

# PRISM

Animality & the Humanities

Edited excerpts from *Orion's Legacy: A Cultural History of the Male As Hunter*. E.P. Dutton, forthcoming, Spring, 1996. The text is undergoing final revisions.

## Sexing the Hunter

BY CHARLES BERGMAN

### I. "The hunt is up ... rouse the Prince"

Here was thou bay'd, brave hart,  
Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand,  
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.  
O world! thou wast the forest to this hart,  
And this indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
How like a deer, strooken by many princes,  
Dost thou here lie!

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, III.i.204-210

[The duke] . . . that for the hunt is so desirous  
And namely at the great harte in May  
That in his bed there daweth him no day  
That he nys [is not] clad and redy for to ride  
With hunt and horne and houndes him besyde,  
For in his hunting hath he such delyte  
that is all his joye and appetytte  
To been him selfe the great hartes bane.  
For after Mars he serveth nowe Diane.

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Knight's Tale,"  
Chaucer's Poetry, ed. E.T. Donaldson, New York, 1958

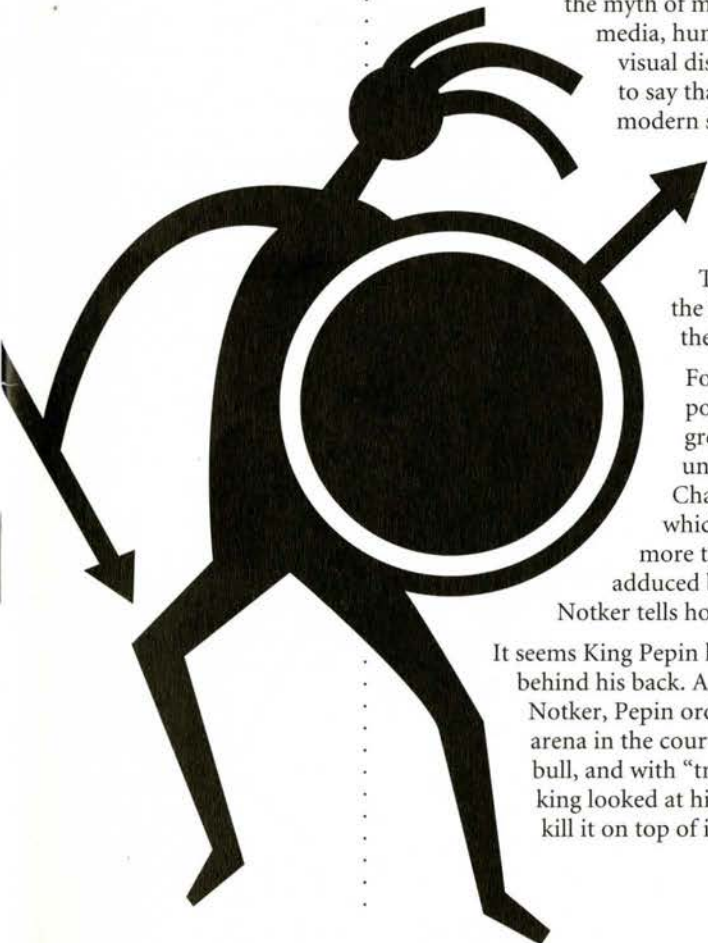
Even more than war, hunting was the crucible out of which medieval lords contrived to hammer the myth of monarchy. A kind of social propaganda, long before newspapers and mass media, hunting gave a pageantry to peacetime, and the early monarchs exploited the visual display in their hunting to control the minds of their subjects. It's not too much to say that through hunting early monarchs contrived much of the centralization of the modern state, centralizing political power in the figure of the king. The hunt was nothing less than an instrument of statecraft, a form of diplomacy, and the sign of the health of the country. In addition to the pleasure the chase provided, it also located the health and vigor of the body politic in the physical body of the king.

The king became the "father of the game," and his hunting was quite literally the image of his patriarchy. For early modern kings, hunting was indispensable to their self-image and their statecraft.

For the Franks, a long tradition made hunting a mirror in which to view the power of the monarchy. Charlemagne (742-814), for example, supported his greatness as monarch through his passion for hunting, "conquering everything under heaven," as Notker the Stammer puts it in his early biography of the king. Charlemagne's father, Pepin, however, revealed the pragmatic philosophy upon which the royal addiction to hunting was founded. Hunting was presumed to teach more than the virtues of virility, more than courage and hardiness, which were always adduced by the defenders of the sport of kings. In his biography of Charlemagne, Notker tells how Pepin proved his worthiness to rule the empire.

It seems King Pepin had discovered that his military advisors were speaking contemptuously of him behind his back. A man of action, he moved quickly to bring them into line again. According to Notker, Pepin ordered a bull of "fantastic size and ferocious attitude" to be set free in a large arena in the court. He then ordered a "savage lion" to be set upon the bull. The lion charged the bull, and with "tremendous fury" seized it by the neck and hurled the bull to the ground. The king looked at his gathered officers. "Now," he ordered them, "drag the lion off the bull or else kill it on top of its enemy."

continued ►



They were all dumbfounded and terrified: They all looked at each other in terror, their hearts frozen with fear, and just managed to gasp out an answer. "My Lord," they muttered, "there is no man on earth who would dare attempt such a thing."

Pepin looked upon them with disgust and disdain.

He rose from his throne, drew his sword, and entered the arena. In a single vicious slash, he severed the lion's neck. With the élan of a true-born king, he sheathed his sword and resumed his seat on the throne. "Do you think I am worthy to be your master?" he sneered at his commanders.

They fell to the ground as if they had been struck by thunder. "Is there anyone so foolish that he would deny your right to rule over the whole of mankind?" they replied.

Pepin, concludes Notker, had proved that he was "master over beasts and men."

In the exercise of this mastery, hunting was used both to seize and enforce control over men and countries, and it was the propaganda by which, in their extravagant and ostentatious forays into the forests, royalty reaffirmed their status and station.

William the Conqueror, for instance, brought Frankish and Norman styles with him across the English Channel, and seemed to have used hunting not only for his pleasure, but as part of his process of reducing the country to his rule. After winning the Battle of Hastings in 1066, he established the hunt as the true sport for kings of England as well as France. To do so, he seized land and suppressed the Anglo-Saxon traditions of hunting with nets and pits and hounds, wherein every man could hunt. In seizing lands, he made over huge tracts of land into forest, converting what were once villages and homesteads into areas for his hunting, evicting and dispossessing peasants and landholders alike. The hunt was at the center of social policy. He is said to have put five-sixths of the countryside of eastern England into forests for his hunting—Wessex, Kent, Essex, and East Anglia. It was a system of ownership and prerogative. The forests were for the king's pleasure alone, or at his franchise by any he alone might allow. His descendants, the Angevin kings, placed as much as one-third of the country of England into forest, which meant under the crown's ownership, to be used almost solely for the royal sport.

The hunt was the symbol of the well-ordered society, but even more, it was a vehicle through which that order could be maintained and regulated. Through the forest laws that were established to control these lands, the king owned all the game in the kingdom. All harts were his, and the hart was particularly the beast of the king himself.

He could farm out his privileges, for money usually, and the system of the Forest Laws which evolved reflected the feudal hierarchy which came to be associated with good social order, the king's

privilege hunting ... categories of the forest, the chase, the park, and the warren. The king and his officers alone might hunt the forest; the chase and the park indicated areas that were unenclosed or enclosed, respectively, and could be hunted only on franchise from the king explicitly, usually by barons. The warren was also held on franchise of the king, but to a wider group of men. In such a well-organized scheme, each division of the hunting lands had its own specific beasts which could be legally hunted there.

