-469.
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., ll. 30-32.
\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., Act III, Scene 1, ll. 285-286.
You rather look like one would turn at bay,/ And rip the hunter's entrails."64

Still another comparison of the energy of men to that of animals is in Don Juan, in which the Russian army, "like a lion from his den,/ Marched forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay."65

Certain animals seemed to have been Byron's favorites for comparing to human beings. Of course, such beasts as the lion, wolf, and gazelle were frequently used as parallels to men. But almost as habitual was Byron's utilization of various birds as representative of certain traits or actions of people. According to Shem in Heaven and Earth, Japhet tarried near Anah's tents "like a dove round and round its pillaged nest."66 This was an especially effective description of Japhet, since he was in love with Anah, who was in love with an angel. Such hovering near the object of one's affection, particularly when that affection is not returned, is surely not foreign to reality. When engaged in the battle defending Rome in The Deformed Transformed, Caesar described the first Roman who fell as "the first bird of the covey! he has fallen/ On the outside of the nest."67 Other images of

64Ibid., I1. 5-9.
65Byron, Don Juan, Canto VIII, Verse 2, I1. 11-12.
66Byron, Heaven and Earth, Act I, Scene 2, I. 247.
67Byron, The Deformed Transformed, Part II, Scene 1, I1. 164-165.
birds were employed in \textit{Werner} when Gabor said, "Tomorrow I will try the waters as/ The dove did. . . ."\textsuperscript{68} and when Haidee in \textit{Don Juan} "flew to her young mate like a young bird."\textsuperscript{69} Again in the eulogy of Kirke White, Byron compared him to an eagle that was struck by an arrow "feathered from his own wing."\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{In \textit{The Vision of Judgment} Byron's allusions to birds not only furnished vivid description of the characters but also provided the poem with clever humor. Instead of comparing birds and human beings, Byron heightened the wit by using images of birds to describe heavenly beings. In order to relate the angels' fear of Satan, the poet employed this graphic picture of the holy creatures: "The very cherubs huddled all together,/ Like birds when soars the falcon."\textsuperscript{71} Later Byron laughingly likened the shouts of Satan's witnesses for the soul of King George to the cries of wild geese.\textsuperscript{72}

In addition to his numerous allusions to birds, Byron often saw similarities between men and snakes. Several times the poet observed that the stare of a human being could be as

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{68}Byron, \textit{Werner}, Act III, Scene 1, ll. 49-50.
\item\textsuperscript{69}Byron, \textit{Don Juan}, Canto II, Verse 190, l. 1518.
\item\textsuperscript{70}John Galt, \textit{The Life of Lord Byron} (New York, 1841), p. 179.
\item\textsuperscript{71}Byron, \textit{The Vision of Judgment}, XXVI, ll. 201-202.
\item\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., LVIII, l. 462.
\end{itemize}
awe-inspiring as the look of a snake. In telling his wife of the man who had cheated him out of his inheritance, Werner pictured him as "this cold and creeping kinsman, who so long/ Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon/ The fluttering bird."\(^7\) Later when Werner met his "creeping kinsman," Stralenheim, the two men looked at each other with repugnance "as snakes and lions shrink back from each other/ By secret instinct that both must be foes."\(^7\) Again in \textit{The Giaour} the lure of the Caloyer's frightening gaze was like the fearful fascination that the snake holds for a bird.\(^7\) The Bourbon in \textit{The Deformed Transformed} also found Caesar's words and actions to be "snake-like."\(^7\)

Occasionally Byron alluded to snakes when describing mental activities rather than physical appearances. For example, in \textit{Don Juan} he compared man's gradual loss of idealism to the snake's yearly shedding of "its bright skin."\(^7\) During the time when he was involved in writing \textit{The Giaour}, he referred to the work as "this snake of a poem which has been lengthening its rattles every month."\(^7\)

\(^7\)Byron, \textit{Werner}, Act I, Scene 1, ll. 83-85.

\(^7\)Ibid., Act II, Scene 1, ll. 278-279.

\(^7\)Byron, \textit{The Giaour}, ll. 837-842.

\(^7\)Byron, \textit{The Deformed Transformed}, Part I, Scene 2, ll. 304-305.

\(^7\)Byron, \textit{Don Juan}, Canto V, Verse 21, ll. 166-168.

\(^7\)Byron, \textit{The Works of Lord Byron}, edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, II (New York, 1918), 389.
It is clear that animals had a much greater significance for Byron than just being objects of his affection and helping to provide him with amusement, companionship, and security. The animal kingdom also made the world and the people in it more understandable to him. Thoughts and deeds of violence, despair, beauty, antipathy, submission, and truth in human beings had their counterparts in the world of animals. The physical characteristics and gestures of men he saw as being reflections of lesser creatures. Because of his perceptive observation of animal life, Byron was able to make it easier for his readers to view the significance in the world with more perspective and to recognize the kinship of all living creatures. Certainly man needs to realize that he has no monopoly on hope and loyalty, and at the same time he should know that animals are not the only creatures that occasionally look ludicrous and act in a ridiculous manner. Byron's awareness of these facts makes the study of his life and work valuable.
CHAPTER IV

ANIMAL SYMBOLISM IN BYRON: ANIMALS AS SYMBOLS OF IDEAS

The significance that Byron attached to animal life went even deeper than his recognition of an affinity between human beings and animals. To the poet, various kinds of animals were symbolic of certain ideas that were of special import to him. The kinds of animals that he delighted in most and his description of them indicated many of his own personal beliefs and sentiments.

