

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC

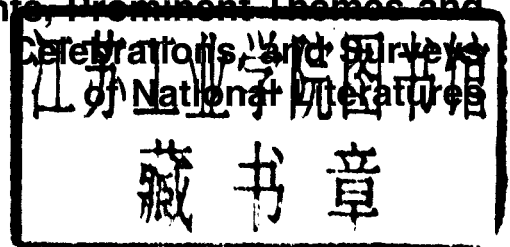
106

TOPICS VOLUME

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

Excerpts from Criticism of Various Topics
in Twentieth-Century Literature, including Literary
and Critical Movements, Prominent Themes and
Genres, Anniversary Celebrations, and Surveys
of National Literatures



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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Topics Volume

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Preface

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TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, TCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in TCLC presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of TCLC is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, (CLC) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between CLC and TCLC.

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- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author's actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.
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- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

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Citing *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume in the Literary Criticism Series may use the following general format to footnote reprinted criticism. The first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books.

George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *Partisan Review* 6 (Winter 1949): 85-92; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 40-3.

William H. Slavick, "Going to School to DuBose Heyward," *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined*, ed. Victor A. Kramer (AMS, 1987), 65- 91; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 94-105.

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The Gale Group
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Animals in Literature

INTRODUCTION

Animals have held an important place in written literature for thousands of years. And prior to written languages, ancient peoples told animal stories by drawing symbolic visual narratives on the walls of their cave homes. These early examples of animals in literary history generally were imbued with strong religious and allegorical significance. Composed around the sixth century B.C., Aesop's *Fables* continue to serve as standards of moral didacticism using animals as examples for humans to follow or avoid. For the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, animals such as bulls and lions, as well as hybrid creatures like the griffin and sphinx, played important roles in the development of complex mythological systems that influenced everything from the stories told to the study of the stars. The Judeo-Christian tradition introduced other symbolic animal figures into literature. Stories in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible have provided vivid and lasting images of animals that represent various human and godly attributes, including the snake, the swine, and the lamb. Similarly, Native Indian cultures have used stories of animals to help explain the mysteries of life and the universe, as have people in Asia, India, South America, and Africa. In the European Middle Ages literary animals were placed into the formal structure of the bestiary, in which different animals were categorized according to the single trait unique to each of them that might teach a moral or religious lesson. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the Age of Enlightenment—moral allegories gave way to satire, which served not so much to teach lessons as to ridicule human foibles and political corruption. Frequently angry and cynical about the state of the world, satirists such as Jonathan Swift used some of the less desirable traits of animals to skewer the less desirable traits of humans. The nineteenth century ushered in an era of Romanticism, where poets such as William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Keats wrote of the beauty and freedom of animals in their natural wild state and the potential for humans to unleash their creativity by emulating that wildness. In Victorian England and America animals in literature took on a more literal meaning, in part because of the publication of Charles Darwin's shocking and controversial *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which advanced the theory that human beings had not been created separately from animals in order to lead and dominate but had instead evolved from animals and were thus merely another link in a chain millions of years old. Over a century later, Darwin's theory continued to generate bitter debate between evolutionists and creationists. But in the years immediately following its publication, the work threw much of Western society into turmoil

as many began to question their own metaphysical and ontological beliefs. With science elevating animals to a new level in the human and natural worlds, and rapidly spreading industrialization exploiting both humans and animals, concern for animal welfare became a major social issue. Humane societies and antivivisection organizations sprang up around England and the United States, and writers began to include examples of noble and heroic companion animals in their works. Similarly, tales of animal abuse arose, in which animals were seen as the victims of human greed, ignorance, and brutal industrialization. In the twentieth century many writers turned to old animal stories and genres to produce revolutionary works dealing with the uniquely modern themes of paranoia, alienation, and futility. James Joyce revived and modernized elements of Greek mythology that featured allegorical animal figures, and Franz Kafka used the traditional animal fable style to tell jarring stories of twentieth-century angst. In the latter part of the century literal and figurative animals became particularly important in gender studies and women's literature. Recognizing parallels between their own struggles for equality and the abuses of the natural world, women imagined themselves as caged and voiceless, like the animals they portrayed in their writing.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Janet E. Aalfs