Whole armies of men, also, had to be organized to maintain the king's hunts, and the hunt was quite literally a microcosm of social order. The king or baron employed foresters, rangers, and woodsmen to maintain his forests. Chaucer's yeoman was a "forster," clad in "coat and hood of grene," well taught in "wode-craft." His job was to guard the "vert and venison," the trees and the harts. Similar employees included woodwards, rangers, verderers. The king's estates for hunting were similarly huge. Gaston Phébus, for example, was said to have 600 horses and 1600 hounds, all maintained for his hunting pleasure. Valets of the kennel had to be trained, huntsmen taught their duties. Queen Elizabeth made her courtly favorite and furtive lover, the Earl of Leicester, her first Master of the Buckhounds and her Master of the Horse—signs of his high station in her court and intimate place in her heart. One of his most famous gifts to her was a richly enameled crossbow.

Falconers were similarly required. When Edward III invaded France for the Battle of Crécy in 1346, he took with him 600 hounds and 130 falcons. Falcons were kept on aristocratic estates in "mews," huge spreads of cages, with professional falconers to feed, breed, and train the birds.

For all these positions, men needed to be trained, apprentices not merely in the hunt, but in the well-disposed order of feudal society. With its retinues of men and animals, its rules and its carefully worked out social laws, hunting created its own minor kingdom.

This society was centered upon the body of the king. The king needed to maintain his health, as a sign of the health of the state itself. King James I, of England, had a mania for the hunt. When he ascended to the throne in 1603, he escaped to his many hunting lodges as often as possible. His favorite was in Cambridgeshire, where he spent as much as a third of the year. The people might grumble, but he put the matter succinctly in defense of "his immoderate exercise of hunting." If people complained, he wrote, let them understand the importance of hunting to the king:

The Kinge... finds such felicitie in that hunting life, that he hath written to the counsaile [Privy Council], that yt is the only meanes to maintain his health, (which being the health and welfare of us all) he desires them to undertake the charge and burden of affaires, and to foresee that he be not interrupted nor troubled with too much busines.

kingdom... chase, "Th... its guilt."

Nobles hunting an... deeper tha... killing anir... The appeti... explained b... the chase. I... was too p... their social... stake was a... male body... and power... tive body u... petuated in... the buffed

The Fro... royal sport... incarnation... top of their... story that e... of the king... upon, the c...

Franço... contempor... Renaissanc... François I... great book... Jacques de... mously an... François "L... He exploit... form of dis... king.

Thus, t... with a "fur...

Most c... France are... favorite w... He repair... such sojo... tain—rec... sent his l... with net... *sanglier*... a young... made o...

Me... tradesr... courty... arena, could...

Fr... "Vani... court... beast... F...

prot... the :... the... ent

ad mountains  
tral Mon-  
ayne  
... was first of  
a grizzly ...  
description of  
at led the  
imals, an  
nts group  
ashington to  
uit ... Wayne  
ecutive  
r the Fund for  
aid: "People  
ars are trying  
some mythic  
sus-bear  
ere's no  
reason for  
no self-  
ment."

Hunting was both sign and vehicle. Hunting was the mark of nobility in a man and greatness in a kingdom. That's why the poet Somerville called the chase, "The sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt."

Nobles and kings throughout Europe made hunting an obsession, a passion that went much deeper than can be accounted for by the pleasure of killing animals or the need for physical exercise. The appetite for their addiction was too great to be explained by the joy of the woods or the pleasure of the chase. Its hold on their hearts and imaginations was too powerful not to have had sources deep in their social and personal psychologies. What was at stake was a certain perception of the male, and the male body in action, as the center of social health and power. It was the image of the powerful and active body upon which society depends, a notion perpetuated in exactly the same way for us by motifs of the buffed and bulked bodies of action heroes.

The French not only invented the rules of the royal sport, they executed it in its most refined incarnations. The French were quite literally at the top of their game. And so we can turn to them for a story that epitomizes the way the male, in the image of the king, made himself the object which all gazed upon, the cynosure of court and culture.

François I ruled France between 1515-1547, the contemporary of Henry VIII in England, both great Renaissance princes. Of all the Valois kings, François I fancied himself the greatest hunter. The great book on French hunting in the Renaissance, by Jacques de Foullioux, maintains the flattery posthumously and the cult of royalty in the hunt by calling François "le père de veneurs," the father of hunters. He exploited the hunt as a form of social control, a form of display and propaganda, as effectively as any king.

Thus, the story is told of François in his contest with a "furious" and "raging" boar.

Most of the châteaux in the Loire valley of France are glorified hunting lodges. François' favorite was at Amboise, along with Fontainebleau. He repaired to Amboise frequently to hunt. On one such sojourn, he decided that he wanted to entertain—*recréer*—the ladies of the court. To do so, he sent his hunters into the forest around the château with nets and cords, ordering them to capture a *sanglier vivant*—a living boar. The hunters captured a young boar, four years of age, put it in a big trunk made of oak, and dragged the beast back to court.

Meanwhile in the château, François had his tradesmen construct a large enclosure in the courtyard, out of chests and trunks. About this arena, they built an elevated viewing gallery, which could be reached by four stairways.

François proposed a "*combat corps à corps*" with "*l'animal furieux*" in the presence of the entire court. It was to be a battle body-to-body, king and beast.

But the ladies of the court, including the Queen, protested so strenuously at this idea, worried about the safety of the royal person, that they prevented the fight. Instead, the king devised a more harmless entertainment. He ordered mannequins to be made,

which, when struck by the boar, would spin in pirouettes.

François gave a signal, and the chest containing the boar was opened, and the beast came charging out, "villainous" and "bristling" and "furious," clacking his tusks. He rushed the mannequins angrily, and they spun in the air. But then he began to look for an escape from the enclosure in the courtyard, running about the arena, inspecting the edges. At one of the stairways, the boar noticed a break between two of the boxes that were used to make the wall.

With a violent crash, he burst through the barricade, and rushed up one of the stairways into the gallery where the king sat. As the story is told, the boar without turning around, goes straight for where the king was. Five or six of his gentlemen try to put themselves between the beast and the king. The king would not put up with that. At the moment when the beast wants to attack him, from that good spear that he held in his fist, the king gives the beast a thrust with his sharp point right through the chest. The boar is transpierced, mortally hit. He leaves the king, staggers back into the courtyard by another stairway, after making several steps, falls dead and stiff. (*Les Chasses*, 23-24)

The image of the chivalrous king, François had saved the queen and her ladies, whose joy it is reported was "boundless" that he had escaped his peril. His manly prowess delivered the court from the fury of the beast, and won the admiration of all the ladies and gentlemen there gathered. How truthful the story is may be a matter of doubt. But the importance of the story lies precisely in its value as propaganda. This staged hunt, like the carefully scripted narrative, proves the innate prowess of the king, his inherent right to rule.

Through the hunt, the king established himself as the court's cynosure, the "glass of fashion and the mold of form." He was what all men of rank would try to emulate, the mirror in which they viewed what they would be.

In Europe of the Middle Ages, hunting became an elaborate game—the game of the game. Kings were masters of the game, in both senses. They mastered the animals, and they were masters in the game of hunting. Their codified hunts, and their elaborately staged displays, may strike us as utterly anachronistic, out of place, irrelevant. But the lesson is in the form, not the content. It was a lesson in hierarchy and social status. Like François at Amboise, the kings staged their hunts to enforce these lessons on a nearly daily basis—who's on top, and who's watching. Strip this game of its fancy ornaments, its high-brow theories, its elaborate rituals, and it becomes visible in a new way. It's about social power. It's not only about life and death. Killing the beast was another way to teach this central lesson: The game is about winners and losers.

Men learned their lessons well, because we still live with this legacy.

The hunt was a highly artificial game. But because the game was about life and death, it seemed so real. And because the game was so full of

pageantry and pomp, it seemed so beautiful and dazzling. Who could see it was only a game?

## II. "...the shot and danger of desire"

"When night dogs run, all sorts of deer are chas'd"

(Shakespeare, *Falstaff, Merry Wives of Windsor*, V.5.238)

"Her love is not the hare that I do hunt."