Part of the appeal that animals held for Byron was in their unrestrained strength and dynamic energy and in their uncivilized, unaffected nature. He had the greatest admiration and respect for these qualities, whether in man or beast. Once he described the escape in Venice of an elephant that destroyed a shop, took its keeper's life, and ultimately had to be shot. When Byron approached the elephant, he barely missed being hit by the hurling beams that the animal had tossed. Nevertheless, he admired the animal's great strength and lamented the necessity of its death.¹ He relished the use of warfare terms to describe a struggle between the dog Matz and a mountain pig. According to his description,

¹Knight, pp. 6-7.
"The pig was thrown into confusion and compelled to retire with great disorder," but it later turned around and "drove Matz from all his positions, with such slaughter that nothing but night prevented a total defeat."\(^2\)

Byron seemed particularly fond of ferocious animals and was seldom concerned about injuries that they inflicted on him. In sailing from Genoa, his night was spent calming the horses that had broken their fetters and were kicking each other in fright from the storm.\(^3\) At Harrogate he owned a fierce bull-mastiff named Nelson in addition to Boatswain, his Newfoundland dog. Although Nelson was usually muzzled, on at least one occasion Byron had him brought to his room and the muzzle removed. A wrestling bout ensued in which dog and master made shambles of the room. Whenever Nelson and Boatswain encountered one another, they immediately attacked each other and could be separated only by the combined efforts of Byron, his servants, and guests. Once when Nelson refused to release his grip on a horse's throat, the dog had to be shot, much to his master's consternation. In a description of another of his dogs, the poet wrote: "Savage ought to be immortal; not a thorough-bred bull-dog, he is the finest puppy I ever saw, and will answer much better; in his great and manifold kindness he has already bitten my fingers."\(^4\)

\(^2\)Byron, Lord Byron's Correspondence, edited by John Murray, II (New York, 1922), 50.

\(^3\)Knight, p. 5.

\(^4\)Byron, Letters and Journals, pp. 61-62, 86.
Apparently Byron never had any real fear of animals, for he had no qualms about keeping fierce creatures for pets. C. S. Mathews warned those who visited Newstead Abbey that they would be greeted by a bear and a wolf.\(^5\) In a letter to Thomas Moore in 1820, Byron wrote this account of two of his rather unusual beasts:

> I have just been scolding my monkey for tearing the seal of her letter, and spoiling a mock book, in which I put rose leaves. I had a civet-cat the other day, too; but it ran away, after scratching my monkey's cheek, and I am in search of it still. It was the fierest beast I ever saw . . . \(^6\)

The fascination that such wild animals held for Byron was also reflected in much of his poetry. Besides using his own personal experience with untamed animals as a source of vivid pictures of wild life, probably the poet was also influenced by some of the graphic scenes that he observed during his travels on the Continent. One evening on their way to Marathon by way of Rapthi, Byron and the somewhat disreputable travelers with him saw a large "dun-coloured wolf" on the shore. Such an impressive figure amid the romantic surroundings was surely a picture that Byron long remembered and perhaps helped to form some of his later imagery of the untamed and the uncivilized. When visiting Constantinople near the Palace of the Sultans, Byron viewed

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\(^5\)Ibid., p. 135.

\(^6\)Knight, p. 6.
two dogs feasting on a dead body, a picture that was to become dramatized in *The Siege of Corinth.*

Description of the wild, untamed energy of animals abounds in Byron's poetry. Such brute strength is vividly portrayed by the enraged bull in the bullfight scene in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:*

> Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,  
> And, wildly staring, spurns with sounding foot  
> The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:  
> Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit  
> His first attack, wide waving to and fro  
> His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

A similar picture of untamed strength and power is represented by the black horses in *The Deformed Transformed:*

> The mighty stream, which volumes high  
> From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;  
> And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel  
> Around their manes, as common insects swarm  
> Round common steeds toward sunset.

Again in the same poem, several different kinds of animals contribute to the general picture of dynamic animal vitality:

> But the hound bayeth loudly  
> The boar's in the wood,  
> And the falcon longs proudly  
> To spring from her hood:  
> On the wrist of the noble  
> She sits like a crest,  
> And the air is in trouble  
> With birds from their nest.

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7Galt, pp. 117-118, 144.
9Byron, *The Deformed Transformed,* Part I, Scene 1, ll. 512-516.
10Ibid., Part III, Scene 1, ll. 35-41.
The horse on which Mazeppa is bound is another representative of untamed strength, for "... he was wild, / Wild as the wild deer, and untaught, / With spur and bridle undefiled—. / And snorting, with erected mane." Images of powerful animals are also used in The Siege of Corinth in order to intensify the atmosphere of unrestrained strength in the description of the storm against the wall of Corinth:

The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein; Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane; White is the foam of their clamp on the bit:

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost who rush on his strength but to die.12

Another picture of animal energy is "a war-horse at the trumpet's sound,/ A lion roused by heedless hound," in The Bride of Abydos,13 and in Werner the essence of the untamed is described as a savage Indian or a tiger.14

Such fondness for wildness was a manifestation of Byron's personal rebellion—against his childhood religion, the more effete qualities of romantic literature, and Western civilization itself.15 He was a man who wished to be controlled by

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11 Byron, Mazeppa, IX, ll. 362-364, 366.
12 Byron, The Siege of Corinth, XXII, ll. 698-700; XXIII, ll. 723-728.
14 Byron, Werner, Act II, Scene 1, ll. 136-137.
15 Lovell, Record of a Quest, p. 24.
nothing except his own desires, and he often flaunted social conventions to demonstrate his un gover nable nature. In him, "the wish—which ages have not yet subdued/ In man—to have no master save his mood,"\textsuperscript{16} was present in a rather extreme form.