"A Chicken's Tale in Three Voices" (short story) 1990

Edward Albee

Seascape (drama) 1975

Margaret Atwood

Surfacing (novel) 1972

Selected Poems (poetry) 1976

Daphne du Maurier

"The Birds" (short story) 1952

Ralph Ellison

Invisible Man (novel) 1952

Carol Emshwiller

Carmen Dog (novel) 1990

Walter Farley

The Black Stallion (novel) 1941

Robert Frost

A Boy's Will (poetry) 1913

North of Boston (poetry) 1914

A Witness Tree (poetry) 1942

Nadine Gordimer

The Soft Voice of the Serpent (short stories) 1952

Ernest Hemingway

Death in the Afternoon (novel) 1932

Zora Neale Hurston

Their Eyes Were Watching God (novel) 1937

Franz Kafka

The Metamorphosis (novella) 1912

"A Report to an Academy" (short story) 1919

"The Burrow" (short story) 1923

"Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk" (short story) 1924

"Investigations of a Dog" (short story) 1933

D. H. Lawrence

The White Peacock (novel) 1911

The Rainbow (novel) 1915

Women in Love (novel) 1920

Kangaroo (novel) 1923

St. Mawr (novella) 1925

The Plumed Serpent (novel) 1925

Ursula K. LeGuin

"A Wife's Story" (short story) 1988

Doris Lessing

"An Old Woman and Her Cat" (short story) 1974

Clarice Lispector

The Foreign Legion (novel) 1964

"The Dry Point of Horses" (short story) 1974

"The Buffalo" (short story) 1985

Jack London

Call of the Wild (novel) 1903

Thomas Mann

"A Man and His Dog" (short story) 1936

Cris Mazza

"Attack at Dawn" (short story) 1989

Marianne Moore

Collected Poems (poetry) 1959

Alice Munro

"Boys and Girls" (short story) 1968

Flannery O'Connor

Wise Blood (novel) 1952

Jean-Paul Sartre

La Nausée [*Nausea*] (novel) 1938

Ramón Sender

El Lugar del Hombre [*A Man's Place*] (novel) 1939

Epitalamio del Prieto Trinidad [*Dark Wedding*] (novel) 1942

Los Cino Libros de Ariadna (novel) 1957

John Steinbeck

"Flight" (short story) 1938

"The Red Pony" (short story) 1945

Alice Walker

The Temple of My Familiar (novel) 1989

Mary Webb

Gone to Earth (novel) 1917

Richard Wright

Native Son (novel) 1940

OVERVIEWS AND GENERAL STUDIES

Mary Allen (essay date 1983)

SOURCE: An introduction to *Animals in American Literature*, University of Illinois Press, 1983, pp. 3-17.

[In the following essay, Allen presents an overview of animals in literature throughout history.]

Animals¹ have served literature well. They have stood as allegorical figures to represent human nature and as a rich body of metaphors for the inanimate as well as the animate. Beyond their figurative uses, animals have been man's servants, his companions, the objects of his hunt, and the food on his table. And sometimes they have been allowed to play their own parts.

Before man could write he drew pictures of animals on the walls of caves in paint made of their blood, figures that transcend time in their immediacy.² Man looked to the heavens and saw animals sketched in the stars. The spirit that could make the corn grow was envisioned as a bull, a wolf, or even a dog. Animal properties were imagined to be magically transferred to man: he thought if he stepped on a tortoise, his feet would be made hard.³ The totem animal, taken as the tribal ancestor of a clan, was looked to as its tutelary spirit and protector. Whether as the earliest subjects of art and worship or as the later symbolic images of a culture, animal figures tell of a people's values. The Egyptians bowed to the bull. And the Christians gave us the lamb.