(Shakespeare, *Rosalind, As You Like It*, IV.3.18)

Curio: Will you go hunt, my lord?

Duke: What, Curio?

Curio: The hart?

Duke: Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purg'd the air of pestilence!  
That instant was I turn'd into a hart,  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursue me.

(Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, I.1.16-22)

Manhood entered the modern world artfully camouflaged in hunter green. He looked so natural, no one realized he'd invented the costume. It's the trick of the mind: dressed up as a hunter in green, men disguised themselves from themselves. We forgot—and forget—the artificiality of the hunter, and the notions of masculinity he supports. Men became somehow invisible. They became hidden from themselves. We look so natural, in our mind's eye, roaming the woods in green, we forget we invented this figure. The ritualized hunt was a way of rendering conventions invisible, of giving them a natural habitat.

This is the hunter in our heads.

But there's another hunter we carry inside of us as well. He's more deeply embedded in manhood. And he's also closely linked to modern notions of masculine identity. And he lives in a thicket that's denser than any found in nature. And the creatures he chases have proved both more vulnerable and more elusive.

He is the hunter in the heart.

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, this hunter took on a new prominence in men's emotional lives. As the French philosopher Michel Foucault says, sometime in the Middle Ages sex changed from a matter of morals, a concern with who was master and who was submissive, to something more complex. It became part of the secret of our identity, and the interrogation of desire became part of the interrogation of the self. Sex was an entire mode of being, a way of relating to yourself, to others, and to truth. "But I think people still consider, and are invited to consider, that sexual desire is able to reveal what is their deep identity," Foucault said. It became a manifestation of what is most secret in our identity, and Foucault traces the birth of this "secret" to the Middle Ages.

The sexual hunt became even more important than the epic hunt. The hare hunter became even more manly than the boar hunter. The hunt provided the most important language men had at their disposal for making themselves into subjects—men—who desired. Plus, it gave a certain "aesthetics" to their experience, in the ritual codes and rules that loving began to develop. It was in large measure

through the hunt that men learned to enter into their emotions. It conveyed them into the habitat of their heart. It took them to the borders of what they were able to feel. No one can see a landscape except through the metaphors that they carry with them into the landscape, or at least, that's the way we begin to see—through lenses we've been given. Men have learned to see the landscape of sex, love, and relationships through the hunting metaphors that the men of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance carried with them into this new emotional territory.

Hunting conveyed them into the regions of the heart. Through hunting men learned to feel "roused"—a hunting term. It gave them a territory to explore, and a metaphor for mapping the territory. As hunters, they had a way both to explore the territory and exploit the creatures. Hunting provided a language of seduction, in use even now.

Shakespeare's favorite sets of puns on love and sex, involving animals, exploit the hunt for the various species of deer. They were the food of love's appetite, their words the tracks of love whose trail they delighted in following. The hart and the hind were the most common. The word hart may mean heart, and with a sideways glance, look at hurt as well.

Their favorite "chase"? For "chaste" hinds.

Almost as common was the deer—deer pun. In *Love's Labour Lost*, one of Shakespeare's early comedies, the four lords and four ladies go on a hunt in the kingdom of Navarre. It could lead to "greasy" talk, and "grease" was part of the way of measuring, with your fingers, the amount of fat on a dead stag. "Who is the shooter?" asks a man to the ladies as they sally to the hunting field, punning on "suitor." The lady says she is.

Boyet: And who is your deer?

Rosalind: If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near. . . .

Maria: You still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she strikes at the brow.

Boyet: But she herself is hit lower. Have I hit her now?

(*Love's Labour Lost*, IV.i.114-117)

The language could swerve quickly from the civil banter of courtiers to the suggestive opportunities the hunt for "dear hearts" provided.

To wear stag's horns was to be "horn-mad," a pun Shakespeare frequently employs. We might call it, more simply, "horny."

The sexuality of hunting grows blatant frequently in Shakespeare, and he enjoys making obscene puns. It's part of the banter of his characters. Examples abound. Speaking of deer and does, bucks and stags, the pandar Pandarus in *Troilus and Cressida*, one of Shakespeare's dark comedies, sings a little song of love. Pandarus is where we get our slang term for the pimp and go-between, and he pictures Cupid, or "Love," as a hunter who eats "nothing but doves," and that breeds "hot love":

Love, love, nothing but love, still love,  
still more!

For O, love's bow  
Shoots buck and doe.  
The shaft confounds

Not that it wounds,  
 But tickles still the sore.  
 These lovers cry, O ho, they die!  
 Yet that which seems the wound to kill,  
 Doth turn O ho! to ha, ha, ha!  
 So dying love lives still.  
 O ho! a while, but ha, ha, ha!  
 So ho! groans out for ha, ha, ha!—hey ho!”  
 (*Troilus and Cressida*, III.1.116-124)

Cupid's wound tickles as well as hurts. A love sore plays upon the technical language of harts—a hart of four years is a sorrel or sore. This sore, or wound, erupts in the “lovers cry.” Crying out, like hunters, in hunt yells—“O ho.” But this cry, of course, this “killing,” is a lover's death—the cry that comes with orgasm. To die was to have an orgasm. “So ho!”

In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare gives technical language from the hunting manuals to describe this sexual death, this *petite mort*. The king is picturing two lovers together, playing with each other's hands, paddling palms: “and then to sigh, as ‘twere,” he whispers, with evil in his tone, “the mort o' th' deer.”

Specific calls were given at the “mort.” Three blasts of the horn announced the moment.

Hares were another favorite for lovers. According to Benedick, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Cupid was a god of traps and snares, in addition to giving you a thump with his bird bolt, he was “a good hare-finder.” The hare had a long association with Venus, as did deer and fawns. She always preferred these creatures of the chase, rather than the more manly kinds of prey like boars. Hares were a favorite gift among lovers, and the Queen of Love is frequently pictured with hares. They were a famously lecherous animal, were described as female in the natural histories dating back to the ancients, and were notoriously sly beasts in that they could easily change sex. So you could chase a hare, but to “raise a hair” meant something quite specifically male, at least to Petronius and Ovid.

Shakespeare knew the puns in the hare hunt. Mercutio, the quick-witted nasty man in *Romeo and Juliet*, reduces all love to sex. When the nurse comes to the piazza in Verona, looking for Romeo, Mercutio screams out “A bawd...So ho!” Bawd was a dialect word for a hare, and of course, a whore. Mercutio is off on his chase. He spies a hare, he tells Romeo, but not a real one:

No hare, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a Lenten pie,  
 that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.  
 (*Romeo and Juliet*, II.4.132-133)

Hare means female genitalia, whore, and hair. She's too old and lean to be good for anything but a Lenten pie. But we still have the slang that this alludes to—a “hair pie.”

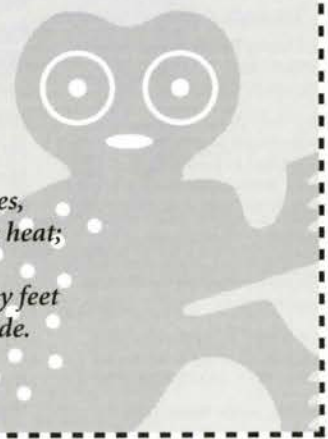
The hunt and sex did not only intersect in wit, though that's always a kind of truth of the unconscious. The hunt and sexuality and love had a strange and powerful overlap, and men could easily slip between the two, one minute loving hunters, the next hunting lovers. The question for us, out of this venatic sexual wilderness, is to what extent the hunt shaped the landscape of love—how fully and in what ways did hunters define the natural habitat of sex?

And second, and for us even more important, to what extent have we inherited their notions of the sexual hunt? Have we made desire, like Cupid, into a predator? Do we see the gardens of love through the eyes of hunters, also? And if so, what will we do to begin to change this erotic jungle, this Eros in our hearts?