In revolting against civilization, he turned to its antithesis—wild nature, a fact illustrated by his plan to become a small planter in the United States or South America.\textsuperscript{17} Because of his rebellious nature, he was in his element when describing the wild, overwhelming forces of nature. Such vivid pictures of raw nature were akin to Byron's un submissive mind. His love of untouched nature was also related to his anti-social sentiment, for the great mountains and seashores that he loved most were uninhabitable because of their wildness. The uncontrollability of the ocean was dear to the poet, just as was a fierce storm.\textsuperscript{18} The love of the untamed element in nature was incorporated into much of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, in which he uttered this conviction:

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,  
Though alway\textsuperscript{[sic]} changing, in her aspect mild;  
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\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldOTS
Though I have mark'd her when none other hath,  
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in  
wraith. 19

Again in the same canto, Byron described the wild mountain  
scene, which has been so dear to him since his childhood:

... and, as the clouds along them break  
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer:  
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak,  
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear. 20

Because the fundamental trait in Byron's character was  
defiance, particularly of hypocrisy, the fetters of a con- 
ventional society, and tyranny, 21 he expressed admiration  
and awe of the wild creatures of nature, which had not  
relinquished their freedom to men. Such animals as untamed  
horses and certain birds, especially the eagle, were to  
Byron symbolic of unrestraint and liberty, which the poet  
believed were essential to life. He tried to escape the  
shackles of the world and of society, just as many of the  
animals he described fled from any attempts of men to limit  
their freedom. In Mazeppa wild horses represented the  
essence of liberty, for their strong, dynamic bodies had not  
been marked by the taming devices of mankind:

The steeds rush on in plunging pride;  
But where are they the reins to guide?  
A thousand horse—and none to ride!  
With flowing tail, and flying mane,  
Wide nostrils never stretch'd by pain,  
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,

19Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto II, Verse 37,  
11. 324-325, 328-332.


21Brecknock, p. 167.
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur on rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free.22

The horse that Mazeppa was tied to also refused to submit to the wishes of men, particularly his reluctant rider:

... his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he past--
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild.23

The Age of Bronze contains several descriptions of animals that reassert their unsubmissive natures after escaping man's control. The old white stallion that is thought to have been tame though spirited "is apt at last/To stumble, kick, and now and then stick fast/With his great self and rider in the mud." The horse is "unwieldy," for the "saddle-girths" are still not wholly certain to remain fastened.24

In the same poem is expressed the poet's joy at the escape of an eagle from imprisonment:

Sigh to behold the eagle's lofty rage
Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;
Smile—for the fetter'd eagle breaks his chain,
And higher worlds than this are his again.25

Further images of freedom represented by birds are found in The Siege of Corinth. A vivid picture of the eagle, whose liberty to soar above the destruction caused by the siege

22Byron, Mazeppa, XVII, ll. 676-684.
23Ibid., XII, ll. 510-511, 515-517.
contrasts with the chaos and confusion of the men below, is described in these lines:

With sudden wing and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun,
The clouds beneath him seem'd so dun;
Their smoke assailed his started beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek.26

In the same poem, the free and far-ranging flight of birds symbolizes Byron's fierce insistence upon freedom of thought and the great range and sweep of his ideas:

My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
And bear my spirit back again
Over the earth, and through the air,
A wild bird and a wanderer.27

Other poems are full of images of birds representing this love of liberty. In Don Juan, Juan asserts his determination to love only when he is free. He refuses to submit to the Sultana's desire for his love, just as "the prison'd eagle will not pair." 28 An allusion to the difficulty in capturing an eagle, a bird that will not easily relinquish its freedom, is made in Werner when Ulric maintains that "nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so." 29 The bird that perches on the window of the prisoner's dungeon in The Prisoner of Chillon sings beautifully and joyously,

26Byron, The Siege of Corinth, XXXIII, ll. 1073-1078.
27Ibid., Introduction, ll. 36-39.
28Byron, Don Juan, Canto V, Verse 126, l. 1007.
29Byron, Werner, Act III, Scene 1, l. 163.
as if to describe its happiness at being free, "knowing well captivity."  

Because of Byron's love of freedom—freedom to think and to act as he pleased, he often expressed contempt for civilization itself, for he believed that the conventions of society hampered the liberty of the individual. Once he even wrote, "I hate civilization." In keeping with his rebellious attitude, he denounced established systems of thought, whether secular or religious, because of their existence as systems.  

One of Byron's few constant attitudes was dissatisfaction with a counterfeit society, a sentiment expressed by many of his Byronic heroes. In The Bride of Abydos, Selim voiced the idea that "his life on the sea and his tent ashore" were "more than cities" to him and that sumptuousness and depravity came "when cities cage us in." Similarly, Conrad in The Corsair had been "warp'd by the world," where he was "doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe." Likewise, Lara's heart had been "not by nature hard." In describing the tragedy in the love of Haidee and Juan, Byron blamed the ills of civilization for the unhappy ending:

31Lovell, Record of a Quest, pp. 25, 59.
32Ibid., p. 69.
The world was not for them, nor the world's art

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care.33

Further evidences of Byron's love of the uncivilized and
disgust with sophisticated society are apparent in his poetry. After describing the serenity of a life untouched by social conventions, the author of Don Juan began sketching the characteristics of civilization:

So much for Nature:—by way of variety,
Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
And the sweet consequence of large society,
War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,
The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
The millions slain by soldiers for their ration.34

In the eighth canto of the poem, Byron wandered from his subject of the siege of Ismail to an idyllic discussion of the life of the group of American frontiersmen under the leadership of Daniel Boone,35 a digression which demonstrated his preoccupation with the uncivilized life. As a naturalist, Byron was attracted to a forest more than to a garden, to any natural scene rather than to an artificial one.36 In the following lines from The Giaour, he exhibited his scorn for

33Byron, Don Juan, Canto IV, Verse 27, l. 213; Verse 28, ll. 217-220.