Animals remain a source of awe. Their means of locomotion, self-defense—the way they *look*—are incredible. But man's relationship with them is complex, often paradoxical. He would have their powers but would not be called an animal. Primitive man drank a beast's blood for vitality, then apologized for slaying it. Modern man reveres what is free and must possess it.

Beyond man's language, animals appeal to the symbol-making mind. They were initially established and still are usually seen as representative images in literature. It was in the sixth century B.C. that the legendary Aesop is said to have composed his fables. The collection of tales from which the medieval bestiaries derived, the *Physiologus*, came in the second century, giving a mystic meaning to each of fifty legends of animals and natural objects. Animals were epitomized by a single characteristic—the industry of the ant, the cunning of the fox, the majesty of the lion. Such stereotyping served a definite moral end. Yet it also reflects cultural and aesthetic biases. In the East, the placid cow is revered—in the motion-loving West, the horse.

As the beast fable and the bestiary gave way to the humanism of the Renaissance and the metaphorical language that centered on man, the basic symbolic values of the earlier period were retained. The animal simile became so prevalent during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that natural history was "ransacked" for material to illustrate everyday experiences.⁴ Caroline Spurgeon finds in her study of Shakespeare's imagery, based on the premise that analogy holds the spirit of the universe, that the second largest category of Shakespearean metaphors (after references to the human body) is birds—not for their form or their song but for their flight. It was the life of things which most enchanted Shakespeare,⁵ and that life in his work is unimaginable without the allusions to animals, over 4,000 of them.⁶

The power of Shakespeare's animal metaphors is felt through realistic detail and a keen compassion for suffering creatures. Yet as Elizabethan drama assumes a metaphorical view of the universe around man, most of Shakespeare's references to animals are figurative. The sharpness of the serpent's tooth is of interest as it illustrates human ingratitude. *King Lear* needs no real snakes. Even Richard III's "My kingdom for a horse!"—indeed, a call for an actual horse—is rather a revelation of the man's desperation than a focus on the animal.

As the age of satire presented a diminished version of man, the animal metaphor served a specific message of disdain. Swift's human race is equated to "odious vermin." But he also satirizes the happy beast tradition of seventeenth-century France, in which animals were considered equal or superior to man because of their naturalness. The Houyhnhnms, who have only the bodies of horses and not their other characteristics, excel not as animals but as beings with extraordinary powers of reason.

The eighteenth century also saw the development of the non-human narrator in the novel, based on the rationale of

the fifth-century B.C. philosophy of metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls. The use of the animal's point of view became the target of satire in France, most vividly with the minuscule creatures who could see all, a satire reaching the epitome of coarseness in such a work as *Memoirs and Adventures of a Flea*.⁷ The humanitarian movement to prevent cruelty to animals of this period, however, led to a more sympathetic version of their point of view. By the nineteenth century a literature for children had developed that presents the animal's own account of his suffering. Black Beauty draws tears for the abused cab horse. Such a sympathetic rendering of the animal has become a standard feature of juvenile fiction (as well as a temptation to those who would present animals realistically but with compassion).

The romantic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with its intent to free man physically as well as spiritually, epitomizes the spirit of the new freedom in the symbolic bird. While suggested as an actual bird, this romantic figure is distant, impalpable, even static. The nightingale lives primarily in the imagination. In a study of the modern bestiary Christopher Nash points out that when actual animals are referred to by the romantics, even in their more vivid roles, Blake's tiger and Coleridge's albatross, for example, they are not alive. For the romantic, the more "terrestrial" the creature, "the less worth of the poet's song it is."⁸

The realism that superseded romanticism focused for the most part on social man, an increasingly urban man, a context in which animals play little part. While realism follows no particular style, the tendency is away from symbolism, in some cases away from metaphor altogether; thus the figurative animal occurs less frequently than before. With naturalism, the metaphor of man *as* beast in an urban jungle is a standard feature—Frank Norris's brute McTeague and O'Neill's hairy ape. Yet the animals themselves are rarely featured.