We need to call this hunter forth, let him speak, see what the lay of the land, so to speak, looks like. And then I'd like to try to see how he does if we give him a new map, and even a new outfit. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the hunt was an evocative metaphor for sexuality, at once powerful and frightening. It hardly need be anything more than stated—a hunt was in progress—and we could easily begin to guess that erotic suggestiveness was hovering at the margins, like a falcon watching from a perch. Often, the hunt was simply the backdrop for an erotic hunt, and the explicit connections were not made. But frequently, they were. And they discovered several different creatures, several natural habitats. The main one was the deer, *le cerf d'Amour*. He was the creature that courtly lovers pursued, and manuals were written for him. He was idealized, domesticated, tamed. In Shakespeare the hunt became, well, an elaborate sensual game, very witty. But the dynamics penetrated deep into the psyches of the players. And finally, there was the wild hunt

**THE GREATER KUDU** by Rick Jones

Despite all reports to the contrary,  
 the Greater Kudu is an awkward beast;  
 that's why, the guide tells us, he is wary  
 of hunters, and bolts at even the least  
 shadow in the tall grass; and at a whiff  
 of danger carried on the wind, he'll rise  
 on brittle legs to give the air a sniff.  
 During a drought when dust gets in his eyes,  
 his tongue grows thick and heavy with the heat;  
 the taller thistles scrape his underside;  
 loose stones are known to bruise his honney feet  
 and thorns make scratches all along his hide.  
 We say we hunt to end this misery;  
 but no—we want to kill whatever's free.



of love, where love became dangerous, veered toward death, and called up the demons, cruel hunters who rode nocturnal horses—nightmares.

All these parts of the erotic hunt could exist simultaneously. Or they could slide, as in a dream, into each other. The lover, as Shakespeare knew better than anyone, was “high fantastical,” and near to the poet and the madman in his closeness to his inner feelings. So the language of love was also the language of paradox. Before moving into stories, here's how Shakespeare summarizes this habitat of the heart, using hunting imagery to describe the act of sex—“Th' expense of spirit”:

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
 Is lust in action; and till action, lust  
 Is perjer'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,

Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,  
 Enjoy'd no sooner, but despised straight,  
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,  
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait  
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad:  
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,  
 Had, having, and in quest to have extreme,  
 A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,  
 Before, a joy propos'd, behind a dream.  
 All this world well knows, yet none knows well  
 To shun this heaven that leads men to this hell.  
 (Sonnet 129)

Past reason hunted. The pursuit of a dream. A bait that, swallowed, makes us mad. A heaven that leads to hell. It's a remarkable world these hunters opened up, where ecstasy seems so closely tied to horror. And men learned to chase a compulsive and tortured sexual desire. Yet one thing remained constant. Hunters had somehow naturalized the chase as the story of sex. Hunters took men to the borders of their natural experience, someplace between tame and wild, and there they discovered the body of sex in the body of nature. It's through their eyes, hunters' eyes, that we largely came to see human desire in nature. Through these particular distortions of longing and power, we created the natural habitat of sex.

### III. "I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer"

As a purple sunrise rises over the dewy garden, a youthful Adonis hies to the chase. He's a beautiful boy, a pretty boy. His cheeks are rosy, and he's more beautiful than all the nymphs in the countryside. He's even more beautiful than Venus herself. He loves to hunt, especially for the toothy boar, as any manly hunter would. But love, he laughs at. Love he scorns. The hunt marks out in him a psychological territory apart from love, a manliness that disdains love. He aspires to the epic hunt, the boar hunt, the heroic hunt.

Venus, however, has her own hunt. It's the soft hunt, the lover's hunt that she's adept at. The "sick-thoughted Venus" makes straight for him, and with a boldness that scares him, begins to woo the young hunter. She has a secret garden of her own, she tells him, where she'll show him "A thousand honey-secrets" if he'll get off his horse.

Adonis, however, had a "leaden appetite," and disdained her. That only urged her more. She seized his sweaty hands, plucked him from his horse, and wrapped the "tender boy" in her arms. He blushed and pouted.

That turned her on more. She tied up his horse—"O, how quick is love!"—and moved next to tie up the rider, pushing him backwards, "as she would be thrust," governing him in strength, "though not in lust."

She was beside him in an instant, both lying on elbows and hips. He was recalcitrant, and she turned predatory. Shakespeare says the goddess was like an "empty eagle," shaking her wings, devouring all the flesh she could, kissing his brow, his cheek, his chin. Adonis was panting, and above her, Venus "feedeth on the steam, as on a prey." (*Venus and Adonis*, 63).

Her arms she wrapped about him, and Adonis turned into a small bird: "Look how a bird lies tangled in a net." That was Adonis in her arms. His struggle only made him more beautiful in her eyes:

Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,  
 Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes.  
 (69-70)

The coyness of the game—Venus' "time-beguiling sport"—makes her the pounding huntress. Ovid had taught, in the *Amores*, that a lover should only chase the quarry that flees—the chase is the greatest sport. Adonis is the ever more provocative, elusive desire for Venus.

She tries the argument of *carpe diem*—seize the day. Adonis blamed her for being "immodest," and she accused him of being a "lifeless statue, cold and senseless stone" (211). Then she embraced him in her arms, locked her "lily fingers one in one," and made an invitation that made even the prudish Adonis smile:

"Fondling," she saith, since I have hemm'd thee here  
 Within the circuit of this ivory pale,  
 I'll be the park, and thou shalt be my deer:  
 Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;  
 Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,  
 Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

"Within this limit is relief enough,  
 Sweet bottom grass and high delightful plain,  
 Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,  
 To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:  
 Then be my deer, since I am such a park,  
 No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.  
 (231-240)

At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,  
 That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple,  
 Love made those hollows, if himself were slain  
 ... (231-243)

The lexicon of venery provides the goddess with the imagery of seduction—the "pale" or fence of her arms, enclosing a park where the deer Adonis can find "relief" or pasture to feed. The body of nature is the body of love's desire, and all the erogenous zones of the female body are contained within the limit, the ivory pale, of this hunt.

The habitat of sex is the female body.

But it's a frightening habitat, even for the boar hunts, or would-be boar hunters like Adonis. What's particularly fascinating about his poem is not its Ovidian sensuality. Shakespeare shows he can do erotic poetry in an even more seductive and witty style than Ovid himself, the *magister amoris*. Shakespeare makes sex what it never was for Ovid. For the ancients, desire was a single story: tracking and pouncing upon prey. There might be a hand-to-hand encounter, but the Eros meant domination. In Shakespeare, seduction has grown much more complex, a twisting narrative of push and pull, a negotiation. The distribution of power between the lovers is much of the erotic element, and the key to the psychology of each lover is how he or she is placed in the dynamics of power and desire. ♦

#### References:

- ...i, P. V. *Jacobean Pageant, Court of King James I*. Cambridge, MA, 1962.
- ...Albert S. *Monarchy and the* ... London, 1948.
- ...Trench, Charles. *The* ... and the Squire: A History of Hunting and Game Preservation. London, 1967.
- ...David. *Lexicon of the* ... German Hunt. Berlin,
- ...Michel. *Politics,* ... Culture: Interviews and ... Writings 1977-1984. Ed. ... D. Kritzman. NY, 1988.
- ...es de Francois Ier, ... es par Louis de Brézé
- ...es La Chasse sous les Valois
- ...onte Hector de la Ferrière. 1699. Trans. Roberta Brown.
- ...D. H. A Chapter of
- ...l History: The Fathers of the
- ...re of Field Sport and Horses. 1924.
- ...e, P. B. *Gentlemen and* ... s: The English Game Laws, 1331. Cambridge, UK, 1981.
- ...Jeanne Addison. *The* ... earean Wild: Geography, ... Gender. Lincoln, 1989.
- ...Anne. *Hunting in Middle* ... iterature. Bury St. ... s, UK, 1993.
- ...x, Marcelle. "The Medieval
- ... Speculum 42 (1967),
- ...y of Love. Ithaca, 1974.
- ...es of Charlemagne, by
- ...and Notker the Stammer.
- ...ewis Thorpe.
- ...dsworth, 1969.
- ...laus. "The Sobbing Deer:
- ...like It, ll.i.21-66 and the
- ...il Context," in *Renaissance*
- ...Ed. S. Schoenbaum.
- ...n, 1970, 79-109.