34Ibid., Canto VIII, Verse 68, ll. 537-542.


36Brandes, p. 334.
any change that man makes in nature and for man's thoughtlessness in defacing natural beauties:

Strange—that where Nature loved to trace,  
As if for Gods, a dwelling place,  
And every charm and grace hath mix'd  
Within the paradise she fix'd.  
There man, enamour'd of distress,  
Should mar it into wilderness,  
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower  
That tasks not one laborious hour.37

It is significant that Byron's first journeys were to countries which were culturally undeveloped, regions where the individual was comparatively unaffected by social convention. Such countries and people were alluring to the poet, for he felt a kinship with them.38 It seems certain that his love of animals was a manifestation of his love of nature, for these creatures were probably even more representative of the natural and the uncivilized than the people he saw during his travels. Often Byron used references to animals in order to enliven or unify a description of the untrammeled beauties of nature. In Don Juan, Haidee, "a child of Nature," was said to be "like the fawn, which, in the lake display'd,/ Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass."39 The poet's love of the untouched beauty of the mountains was compared to the eagle's love of such wild scenes in nature.40 In The Island the mutineers fleeing from punishment were compared to untamed

37 Byron, The Giaour, ll. 46-53.  
38 Brandes, p. 271.  
39 Byron, Don Juan, Canto VI, Verse 60, ll. 475, 477-478.  
40 Byron, Werner, Act IV, Scene 1, ll. 222-223.
animals, which try to shun men. "Like wild beasts," the revolting men "sought the wild,/ As to a mother's bosom flies the child." But men fail to elude each other just as "vainly wolves and lions seek their den."\(^{41}\)

Closely related to Byron's dislike of urban society was his great respect for honesty. Even in his writings he emphasized accuracy and a sense of authenticity in description, for he insisted on describing what he had seen rather than fabricating what he had not seen.\(^{42}\) In *Don Juan* he maintained that despite the consequences, truth was the objective in his writing:

> Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction: She gathers a repertory of facts, Of course with some reserve and slight restriction, But mostly sings of human things and acts-- And that's one cause she meets with contradiction; For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts; And were her object only what's call'd glory, With more ease too she'd tell a different story.\(^{43}\)

Not only was he truthful in his writing, but he was also honest in describing himself.\(^{44}\) Once when he was evaluating his past conduct, he confessed his frequent lack of morality and propriety.\(^{45}\) In Albania he admitted, "I am vastly happy and childish."\(^{46}\)

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\(^{41}\)Byron, *The Island*, Canto III, Verse 1, ll. 15-58.

\(^{42}\)Lovell, *Record of a Quest*, pp. 97, 99.


\(^{44}\)Lovell, *Record of a Quest*, p. 230.


\(^{46}\)Quennell, *Years of Fame*, p. 17.
Throughout Byron's life his contempt for pretensions and deceit was revealed in his writings as well as in his conversations. On one occasion he remarked that since only the peasant class of Greece spoke the truth, that group was the only one worthy of military protection. Members of other classes were more enslaved, for they said what was expected and not what was true. He viewed London society as a superficial cover for the vulgarity and dissipation of the previous Georgian era. He once said, and truthfully so, that "there are but two sentiments to which I am constant,—a strong love of liberty, and a detestation of cant, and neither is calculated to gain me friends." Certainly Byron's refusal to conceal what many people feel but hide or do not recognize was one of his most provoking traits, and such a quality probably did alienate him from many less honest people. However, the poet was very likely not disappointed at losing the friendships of such people, for his admiration of complete integrity led him to prefer friends with this quality, such as John Hobhouse.

It seems entirely logical to assume that his respect for honesty was another reason that he often preferred animals to men. Surely not many men are above occasional deceit, but

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47Parry, pp. 166. 48Symons, p. 166. 49Marchand, III, 1066. 50Ibid., I, ix. 51Blessington, p. 102.
animals are not associated with this offense. Thus, just as 
animals stood for the free and the natural, which were so 
important to the poet, they were also more representative 
of truth than men were.

Although the following lines are addressed to a Quaker 
girl, they are even more applicable to a faithful dog. Even 
though Byron was perhaps not intentionally alluding to an 
animal (particularly a dog) in this passage, the possibility 
that he was doing so unconsciously is strong in view of his 
well-known feelings concerning the sincerity or the empathic 
qualities of dogs:

The tongue in flattering falsehood deals,
And tells a tale it never feels;
Deceit the guilty lips impart,
And hush the mandates of the heart;
But soul's interpreters, the eyes,
Spurn such restraint and scorn disguise.52

Certainly an animal is the only creature that does not deceive 
with his lips and tongue, and a dog lover would probably 
maintain that a dog reflects more honest feeling through his 
eyes than do most men. Such a sentiment has some scientific 
basis, for François Bourlière, an eminent zoologist, emphasizes 
the importance of the eyes and the facial expression in 
communications between wolves and similar creatures.53 In 
another poem Byron seemed to make a comparable allusion when 
an honest soul stimulated him to write,

52Byron, "To a Beautiful Quaker," ll. 15-20.