As science, psychology, art, and new kinds of mass communication have reestablished the worship of symbols in the twentieth century, the earlier symbology of animals is revived. Joyce's Dedalus, based on the Greek artisan ordered to design an elaborate cage for the Cretan Minotaur, confronts the labyrinth of the unconscious as "a human structure fabricated to contain and withhold an animal core."⁹ Reverting to the fable, Kafka creates his unforgettable image of modern man—Gregor Samsa as a beetle swept into the trash.

The metaphorical far outnumber the literal animals in literature. But actual ones do appear from time to time in their own right. If they also serve a symbolic function, the power of the symbol depends on how vivid the actual animal is. While some types of literature, the fable, for one, preclude the development of realistic animals, no genre or literary movement has made particular use of them. They are invited in rather at the inclination of the individual author, whether he be classic or romantic, poet or novelist.

Poetry has most often featured the bird, while fiction's favorite is the pet dog—the loyal, obedient companion, who offers a satisfaction untainted by the complexities of human relationships. Thomas Mann's "A Man and His Dog," for example, centers on the "dumb paean of joy"¹⁰ the dog Bashan brings his master. The source of this happy connection is attributed to the patriarchal instinct of the dog to honor the man as his absolute master.

One of the most moving accounts of an animal in all literature is the scene in *The Odyssey* when Odysseus comes home. His son thinks he is a beggar in town, and his wife requires proof of identity. Only the dog knows him: "Here lay the dog, this Argos, full of fleas. Yet even now, seeing Odysseus near, he wagged his tail and dropped both ears, but toward his master he had not strength to move. Odysseus turned aside and wiped away a tear." Argos does not represent anything but himself, nor would we wish him to. He acts as a dog acts, and that is enough.

While the animal simile is far more prevalent than the literal animal in Greek poetry, regard for the physical world is reflected in a view that is not primarily metaphorical. In a study of Homer's perception of reality Paolo Vivante makes the case that the function of the Homeric simile is to stress the essential nature of the subject, not to suggest other possibilities. If warriors are said to move like scared fawns, it is simply their common response to fear which the simile presents. For Homer things exist in their own right, "with nothing to sustain them but their solitary power and the earth upon which they stand."¹¹ This process works in the reverse of the symbolic approach in which the tangible is a sign of a superior spiritual realm. The Greek passion for this world is suggestive of the spirit with which many actual animals are portrayed in modern literature. The brilliantly intellectual art of our time rarely offers such feeling. But where animals are, so is emotion. It is worth reading about them for that refreshment alone.

It was to the actual animals that Aristotle turned in the classification which was the beginning of natural science, *The History of Animals*. Although much factual information was available, it is probable that many accounts of remote species came through the limited descriptions of explorers. In fact, by the thirteenth century Europeans still knew of the rhinoceros only through Marco Polo's description of "lion-horns."¹² To illustrate fables of exotic animals, the miniaturists used the familiar bodies of dogs and horses and added a fabulous version of teeth or tails.¹³ In this way many fantastic creatures came into being. Still, man's creations did not outdo the uncanny subjects in nature.

The commencement of modern zoology in the sixteenth century heightened the artist's interest but at the same time enhanced many a zoological fable. Sir Thomas Browne continued in the belief that mice were generated by wheat, and Milton reaffirmed that creation is a process rising up miraculously from slime and mud. Investigations by the newly established Royal Society set forth ideas

such as parthenogenesis, which led to the belief that as the creator of art forms his work, so are animals brought into mysterious being. In *Hudibras* Butler supports the notion that the baby bear is created as the mother licks lumps of matter into shape.¹⁴ As scientific fact did take hold, the literary artist became more precise, although rather with the approach of the naturalist, who sees the creature whole in his habitat, than the scientist, who dissects.