# Attainable Paradise

BY DAVID SEAL

**"What you call salvation belongs to the time before death." — Kabir**

"Somewhere up ahead, not too far," Sirilkumar told me as he adjusted his headset. "We must be careful. This is an aggressive herd. A female charged us yesterday."

We were tracking a herd of Asian elephant, one of whom had been fitted with a radio collar, in India's Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, on the border between the southern provinces of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. We'd hiked a kilometer out from a dirt range road in dry scrub forest, a landscape which resembled the American West in the cowboy movies of my youth. Cactus flowers flamed up from the sands; scintillating quartz studded the dry washes. Thorny acacias meant that we had to exercise care if we took cover.

Sirilkumar turned with his receiver. Static chattered on two sides, but in the middle it resolved into a persistent clicking.

"There's a water hole under those trees," he said, bobbing his head to the right. "They are probably resting now." He motioned to his watch. It was 10:20 a.m. "They will rest there from now until three."

We couldn't see anything yet, so we edged forward. Sirilkumar and the other tracker, Krishnan, were members of a team of research scientists from the Bombay Natural Historical Society. One of the projects the BNHS elephant people had given themselves was to track selective herds in the Mudumalai/Bandipur park areas. Range studies would help to determine the continuing health of herds, their migratory patterns, their habitat needs and destructions, and potential conflicts with human settlements, both within and without the park. This herd was familiar; they tracked it daily. Still, nothing was taken for granted.

"There," Krishnan whispered, while pointing. He'd gone ahead, moving around some acacias, keeping the breeze in his face. I had to edge forward before I could see movement in the thicket fifty meters away: Big elephant ears flapping in the midday heat, one of an elephant's prime ways of keeping cool.

Elephants have a keen sense of smell, but their eyesight is only average. The BNHS trackers were very gracious to me, not only in letting me tag along but in not condescending to me with a lot of advice. Still, they were wary of my shirt. They weren't saying anything. They were looking at it as I in turn peered at the elephants with my field glasses. I noticed, between sightings.

"Too bright?" I asked.

They nodded.

So much for the safari look. I'd bought it at the lodge I'd been staying at. It was wonderfully light, perfect for the Indian heat. It had more pockets than

I had notions to fill, and its light tan color seemed to perfectly match the color of the sand around me. Wrong. The BNHS guys were wearing army surplus fatigues, a dark green, which to my untrained eye didn't match much of anything, since growth was sparse.

I was careful from then on not to move into the open.

We watched for a half hour. The thicket was so dense we could not get an accurate count. "Five plus" was how the morning would be charted. I saw two large cows and two younger ones of undetermined sex together, and another older cow off to the side. Only one presented itself clearly to us, the ears at first and then its rear. We were content. There was no attempt to move forward for the sake either of an accurate count or impressing the guest.

Nor was I going to insist on getting closer. When a wild elephant gets larger than the field of view in a telephoto lens, you are usually in trouble. It had happened recently to an overly curious Canadian who, like me, had also been interested in elephants and who had stayed at the same lodge as I. He'd gone out for a walk alone, a daily habit of his, despite several warnings against it. His curiosity turned over-zealous when he'd heard about a lone bull in the area. The bull was well known. A tuskless male, or makala, he was named "Admiral" and tracked regularly by the BNHS people and unofficially by the local farmers and lodge operators. The Canadian had gone out one evening, bringing his dog. He probably thought the dog would be an added measure of security.

He ran into a local. "Don't go any farther," the local had said. "There's a bull nearby."

"Where?" the Canadian asked.

"Across the stream."

His body wasn't found until the next day, despite a search by torchlight after he failed to return.

I had pressed the proprietors' nephew, who was running the lodge during their holiday, about the details. Keith was Indian; his English was English, his manners impeccable, his gaze direct and intense.

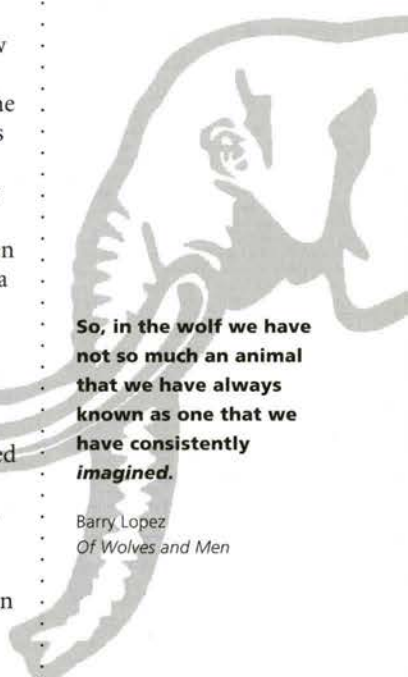
"My cousin found him," he said. Keith knew I was interested in elephants. He seemed to be weighing my urge to know with equal measures of local discretion and lodge policy. Dead guests were not good business.

I pushed on. "How did he die?"

"We don't know. The elephant was angry. It was stupid bringing the dog along. The dog probably wouldn't stop barking."

"The dog got away."

"Of course. And the bull took it out on the man. Ripped his clothes off, broke his shoulders. It wasn't pretty."



**So, in the wolf we have not so much an animal that we have always known as one that we have consistently imagined.**

Barry Lopez  
*Of Wolves and Men*

That was enough for me.

"He was married, you know. Only twenty-four. His wife was here, too, doing research. We all warned him not to walk alone."

I gave him my best I-wouldn't-dream-of-it look. I meant it, too, although there have been times in my youth as well when I may have assumed that fate exempted me from much good advice. I was here now to watch and study elephants, but not to widow my wife, de-father my daughter, and deprive the energetic new administration of an able-bodied taxpayer.

That was why, in this near-desert scrub, I kept an eye on the figurative back door. Admiral was at least two kilometers away; he too was wired, and we'd taken a quick and distant fix on him from the road. It was always possible, however, that we might scare up something else. I had complete confidence in the BNHS people. It simply gave me a false sense of importance to anoint myself as rear guard, and I could play with that a little.

We left discreetly. Krishnan cut some cactus blossoms for me to eat on the way out. I thanked him. They had a pleasant texture, a benign taste—vaguely like watermelon, and lots of seeds, which the Indians ate. I didn't.

"Nice life, you guys," I said. "You take a jeep out twice a day and watch elephants. And dessert is free."

They smiled, and rolled their heads in that Indian fashion that Westerners always notice and can never quite imitate. It is as if their brains do figure eights in moments of approval. The Hindus invented zero; perhaps here, too, is where the infinity sign came from.

Stuck as we are between those two forms of nothingness, we humans have a lot to do. My gentle mockery was really a way of saying thanks for your work in caring for elephants. Watching them, keeping track of them, had ostensible scientific purposes. But we have arrived at a new age in human-animal relationships. In the India of 1500 years ago, temples were constructed inside walls that were often sculpted into animal shapes. It was a way of saying that animals stood guard over human sacred space. Some of the animals were realistic; some were purely creatures of imagination. The eminent Hindu scholar, Wendy Doniger, has noted this prevalence of animal forms in temples. "Animals and gods are two closely related communities poised like guardians on either side of the threshold of our human community, two others by which we define ourselves. Aristotle remarked that a man who could not live in society was either a beast or a god."