53François Bourlière, The Natural History of Mammals 
(New York, 1904), p. 231.
Ah, joyous season! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie;
When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye. 54

Despite the fact that these lines are spoken to a young friend, they readily suggest to one who has studied Byron's complex attitude toward animals the picture of a devoted dog, whose love for his master cannot be verbally expressed but is nevertheless clearly seen in his eyes.

Thus, animals were to Byron symbolic of various qualities of the uncivilized—wild, untamed energy, freedom of thought and action, unaffectedness, and honesty. But there was another idea represented by many animals that was as important to him as was that of the natural and the untamed. Although he respected ferocity in animals, he had an inherent compassion for their many weaknesses and sufferings, a sympathy that was extended to all frail and misfortunate creatures. Although Claire Clairmont was not an unbiased judge of Byron's character, she did shrewdly observe this peculiar tendency in the poet's personality when she told him:

I have observed one thing in you that I like; it is this: let a person depend on you, let them be utterly weak and defenseless, having no protector but yourself and you infallibly grow fond of that person. How kind and gentle you are to Children! How good-tempered and considerate towards your servants, how accommodating even to your dogs! And all this because you are sole master and lord; because there is no disputing your power you become merciful and just. 55

54 Byron, "To a Youthful Friend," II. 29-32.

55 Marchand, II, 731.
Examples of Byron's compassion for weak or dependent animals are numerous. In a note from his Swiss Journal, he described a boy followed by a small goat. When the animal was unable to cross a fence, the poet attempted to help it, although he nearly spilled himself and the animal into the near-by river. He once bought a monkey in Pisa because he saw it treated badly. After the revolt in Ravenna failed and Countess Teresa Guiccioli begged him to meet her in Pisa, Byron delayed because he was afraid the roads were too rough for his elegant horses. He always showed more concern for the horses than for Teresa's wishes. She wrote of him, "Tears of mental or physical suffering make him almost ill—the dread of treading on an ant makes him go out of his way."

Byron's sympathy for dependent creatures was once angrily demonstrated when he was picnicking with a large company near Genoa. When Colonel Carr's dog with muddy feet jumped up on his master's white-clad knee, Carr knocked the dog down with his fist and then broke one of the animal's ribs by kicking it. Watching the scene with horror and growing pale with indignation, Byron said to the Colonel, "My God, sir, you are either mad, or the greatest brute I ever saw in my life." He then picked up the injured creature, found its rib fractured, and said to Captain Stewart, "A bad master to a dumb animal is very unfit to command men." Byron entrusted

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56Knight, pp. 5, 11.
the dog to the monks, whom he rewarded for their trouble, and then abruptly left the gathering. Until the next day, he remained alone in his room. Later he asked pardon for his rudeness in shutting himself up but at the same time declared, "Colonel Carr's brutal conduct would have discomposed an angel." 57

Although Byron had maintained that one should always eat a goose at Michaelmas, in a letter to Teresa he showed a subtle hesitation by asking that the geese not be killed because he would be delayed. When it was time to kill them, he would not consent and decided to keep them, supposedly to verify the belief in their long life span. From then on, the geese had free run of the yard and followed Byron wherever he went. When he started for Greece, he left them with his banker and informed the gentleman that he intended to keep the geese for the rest of their lives. 58

As might be expected, Byron took no part in hunting. In 1804 he complained that the only pleasure of some of the neighbors, who were in his opinion closely akin to savages, was in blood sports. In later years his repugnance increased, and he wrote, "I hate all field sports." 59 His hatred of the

57 An English gentleman, Life, Writings, Opinions of Byron, III, 69-70.
58 Teresa Guiccioli, My Recollections of Lord Byron, I (New York, 1869), 388-389.
59 Knight, p. 11.
cruelty of killing animals for sport was emphasized in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, in which he condemned the sport of bull-fighting because the pleasure derived from it is based upon the shedding of blood and "another's pain." In Don Juan he reiterated his denunciation of sports at the expense of other creatures:

And angling, too, that solitary vice,
Whatever Isaak Walton sings or says,
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.61

In a note to the last line, Byron wrote, "No angler can be a good man." Once in a letter he even chided Teresa for having become a "huntress."62 In his journal on March 20, 1814, he expressed his most definite attitude toward field sports:

The last bird I ever fired at was an eaglet, . . . It was only wounded, and I tried to save it, the eye was so bright; but it pined, and died in a few days; and I never did since, and never will, attempt the death of another bird.63

Byron did not waver from these principles even when they contradicted his best interests to appear as a man of steel, as when he was associated with the revolutionary movement in Ravenna. In a trial of marksmanship, in which he excelled, the poet refused in front of guests to participate when the

60Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto I, Verse 30, ll. 792-794.
61Byron, Don Juan, Canto XIII, Verse 106, ll. 845-848.
62Origo, p. 197.
63Knight, p. 12.
target was a living bird. Suffering because of his compas-
sion for animals was characteristic of Byron, as well as of
his character. Cain, for one of the causes of British social
antipathy to him was his dislike of blood sports.64

Sympathy for helpless and suffering creatures is also
typical of many of the Byronic heroes. The story of Cain is
centered on the idea of animal slaughter, for the major
character's offense is that of Byron—resistance to the
accepted practice. Although he consents to offer fruits,
Cain refuses to yield blood to God. Because God accepts
Abel's gift of a lamb but rejects Cain's sacrificial fruits,
Cain rebels against what he thinks is the Almighty's thirst
for blood. Defiantly he asks:

... what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers which
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? ... 65