As the old hierarchy of the kingdoms toppled with Charles Darwin, and the belief in human dominion over the animal lost its force, the creatures consequently loomed into a new place. Darwin's intent was not to reduce man; only one line in *On the Origin of Species* even suggests that light might be shed on human origins. He intended rather to "ennoble and humanize animals." Stanley Edgar Hyman describes *Origin* as a scientific argument that reads like a dramatic poem in which animals are the actors.¹⁵ It is one of the ironic twists of history that an appreciative view of animals was reversed in the image of man as ape. But if Darwin's ideas were received in a spirit contrary to his own, he did succeed in raising animals to a more important place than they had occupied for centuries.

Man's ambivalent relationship with animals has raised many an intriguing issue. If man and beast commit the same vicious deeds, are they not similarly responsible? This line of reasoning led to the bizarre practice of criminal prosecution and capital punishment of animals, dating from the ninth century. Sentences were inflicted by secular tribunals on pigs, cows, and horses for the crime of homicide; judicial proceedings of ecclesiastical courts against rats, mice, locusts, and weevils resulted in exorcisms and excommunication. It was believed that if domestic animals were not punished for homicide, devils would take possession of them and their masters. In the sixteenth century a French jurist made his reputation as a counsel for rats charged with eating a barley crop, successfully arguing that the rats summoned to appear were prevented by serious perils, "owing to the unwearied vigilance of their mortal enemies, the cats." As late as 1906 in Switzerland two men and a dog were convicted of murder. The men were sentenced to life imprisonment, and the dog was condemned to death.¹⁶

If primitive man was mystified as to his kinship with animals, the Bible of his literate descendants did little to eliminate the confusion. The distinction between man and the other creatures in Genesis as the creation evolves from whale to man is not a moral one, a fact not lost on Darwinists. While all creatures are said to be good, as God's creations, some are worthier than others. The animal in man, on the other hand, is vile. Man is commanded to be master over the other creatures (although he is commanded otherwise not to kill), and yet elaborate Levitical laws must be followed in using animals for subsistence (e.g., only true ruminants, animals with four-chambered stomachs, were considered clean enough to eat). The practice of animal sacrifice is a more difficult concept still, presenting the idea of a father's sacrifice of his son, the killing of a God.

The revolutionary doctrine of Christianity is impressively captured in the image of the lamb, in sharp contrast to the representatives of power and fertility held by many cultures. For the nomadic Hebrews, sheep were an economic necessity, used for meat, milk, and wool. The choice of this domestic animal rather than an exotic one is both natural and appropriate to the modesty of Christ's image and message. Sheep are good followers. As the worthiest creatures in the Bible, lambs and sheep are mentioned oftener than any other, 742 times.¹⁷ Frequency of mention, then, is evidently an important indication of worth. But does this mean that the one familiar animal missing in God's creation is so despicable as not to be mentioned even once in a work where the pygarg, chamois, and wanderoo are given a place? In the Bible there is not a single cat!¹⁸

If the gentle lamb is first in value to illustrate the New Testament ethic, creatures as they are arranged by power and beauty on the chain of being also operate as symbolic figures in both the Old and the New Testaments. Leviathan's enormity is cause alone for respect, despite his destructiveness. The lion is used to represent both the Lord and Satan. The paradox Blake poses in bringing tiger and lamb together is never rationalized in the Bible. Not only is the power ethic of the Old Testament never fully reconciled with the code of humility in the New, but animals are placed in striking aesthetic and traditional patterns as well as didactic ones. The moral sense attributed to animals, and it is impossible to take them amorally in a work whose every line is instructive, is never clear.

Although the Bible raises many confusing issues regarding animals, it unquestionably places humankind above the other creatures in the hierarchy of being. Man's deposition from that place as a result of the Darwinian revolution, with its inescapable impact on literary characters, has received substantial critical attention. But little has been said of how that shift affects the place of animals in literature—not so much that their nature is revised as that their position in regard to man is vastly altered. Nash makes the case from examples of prominent animals in the twentieth-century novel that man is no longer the supreme animal. The Great Chain of Being is reversed so that the realm of the beast lies above that of man, a realm of the "supernatural" that may be attained only through nature, not, as formerly supposed, through culture.¹⁹

It was during the Darwinian awakening that the first great blossoming of American literature took place. No evolutionist himself, Melville wrote rather in reaction to the developing argument that man was to be deposed. But he did use Darwin's account of species in the Galapagos Islands as a source for "The Encantadas" and was much influenced by the revolutionary theories of Lyell and Chambers as well. It is no coincidence that, eight years before *On the Origin of Species* appeared, the biggest creature on earth should become a major character—pursued by angry, shrinking man—in the mightiest American novel of the century. However supreme Moby Dick became as a symbol, he rides first as an actual whale.