Times have changed. In India, sectarian and communal violence threatens the very notion of sacred space. Among the few places left that we can call sacred, parks which shelter wild animals from human encroachment can claim honor from cultures as divergent as East and West, or even Hindi and Tamil, Hindu and Moslem. Sacred space is increasingly wild, not human. Fierce animals carved in stone and meant to scare away evil spirits have been replaced by naturalists in jeeps, communicating by radio and satellite, and by their very presence keeping poachers at bay.

In the West, the gods have been taking a beating for four hundred years. But it is nothing compared to what has been happening to our animals. India, nearing one billion people, has only in the last forty years begun to be hard on its gods; but its tiger population is at three thousand, and its elephants at ten to twelve thousand. Mudumalai, Bandipur, Periyar, and the other parks of southern India, indeed, all of India, are like arks floating in a human flood, a flood which has not yet crested, and from which no dove has yet returned.

On that day in the dry scrub, I was doing more than watching elephants, although I didn't know it at the time. I was bearing witness to a kind of polar shift in sacred space. What is wild is no longer to be killed or transformed, but saved. The Noahs of our time are not simply keeping humans out, either. If the new temples are the parks, the walls around them are made up of dissertations and monographs and accumulated data, as humankind tries, via the long way, to learn the "language" of animals. Doniger says, "The hope that all animals may be in some sense even less other than they seem to be is the source of a myth that we share with Hindus and Buddhists, the myth of a magic time or place or person that erases the boundary between man and animals... Many mythologies of animals are haunted by this lost unattainable paradise. To be with the animals (or the gods) would be to transcend our human condition entirely."

Scientists and to an increasing extent tourists are hoping, in their incursions into the parks, to erase those boundaries, if only for a moment or two. I'd come as an ecological tourist looking over the shoulders of scientists. They were after data; I was chasing wonder, a brief but attainable paradise. And I'd come to the world's oldest culture, and to one of the world's great profusions of wildlife, on a trip that I hoped would take me to both of Doniger's guardian communities: Parks with their wild spaces and animal spirits; and temples with their cultural spaces and animal forms. My totem animal was the elephant, which lives in both.

I've always admired gargoyles. Animals purely of our imagination, they have protected our Western sacred space from Notre Dame de Paris to the Chrysler Building in New York. It used to be religious; these days it is commercial. Now I'd been a gargoyle of sorts myself. In watching science with an imaginative eye, I'd also guarded the temple, however insignificantly. Inside the sacred space, transgression brought death. I'd stood brief watch at a respectful distance.

The elephants never knew we were there. ♦

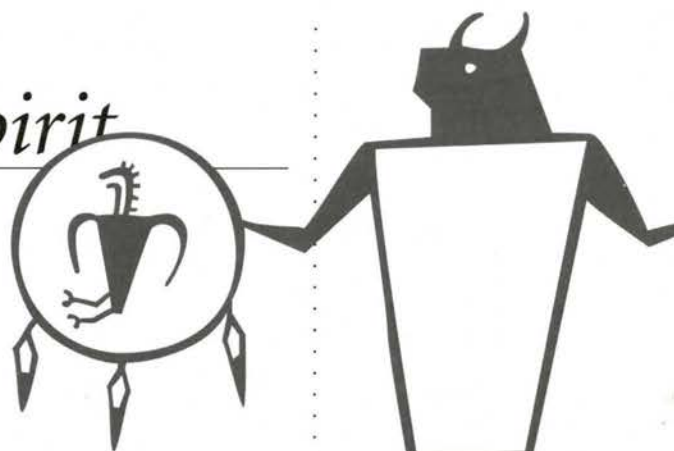


# Children of the Master Spirit

BY PAUL O. INGRAM

**Each animal has its own Master Spirit which owns all the animals of its kind . . . so all the animals are the children of the Master Spirit that owns them. It is just like a large family.**

— *Raining Bird (Cree)*<sup>1</sup>



On a sullen November day twenty years ago I took a long hike in the foothills of the High Sierras that ended at a forgotten nineteenth century Indian cemetery. The wind was up and snow covered the land like a white shroud and clung to the trees like cotton by the time I reached the cemetery bathed in gray twilight. The California tribe that placed the cemetery there had vanished long ago. Season by revolving season, frost, snow, and heat had cracked the flat stones until none stood upright.

As I stood freezing among the frozen dead, wiping snow from my eyes, I saw the only other living thing in that bleak place—a mule deer showing ribs and hunger beneath its skin. Only the storm contained us. That shrinking, long-eared animal cowering beside a slab in an abandoned graveyard must have expected the momentary flash of death. But it did not run. And I, with a rifle I used to carry in that day and time, also stood still, while snow—a real blizzard by then—raged over and between us. I did not fire, and have not fired since.

We both had the power to be fruitful and multiply, I remember thinking. Why was it so, and was there a message in our meeting that somehow seemed spoken from a long way off, carried by the cold wind, out of explicit hearing? Wind swirled snow between us as the temperature fell. The deer needed that bit of shelter. In its trembling body, in the millions of years of evolution between us, there was no story teller's aid. It had survived alone, thin, crumpled, and small. But it was alive, and that seemed triumph enough.

I slowly backed away from the mule deer and the dead human beings and their fallen stones. I knew that if I could follow the fence line, there would be a fire and company for me. It's hard to leave tracks in a snow storm, and they quickly filled as I made my way back to the cabin of my friends. Then I suddenly knew a truth that has since been confirmed by my studies in comparative religion, especially of Native American spirituality: it was out of such isolation that the mule deer and humanity had arisen, and to such desolation to which the mule deer and humanity—along with everything else caught in the field of space-time—will return. We are, in essence, belated ghosts of an angry winter searching for springtime; we carry in our hearts winter's death intertwined with yearning for springtime's life.

That mule deer was, for me, what Loren Easley

called a "hidden teacher." It taught me a hard lesson. But as I discovered later from native American friends, for whom animals are *explicit* teachers, animals—including mule deer—teach other lessons about the Sacred for those of us—human beings and animals—caught in field of space-time. This essay is about some of these lessons seen through the lenses of Oglala Lakota experience of animals as vehicles of the Sacred Power, or in Lakota language, *wakan-tanka* ("the Great Mysterious" or most often, though incorrectly, "the Great Spirit").

How is it that the Sacred becomes manifest in animals (as well as in plants) in native American spirituality, in this case illustrated by the Lakota? The key to answering this question in the case of the Plains Indians is the vision quest. Among the Lakota, whose term for it translates into English as "crying for a vision," the vision quest was undertaken by virtually all men and less frequently by Lakota women. Not all successful vision quests resulted in the formal acquisition of animal "spirit guides." Usually, however, those that did involved an encounter with a bird or a mammal, and, occasionally, an insect such as a spider. Sometimes, a vision quest could be unintentional, as in an encounter with an animal in a dream. Intentional or not, it was through such visionary experiences of animals that the seeker's desired goal and the quality of his or her future life could be achieved, provided the specific instructions which were conveyed by the animal teacher were carried out.

Consequently, the experience of the vision quest most often involved an intense relationship with animal spirits who mediated "power" (*wakan*) to the seeker. These experiences go beyond and are deeper in meaning than encounters with phenomenal animals in our normal waking state of consciousness. That is, apparently there occurs a shift to another level of cognition in which the Lakota visionary no longer merely encounters the phenomenal animal, but the Sacred itself (*wakan-tanka*) appearing in animal form.

Although all Lakota men were expected to undertake a vision quest for a spirit helper, not all received visions. There is also a great deal of variation among those who did. For some the experience was recurring and of such high intensity that the recipient might become one of a number of types of "medicine men." For example, those who dreamed or had visions of the Thunder-Beings or

**The bison is chief of all the animals, and represents the earth, the totality of all that is. It is feminine, creating earth principle which gives rise to all living forms.**

Black Elk, as quoted by Joseph Epes Brown, *Animals of the Soul*

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Joseph Epes Brown, *Animals of the Soul* (Rockport, MS.: Element, 1992), 1.

dogs were destined to become *hehoka*, or “contraries,” meaning those who did everything backwards, e.g., walking backwards or riding their horses backwards.