Cain's sensitivity to the pain and suffering of helpless
creatures is further evident when he describes the agony of
"a lamb stung by a reptile." "The poor suckling/ Loy foaming
on the earth, beneath the vein/ And piteous bleating of its
restless dam."66 Juan is another figure who is repelled by
the ill-treatment of weak beings, for he "hated cruelty,

64Ibid.
65Byron, Cain, Act III, Scene 1, ll. 298-303.
66Ibid., Act II, Scene 2, ll. 495-487.
So till men hate/ blood, until heated—and even then has \( \ast \)/
At times would curl on a bone heavy green.\(^{67}\)
Similarly, the emperor in *Sardanapalus* declines to adopt the accepted
standards concerning blood sports and conquest, and he
declares, ". . . I hate all pain, I given or received. . . ."
A comparable attitude is exhibited by Gertrud, one of the
compatriots against Marino Faliero, for he has ". . . net/
Yet I would to think of indiscriminate murder/ Almost same sense of shuddering."\(^{69}\)

Success of Byron's keen awareness of the sufferings of
animals, expressions of killing for and in animal life are
frequent in his work. The *Sibyl* contains abundant examples
of Byron's insight into and compassion for the suffering of
animals, such as his description of a lioness killed for her
young cubs: "the man the hunter's hand hath wrong/ From
Forest—gave her shrinking, young, and calls the lonely lioness."
Throughout the poem, various forms of animal life are evoked
with keen feelings. The poet finds joy in the "Lyric vitali-
ties" of the animal kingdom when he glimpses a "butterfly,
. . . rising on its purple wing/ The insect dance of morning
spring," no being pursued by a boy. Its elusive beauty will
outreach the "panting heart," or if captured "with wound's\(^{69}\)

\(^{67}\)Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto VIII, Verse 55, ll. 437-440.

\(^{68}\)Byron, *Sardanapalus*, Act I, Scene 1, ll. 355-356.

wing, or bleeding breast,/ Ah! where shall either victim
rest?/ Can this with faded pinion soar/ From rose to tulip
as before?"70 In the same poem is found Byron's sympathy for
universal suffering which is a result of too close a contact
with the world and of loss of innocence:

Woe waits the insect and the maid;
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play, and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that woo'd its stay
Hath brush'd its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'T is left to fly or fall alone.

No gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.71

The poet also is moved to deep sympathy, if not to horror, by
the suffering of the legendary scorpion, singed with fire and
struggling to inflict itself with its own venom.

In circle narrowing as it glows
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly search'd by thousand throes;
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows;
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain.72

70G. Wilson Knight, "The Two Eternities," Byron: A
Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Paul West (Englewood

71Byron, The Giaour, ll. 401-409, 416-421.

72Ibid., ll. 422-434.
Don Juan also contains several expressions of compassion for the agonies and misfortunes of various animals, as in the description of the exhausted post-horses and the picture of the camel with its feet burned by the hot desert sand.\textsuperscript{73}

Such sympathetic descriptions of suffering animals are frequent in other poems of Byron. Compassion is shown for the crying lamb facing the butcher in Marino Faliero. The impact of Heaven and Earth in large part results from the poet's warmhearted perception of the flood's impingement on animals.\textsuperscript{74} Byron's sympathetic treatment of the terrified wild animals helps to enforce the feeling of despair in \textit{ Darkness:}

\begin{quote}
... The wild birds shriek'd,
and, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Come tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitudes,
Hissing but stingless—they were slain for food.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

Conjoined with the poet's admiration for the strength of the dying warhorse in "The Destruction of Sennacherib," in his compassion for the animal's misery and pain. Describing the magnificent creature's imminent death, Byron describes

\begin{quote}
"... the steed with his nostril all wide,/ but through it there roll'd not the breath of his uride:/ and the Lord of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{73}Byron, \textit{Don Juan}, Canto XIII, Verses 42, ll. 531-535; Canto IV, Verses 38, l. 430.

\textsuperscript{74}Knight, \textit{Christian Virtues}, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{75}Byron, \textit{Darkness}, ll. 25-27.
of waving, by waves on the turf;/ and vain is the spray of
overhanging turf." 76 The poet's own sensitivity to the
bitterness of animal life is further evident in the
description of the wounded eagle in English Barids and Scotch

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76 \text{Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib," I, 13-16.}
77 \text{Byron, English Barids and Scotch Reviewers, II, 941-943.}
78 \text{Guiccioli, I, 387.}
79 \text{Coric Moore, p. 504.}
\]
Public condemnation of him when he and his wife separated strengthened his feeling of alienation. 80

As a young schoolboy, Byron early began his defense of the weak and the oppressed. On one occasion at Harrow when he was physically unequipped to master a bully, Byron offered to share the punishment that the tyrant was inflicting on a schoolmate, Sir Robert Peel. Often young George assumed a protective role in the interests of the smaller boys. 81 He would chastise others and would even whip a classmate to make him actively resist a bully. As a question of the frail, he told a friend who was also tame, "Hearsee, if anyone bullies you, tell me, and I'll thrash him if I can." 82

The poet’s interest in government was primarily limited to its role in helping people, particularly the oppressed. 83 As a member of the House of Lords, Byron opposed injustice to the weak by speaking against the Frame-breaking Bill. This bill, which proposed to make the destruction of industrial machinery a capital offense, was a reaction to the Luddite riots that had broken out among the unemployed stocking weavers of Nottingham. In order to subdue the disturbance, the military

81 Drinkwater, p. 162.
82 Synge, p. 56.
had been summoned. Because the jobless weavers thought that the new machinery would keep them permanently unemployed, they had smashed the frames. Such action showed their resentment of the employers who were threatening to deprive them of their livelihood. In a carefully prepared speech, Byron said that even in the most uncultivated provinces of Turkey he had not witnessed "such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return, in the very heart of a Christian country." He fought the bill not only because of the misery that would result from it but also because of its "palpable injustice and certain inefficiency," and he warned the audience of the terrible consequences of the bill's being made law.