The fact that Moby Dick looms at the center of American fiction in mid-nineteenth century America, while Dickens was writing of the working conditions of the poor, illustrates the diverse national concerns. The commonplace that Americans write of the individual, freedom, and violence while the British deal with society, domesticity, and manners is dramatized by the presence of *wild* animals in American literature, a phenomenon that has scarcely been noted.

An astonishing number of actual animals play impressive roles in American literature. No other national literature makes them so important. Those discussed in this book were selected from among the most prominent examples in works by major authors. As the animals are referred to in the literature most often by the personal pronoun (almost always male), so are they designated here. (In those cases where the impersonal pronoun is used, the author's intention to objectify will usually be evident.) The focus on literal animals here is meant to raise issue with the literary assumption that they must stand for something else. And they are, emphatically, distinct from mineral and plant aspects of *nature*, a term that for too long has been used in literary criticism as a general reference to the out-of-doors, as if there were no difference between a bird and the branch he sits on—between active and passive. These animals are alive.

The pastoral convention tended to make all aspects of nature similarly serene and harmonious: no storms, no mosquitoes, no violence. The out-of-doors is a place more for contemplation than for action. The complete angler goes fishing for peace, not for struggle. In the poetry of British romantics nature is usually something seen from inside the house so that features are indistinct. Even inside Wordsworth's woods the atmosphere is as calm as that of a well-ordered living room. It is not disturbed by the movements of animals, certainly nothing savage.

Such a tradition is followed in America by such poets as Freneau and Bryant. Whitman is as much at home in his poetry with the wild animal as the tame, yet his harmonious approach to nature links him to the pastoral tradition as well. The "peaceable kingdom" predominates for animals in American art, according to a study by Mary Haverstock, although the "howling wilderness" does offer a strong countertradition.²⁰

The overwhelming appeal in the literature, however, is for the tangibility and ferocity of the new land. As Henry Nash Smith has pointed out, firsthand reports of the frontier did much to dispel the myth of an edenic garden.²¹ The retreat is to the wilderness, but not for peace—for challenge and profit. Cooper's hero is a hunter, not a singer of love songs. And when Hemingway's characters take their "pastoral retreat," it is to duel with an animal. The challenge of nature is epitomized through confrontations with bold creatures who stand out as distinctly from tree and lake as man himself. The animals come close enough to show their delicate coloring, their texture, to look man in the eye. Close enough to grab.

These animals have lives of their own. In one of the few examinations of different ways animals appear in literature, W. H. Auden lists the figurative uses (fable, simile, and allegory); the romantic encounter, in which animals provide a stimulus to man but have no feelings and are not realistically described; and the animal as the object of human interest and affection.²² But he notes no category in which the animal's own dramatic role operates as the instigator of man's actions or where they are equals. Yet the animal has emerged as a powerful actor in the drama, bringing about significant responses from man. This view is in direct opposition to the commonly held notion that nineteenth-century romanticism was the last great occurrence of nature in literature. In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries American authors classified as transcendentalist, realist, determinist, imagist, and existentialist, as well as those who fall in no category, have developed important realistic animals. The realism with which these animals are depicted by writers as unlike as Jack London and Marianne Moore has little to do with the term *literary realism*, which suggests a time period or even a sordid view of man. But it does contain a sense of wonder for the actual.