Although the Lakota never expressed it systematically, they also ranked animals according to their “spirit-power.” Even among traditional Lakota today, the grizzly bear, for example, is the chief of the underground earth forces, conceived as a negative and terrifying force. The bison is chief, in an exclusively positive sense, of all the surface animals of the earth, and the eagle has supremacy over all flying animals. Some animals outrank others in terms of their “attracting power,” and the spider outranks all in terms of cleverness. Seen in this light, the Lakota experience animal spirits as qualitatively different manifestations of *wakan-tanka*, from which human beings may obtain “power.”

Visionary encounters with animal spirits brought with them certain social obligations to share the attainment of power with the visionary’s community. Among other things—such as making a medicine bundle or a talisman—anyone receiving a vision was obliged to share its power through ritual reenactment, sometimes by a dance ceremonial or by singing songs learned in the vision. By acting out or dancing or singing the vision, the visionary’s subjective experience is intensified and the tribe is able to participate in the vision’s power.<sup>2</sup>

Lakota visionary experience with the animals of the Great Plains and the Black Hills engendered a type of thinking quite different from that of Anglo-European people. To this day, for traditional Lakota, the world has fewer set limits than it usually has for contemporary Anglo-European people. There is fluidity and transparency in Lakota experience of nature in general and of animals in particular which permits no absolute separation between the world of animals, human beings, or spirits. In the words of a Lakota medicine man named Sword, “the Four Winds is an immaterial god, whose substance is never visible.... While he is one god, he is four individuals.... The Word *Wakan-Tanka* means all the *wakan* beings; they are all as if one.”<sup>3</sup> Or as Black Elk reported: “Crazy Horse dreamed and went into the world where there is nothing but the spirits of all things. That is the real world behind this one, and everything we see here is something like a shadow from that world.”<sup>4</sup> To non-native Americans, Lakota experience of animals as vehicles of sacred power often appears incomprehensible. But the Lakota world is neither chaotic nor unstructured, because underlying this fluidity of animal forms is the coalescence of this fluidity into the unifying principle of *wakan-tanka*, whose plurality of manifestations in animals does not compromise its unity. This can be seen in the following examples—certainly not a complete list—of how certain animals are associated with different forms of Sacred Power.

An instructive place to begin is the following chain of associations with the cocoon. From the cocoon there emerges, in a way just as mysterious to non-Lakotas as to Lakotas, the fluttering butterfly or moth. The Lakota believed these insects shared attributes with Whirlwind because of the “logical”

fact that a moth or butterfly can no more be contained than may the wind. So the moth or butterfly is identified with the formless power of wind. Further evidence of this identity is the fluttering, wind-producing actions of the wings, a trait possessed by other winged forms, such as the dragonfly, which also has access to Whirlwind power. The cocoon-encapsulated Whirlwind power is obviously valuable to a warrior; having such power, a warrior is as difficult to strike with a weapon as it is to hit a butterfly or a dragonfly. Furthermore, Whirlwind’s playful, twisting movements have power to cause confusion in an enemy’s mind.

A more famous association of Sacred Power manifested in a concrete way to human beings through a specific animal involves the bison, and tangentially, the grizzly bear, said by the Lakota to also confuse enemies. The buffalo is chief of all the animals and represents the earth, the totality of all

#### COMMEDIA DELL’ ARTE

by Rick Jones

*There is a unicorn lives down the street,  
the last of a long line of mythical beasts;  
he is old now and hoarse and tired and slow;  
his color has turned from white as snow  
to industrial gray. His horn is gone.  
A few hairs tuft above his blood-shot eyes  
in dubious spiral—anti-clockwise—  
where it once grew as straight and gold as dawn.*

*But now he’s fenced in fields they never sow,  
and looks whichever way the winds might blow;  
I hear him every night lament his past  
in emphysemic wheezes like an ass  
behind the barn in alfalfa and weed,  
where even the thistle has gone to seed.*

that is. It is the feminine, creative earth principle which gives rise to all living forms. The grizzly bear represents knowledge and use of underground earth forces (roots and herbs) in a “terrifying” and strongly masculine manner. It has no fear of human beings or other animals, and many of the powers that “medicine men” (*pejuta wicasa*) and “holy men” (*wicasa wakan*) used to cure were received from Grizzly Bear.

The Lakota also observed that in winter when a bison cow drops a calf, she blows out from her nose and mouth a red filmy substance which envelops and protects the newborn calf from winter’s cold, just as a cocoon protects its developing butterfly. Lakota imagination was also stimulated by the behavior of bison bulls pawing the earth and scooping up dust with their hooves and driving it straight up into the air: this is how bison bulls pray to Whirlwind for power over their enemies.

Finally, a number of other animals are associated with wind-power. For example, the spider teaches the Lakota that all life is as interdependent as its web. Spider sometimes weaves the destiny of human beings, is frequently carried by the wind on fine filaments of silk, and therefore is said to be a friend of the Thunder-Beings, who in their turn control

Throughout Nature's  
opolis: Chicago and  
Great West, William  
on distinguishes  
reen first nature, as  
inal, prehuman  
re, and second  
re as "the artificial  
re that people erect  
first nature." ...  
on writes: "In the  
ers' world, it was  
not to remember  
eating was a moral  
extricably bound  
ling... The sheer  
ty of these new  
ardized uses (for  
y part of the animal)  
fied to the packers'  
nity in their war on  
e, but in them the  
al also died a  
nd death. Severed  
the form in which  
d lived, severed  
the act that had  
d it, it vanished  
human memory as  
of nature's cre-  
s. Its ties to the  
receded, and in  
etting the animal's  
ne also forgot the  
es and the prairie  
and the departed  
herds of a land-  
e that seemed more  
more remote in  
e and time."

orker  
9, 1991)

example of this sort of  
enactment is the Lakota  
Black Elk's "Horse Dance."  
in C. Neihart, *Black Elk*  
(New York: Washington  
Press, 1932), 32

y Joseph Eps Brown,  
s of the Soul (Rockport,  
ement, 1992), 6.

the direction of the four winds. Likewise, the bull elk's power to attract females through his bugling call is also seen as a demonstration of control over the wind, and Lakota men often attempted to imitate this sound on their "love flutes" when they wanted to attract women.

What can those of us who are not Lakota learn from Lakota experience of animals as vehicles of the Sacred? How can animals mediate the Sacred beyond name-and-form to us who are not participants of this spiritual universe? Here are some suggestions.

Of course, my experience with animals is not identical to that of my Lakota friends. I am not Lakota, although I admire this culture and its spirituality. Still, animals have seemed to open up levels of reality for me I never thought possible. Something more than the phenomenal animal was involved in my encounters, or at least I think so. For I have seen fish flash in the creek that runs in front of my house, then before my eyes dissolve in water like salt. I have seen elk and mountain lion ascend bodily into the heavens and bald eagles and great blue herons fade into leaves. And I remember a starving mule deer waiting out a winter snow storm in an old Indian cemetery.

These events stunned me to silence and concentration. They teach—and are confirmed by the Lakota—that whatever the Sacred is, however one's culture trains one to name it, the Sacred conceals itself with stunning nonchalance. So whenever we do encounter the Sacred, vision and hearing seem like deliberate gifts, like revelation. For the Sacred conceals, as well as reveals; it has a trickster character that shows that reality, "the ways things really are," is always more than we expected or thought we knew.

So what's the lesson animals can teach non-Lakota human beings implicitly and the Lakota explicitly? Perhaps it is learning how to follow what Joseph Campbell called "our bliss." Would it not be proper to begin by flowing with nature rather than dominating nature, dangling from it wherever nature takes us? Then even death, where we are headed no matter what, cannot part us. Seize nature and let it seize us, until our eyes burn and drop out; let our murky flesh fall off in shreds, and let our bones unhinge and scatter, over fields and forests, lightly, thoughtlessly, from any height at all, from as high as eagles or ravens. Then we discover there never was anything to seize, nothing to grasp all along, because we are nature, looking at itself.