Uncleland, he chided, was listening to relieve the sufferings of other allies and neglecting her own distraught subjects. Byron's denunciation of the Frame Bill was not limited to his speech in Parliament. After the speech, there appeared in the Morning Chronicle "An Ode to the Frameers of the Frame Bill." Although the poem has little literary significance, it was a suitable "follow-up" to the address. In the poem he criticized the man who had introduced the bill, Lord Liverpool, and many who were supporting it. In concluding the ode, he asked, "(and who will refuse to partake in the hope?) That the frames of the fools may be first to be broken; / Who, when asked for a remedy, can ask - none."  

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84Bigloun, p. 37.  
85Bowden, p. 411.  
86Bowden, p. 24.
Further examples of Byron's compassion for weakness and suffering are abundant. Once when one of his young servants refused to give anything to a beggar, Byron told the lad:

I insist on your going after that poor man and serving him the best of this day with everything he wants, and in case you act in such a way again, I will make you provide a good dinner for him; and recollect if you ever insult or ill use any other person in distress, you shall be sure to wait behind their chair, till they have dined....

Because he sympathized with any weakness, Byron felt compassion for the Jewish nation—persecuted, scattered, and without a country. This sympathy he expressed in Hebrew analyses in such pieces as "The Wild Gazelle" and "The Destruction of Sennacherib." In "The Wild Gazelle," the wanderings of the homeless gazelle is likened to the condition of the Jewish people. The poem reveals the author's compassion for the uprooted state of "Israel's scattered race." Again in the lyric, "Oh! Weep for Those," the poet dwells on the homeless condition of the Jews as contrasted with other creatures: "The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave, mankind their country—Israel but the grove." Byron's sympathy for suffering was also obvious in his literary activities. During his first year at Niceleschi,
be distinguished himself by saving a Turk from the wrath of several Greek sailors. When the sailors refused to accept his money in exchange for the Turk, Byron told them: "Since this is the case, you shall kill me before the poor wretch perishes. . . . Fly from my presence, if you would not pay dearly for your humanity." The Turk remained in hiding in Byron's house for several days and was eventually sent gift-laden by the poet back to his family.91 At Greece Byron commended the major of his brigade, William Parry, to try to save the lives of any prisoners that might be captured. He even proposed giving two dollars for each prisoner that was saved and offered to assume the expenses of conducting them to a safe place. At one time he saved twenty-four prisoners, mainly women and children. When he heard an account of their sufferings, he had to turn his face to hide his emotion. Byron's humanity was extended to those in his command. This was demonstrated in his demand for the safe return to their homes of six British military mechanics who were unable to withstand the trials at Missolonghi.92 Never did he approve of harsh punishments, particularly physical inflictions, and he refused to allow the whipping of a Greek soldier guilty of theft.93

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91 An English gentleman, Life, Writings, and Opinions of Byron, III, 247.
92 Parry, pp. 53-54, 163-164, 64-67.
93 Knight, Christian Virtue, pp. 360-361.
The hatred of war illustrated in Childe Harold and Sardanapalus might appear to be a contradiction of Byron's participation in the revolutionary movements in Italy and Greece. A marksman who refused to shoot living animals would not seem to be the kind of man who would urge people to fight for liberty. Although he was usually armed at all times, there was not a recorded instance of his harming another human being. In Byron were blended an esteem for military skill and courage and a hatred of offensive war.94 Similarly, he respected fierce, wild animals but felt compassion for weak, suffering beasts. The description of the bullfight in Childe Harold vividly exemplifies the two conflicting ideas that are represented by animals. The wild, dynamic strength of the bull is greatly admired by the poet, but he also feels pangs of sympathy for the agony and pain of the dying animal.95

Other ideas were to Byron vividly symbolized by animals. The universal sentiment of maternal instinct was, in the poet's opinion, dramatically illustrated by various forms of animal life. In Don Juan he described the common devotion of a parent for its issue:

The love of offspring's nature's general law,
From tigresses and cubs to ducks and ducklings;
There's nothing whets the beak, or arms the claw
Like an invasion of their babies and sucklings;

94Ibid., p. 197.
and all who have seen a human nursery, saw

...the desert-bird,

To still her passion'd wailing, her breast, her breast!

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the steel is willing to sacrifice its life. This picture of
self-sacrifice to man is found in the following passage:

One gallant deed is struck: 'tis man he, or men;
Another, his own dear, most holy life;
His very best unveils life's highest source;
Courage is known, will not yield to a force;
Strong, brave, but steadfast all, his lord unarmed'd be slain.

Such a concept of loyalty that is embodied by certain
animals is fidelity to their vote, which is described in the

Byron:

But this was taught me by the done,
By other men, 'midst other tasks,
Thus lesson set high up to learn,
Bought by sweat, by pangs, which pierce:
The pain that rises within the heart,
The song, the moral, still loath,
And let the fool, still prone to range
And burn with vengeful desire to change,
Partake his hurt with loathing eyes;
I may not have buried joys,
But seem such feeble, heartless can
less than you fully said,

... could Byron usually be Gilles Vandore's kind companion
and confidant. He is, however, as described particularly
in the lines of Odysseus in the Iliad, a kind of ignoble hero.