These realistic animals are wild, terrestrial beings. Many are big and violent, though their spirit is more important than their force. They are usually disciplined, clean, and utilitarian. They are celibate males, free or fighting to be free. And they are markedly independent. The favorites are the big fish (including the mammal, the whale), the bird on the ground, the untamed dog, animals with tough hides, and the horse. Of these only the horse has been a favorite traditional subject for the artist. Kenneth Clark states that for the painter the horse is "without question the most satisfying piece of formal relationship in nature." Because the painter who was required to flatter people in his painting was not under the obligation to do so with animals, "the realism of animals came as a pleasant change from the monotonous idealism of Hellenistic figure sculpture."²³ The horse as a central literary subject, however, came much later, after the time when it was most important in society. Except for myths and legends, few stories with the horse as a central figure existed before the opening of the West in frontier America.²⁴

America's affair with the frontier is clearly behind the appeal of untamed animals. And surely the dramatic possibilities of conquering the beast surpass those of a battle with the elements alone. One may survive a storm, but he can look his prey in the eye. Conquest of another creature and economic gain were brought together in the whaling industry of the 1850s and in the fur trade, which took men to the western horizon and to the top of the world before they ever went for gold. For the lover of frontiers, whether he be abroad or at home, the untamed is salubrious, a "tonic of wildness," as Thoreau put it. He sensed a "strange thrill of savage delight" when a woodchuck crossed his path and was "tempted to seize and devour him raw." As unlike Hemingway in tone as Thoreau is, he finds the same purifying effects in the conquest of the wild animal.

In contrast to Emerson's cool symbolic nature, Thoreau's flesh-and-blood version is savagely alive. He speaks for others who write of animals when he says, "I love the wild not less than the good."²⁵

If to be wild is good, to become domesticated is to sell out to a master. Pets are a rarity, and those who do live under a human's roof may yet exhibit their wildness—the cat in a deliciously fierce attack. Examples from juvenile literature illustrate this point as well. The beasts of Tarzan's jungle are extravagantly ferocious (while those of Kipling, Burroughs's British counterpart, are civilized). If Lassie had been an American creation, instead of a Yorkshire dog who wants nothing more than to find her way back to an English hearth, the story might be *Lassie Leaves Home*. The primeval Buck in *Call of the Wild* is rather the hero in American fiction. And *The Black Stallion*, a classic fantasy of boy and horse on a deserted island, shows the ideal companion to be the "wildest of all wild animals," whose nature is "to kill or be killed."²⁶ Back at a New York race track, the horse is as ferocious as ever, attacking another horse at the starting gate. The black stallion makes Black Beauty look like a pussy cat.

Where the untamed reigns, the cultivation of the mind is suspect. The anti-intellectual strain in American literature, which makes books anathema and learning the work of the devil—Hawthorne's evil scientists, Melville's rigidly bookish Captain Vere—perpetuates the notion that one should be wary of the brain. The savagery of animals is pure in contrast to the convolutions of man's mind. One of the most appreciated qualities of animals is that they are beyond language. That they feel but do not require conversation is a great relief to most people. Language cannot be trusted, even by those who use it most carefully. When Hemingway's Frederick Henry renounces abstractions as a form of falsehood, he speaks not as a disbeliever in matters of the spirit but as one who distrusts the articulation of them. Animals do not lie.

In American literature animals offer a type of purity that rarely conflicts with violence but does require chastity. Their most peculiar characteristic is the avoidance of sexual activity—even the absence of desire. Virility is assumed in most cases, but mating is as much to be avoided by the animal as by the human character. Even Moby Dick, for all his Freudian critics, is not a participant. When a whale's organ is described, it is that of a dead whale. The great white whale rides alone, with a whole sea to put between himself and the lady whales. His mating activities are properly behind him. Animals are generally beyond sexual activity, by age or makeup or because of other interests. Emily Dickinson's robins are gentlemen singers; Mark Twain likes the mule; Jack London's dogs would rather eat; Marianne Moore's animals are too well covered; and John Steinbeck's turtle must travel. Richard Wright's creatures are driven beyond the privilege of mating. And just as William Faulkner's racehorse lives to run, not mate, Ernest Hemingway's bulls reserve their energy for the fight.