And yet the poet is not only a mere sage insensible,
but vitally he is a man who touches with his suffering.

in this passage from The Iliad of Homer:

The soul was in the well-known art,
The mind was caught at once his law,
And close by the shore, on the edge of the sea,

Homer, Odysseus, 11. 769-773.

Homer, The Iliad, 11. 1665-1671.
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay. 103

In order to emphasize the brutishness of particular people,
Byron often referred to them as wolves or jackals. For example, he said that "reviewers were northern wolves," which assaulted both the quick and the dead "with hellish instinct." 104

Also in The Deformed Transformed, Arnold addressed the pillaging soldiers as "jackals" that "gnaw the bones the lion leaves." 105

Man's instinct to shed blood was in the poet's mind the same instinct that wolves possess. 106 When Byron attacked Britain for despoiling the Greece that had "scaped from the ravage of the Turk and Goth," he used images of animals to emphasize the ignominious barbarity of his Motherland:

So when the lion quits his fell repast,
Next prowls the wolf, the filthy jackal last:
Flesh, limbs, and blood the former make their own,
The last poor brute securely gnaws the bone. 107

Many other ideas are symbolized by animals in Byron's poetry. In Don Juan the "white bird" that appears to the shipwrecked crew is called "this bird of promise" and is

103 Byron, The Siege of Corinth, XVI, ll. 471-478.
104 MacKenzie, p. 141.
105 Byron, The Deformed Transformed, Part II, Scene 3, l. 322.
106 Byron, Marino Faliero, Act IV, Scene 2, ll. 405-408.
their hope for better things to come.\(^{108}\) The concepts of peace and tranquility are dramatically illustrated by animals in these lines from *Heaven and Earth*:

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... even the brutes, in their despair,
    Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
    And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
    Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother.\(^{109}\)
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The attitudes of patience and acceptance of life are represented by animal life in this passage from *Childe Harold*:

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... mute
    The camel labours with the heaviest load,
    And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestowed
    In vain should such example; if they,
    Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
    Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
    May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.\(^{110}\)
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Still another idea that is symbolized by various beasts is that of decadence and decay, as in *The Giaour*:

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The steed is vanish'd from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely Spider's thin gray pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The Bat builds in his haram bower;
And in the fortress of his power
The Owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst and famine, grim.\(^{111}\)
```

And finally, in the expression of the concepts of destruction and death, several kinds of animals are effective images:

\(^{108}\)Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto II, Verse 94.


The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead;
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke—
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,
Deep-mouth'd arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yell'd on the cavern'd hill
Where echo roll'd in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gather'd cry,
Bay'd from afar complainingly,
With a mix'd and mournful sound,
Like crying babe and beaten hound.112

112Byron, The Siege of Corinth, XXXIII, ll. 1059-1072.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The reasons for the important role that the animal world played in Byron's life can be understood without too much difficulty. At a time in his life when he needed human compassion and understanding, these needs were denied him. As a child he had little to give him confidence in himself and a secure place in society. More and more he was left to himself because of his peculiarities and because of his refusal to accept the imperfections of men. Naturally he sought companionship wherever he could find it, and often the company of animals was to him more satisfying than any other. The fickle favor of men and of society in general did not mar Byron's relationships with his "menagerie." In his ever-changing world, his pets were one constant factor that was not continually offering and withdrawing its affection, as his parents and the general public had done.

There were, however, significant facets of Byron's pre-occupation with animal life other than the compensation that animals provided for the inadequacies in his life. The poet not only had a psychological need for the companionship of live creatures, but he also felt an admiration for and kinship with many of the qualities that animals possess. More than
likely, the intense sympathy that he experienced for all dependent creatures was a result of his having suffered himself. He knew what it was like to be weak, and he probably realized how it felt to be strong. Because he refused to submit to many of the conventions of society, he understood the drive for freedom that certain wild animals exhibit, and he felt akin to the fierce animals that rebel against the elements of civilization by releasing all their brute force and dynamic energy. As a man who despised cant and hypocrisy, he probably realized that only animals are completely free of these failings. Thus, the qualities that Byron admired most were usually those expressed in the simple and guileless behavior of animals, and most of the traits that he shunned were more typical of the devious and subtle behavior of mankind. He hated hypocrisy and tyranny, while his sympathy and love were reserved for the courageous, the dynamic, the resolute, and no less for the weak and the oppressed.¹

Still further significance can be found in Byron's feelings for animals. Just as the poet, despite his uniqueness, possessed many of the qualities common to all men, so his attitude toward the animal kingdom contains universal elements. Modern society is constantly demonstrating an extreme preoccupation with animal life. Various traits of the cat family, particularly the tiger, are being extensively employed in

¹Brecknock, p. 156.
numerous forms of advertising. Certain kinds of dogs presently receive as much grooming and attention as many human beings. Making clothes for domestic pets and manufacturing such items as greeting cards for animals are becoming flourishing enterprises. Indeed, there seems to be a modern trend toward identifying animals with human beings and men with animals. In this respect, perhaps Byron was somewhat prophetic when he noted similarities between mankind and animal life. Maybe, like Byron, modern man, bewildered and repelled by the complexity of his world, recognizes certain attractive qualities in the simple and natural life of animals and desires to more closely identify with these creatures.

Whatever the motives for the present-day emphasis on animal life, Byron's reason for more easily accepting and admiring animals than mankind is understandable. Man's inability to live up to the poet's idealistic expectations disgusted and disillusioned him.\(^2\) As a man whose rapport with animals was seldom duplicated in his relationships with human beings,

\[\ldots\] he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompeil'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind

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To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.³

³Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III, Verse 12.
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