Or restated according to my particular theological perspective: animals can teach us that whatever God is, God does not demand that we give up our personal dignity or rob animals of their dignity, for God is the "life" of nature, *intimior intimo meo*, as Augustine put it—"more intimate than I am to myself." Of course, we do not have to stop abusing nature—unless we want to know God. It's like sitting outside on a cold, clear winter's night. We don't have to do so; it may be too cold. If, however, we want to look at the stars, we will find that darkness is necessary. But the stars neither require nor demand it. ♦

## DEAN'S COMMENTS

JOHN PETERSEN, DEAN OF HUMANITIES

**G**reetings to all readers. I welcome this opportunity to share what's going on within the Division of Humanities.

Much of the work of the Division goes on in the quiet, everyday efforts of our faculty, in teaching classes, counseling advisees, writing and researching, and serving on committees. These seemingly common tasks reflect our commitment to the challenges of teaching and learning. In calling attention to a twist of phrase, opening up an unknown text, and exploring a new mode of analysis, faculty and students become colleagues in the learning process and move together in a quest that energizes their lives and provides a vital core of liberal arts education.

It is not surprising that Humanities faculty continually strive for new modes of instruction and avenues of research. The Languages Department has requested a grant from the Culpepper Foundation to assist in equipping a multimedia Language Learning Resource Center. Key components of the proposal include the installation of a satellite dish and receiver, purchase of fourteen Power Macintosh computers, and outfitting a multimedia language center on the first floor of Mortvedt Library. The LLRC will enable the department to intensify first-year instruction in European languages, strengthen listening, reading, and writing skills in Asian languages, present humanitarian and environmental themes through electronic networking, introduce interactive videodisk programs and direct satellite broadcasts to third-year courses, and provide support for American Sign Language materials for the Hispanic and Asian communities.

Another sizable grant proposal has been submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities by fourteen faculty from seven PLU departments. The faculty study grant, with the intriguing title, "Sources of Community and Conflict: Freedom, Wisdom, and Violence," will support two summer seminars and symposia stretching over one academic year, affording faculty time for collective reflection on topics of mutual interest that interrelate their traditions and disciplines with pressing global problems. Issues dealing with the construction, identity, and sustainability of communities in the face of various types of conflict and modes of response offer dynamic grist for the dialogue, critique, and creative thinking the study group has proposed.

Following four years of reorganization our English Department has just proposed a full new curriculum, revamping the courses and restructuring the majors in literature and writing. Shakespeare will become the single "central" course required of all majors and will be offered every semester. The canon of American and English literature will be organized by historical periods. Much of the major's course work will occur in small upper-division classes. A new category of literature courses entitled "Literature and Difference" will emphasize multi-cultural and/or non-canonical literature. The department also proposes the following new courses: 213, Topics in Literature; 341, Feminist Approaches to Literature; 343, Post-Colonial Literature; and 374, American Ethnic Literature.

These are exciting proposals for faculty and the students they will impact.

One last comment. We are proud to announce that several Humanities faculty have assumed important administrative roles recently: Paul Menzel (philosophy) has accepted the position of Provost; Patricia Killen (religion) has become Chair of the Faculty, and Keith Cooper (philosophy) was just elected Dean of Humanities.

# Challenging the Hierarchical Mind

BY NANCY R. HOWELL

Those of us nurtured and educated in North America and Europe have inherited a useful method for thinking and making judgments that I refer to as the hierarchical mind. The hierarchical mind makes choices between better and worse, higher and lower, superior and inferior options. With all too rare, but thoughtful, deliberations, the hierarchical mind discerns that humans are more intrinsically valuable than hillsides or rocks.

Ecofeminism challenges the hierarchical mind to rethink the relationship of women and persons of color to culture and the relations of humanity to nature. Particularly striking is the ecofeminist call to look again at nature as a nonhierarchical ecology and to reinvent human relationships without domination and control as the central paradigm.

## What is Ecofeminism?

The interweaving of ecology and feminism in ecofeminism is a profound synthesis bringing ecojustice into the center of feminist scholarship and activism. While this interweaving has certainly directed attention to urgent environmental issues, ecofeminism has also provided opportunity for further substantiation of feminist claims and theory. One example is the problem of dualism. Feminist theory has addressed the problem of sexist dichotomizing, noting the patriarchal penchant for interpreting reality in terms of pairs of opposites one of which is superordinate and the other which is subordinate. Ecofeminism questions especially the dichotomizing of humans and nature, Creator and creature, spirit and matter, living and non-living. Susan Griffin and Starhawk identify in dualism the crippled and crippling effects of alienation (or split culture) and estrangement (Griffin 1989, 7; Starhawk 1982, 5). A second example is the problem of hierarchy. Feminism has named the injustice of hierarchical domination and questioned the rational, social, political, or utilitarian ordering of persons or creatures. Ecofeminism is very precise about the global environmental consequences of ordering the world in a "pyramid of domination" that devalues the nonhuman. Perhaps even more striking is a figurative "ecofeminist atheism," a refusal to reify hierarchy in a transcendent, omnipotent deity and to believe that the hierarchy exists in reality as more than a patriarchal construct. This serious doubt is established on the basis of ecologi-

cal data that points to a nonhierarchical, organic organization in nature.

The interweaving of feminism and ecology, according to Ynestra King, has contributed four foundational beliefs to the formation of ecofeminist principles.

1. The building of Western industrial civilization in opposition to nature interacts dialectically with and reinforces the subjugation of women, because women are believed to be closer to nature. Therefore ecofeminists take on the life struggles of all nature as our own (King 1989, 19).

Feminist and ecofeminist literature, including Sheri B. Ortner's important article "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?," has argued that there is an ideological connection between women and nature that places both women and nature in subjugation. The domination and exploitation of nature and women result from the same origins. Because a patriarchal hierarchy is the cultural sanction for injustice toward both women and nature, the struggle for women's liberation is a struggle for environmental liberation.

2. Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected onto nature and then used to justify social domination. Therefore, ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature, and ecofeminist practice is necessarily anti-hierarchical (King 1989, 19).

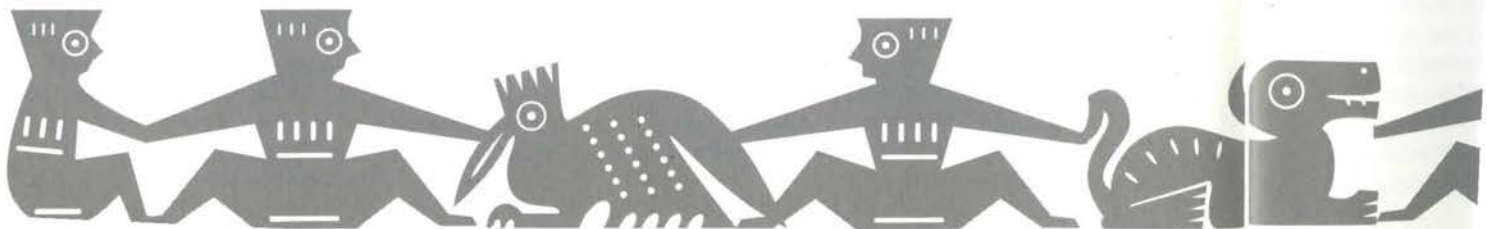
Feminism and ecology work together at this point to demonstrate that nature (including humans) is an interconnected web, since ecology demonstrates that there is no natural hierarchy governing human society or nature. Hierarchy is a cultural and social construct which has been projected onto nature. All forms of domination are supported by this construct. The forms of domination are connected, since the prototypical domination of women rests upon a hierarchy which is projected onto nature. The ecofeminist conclusion is antihierarchical; there is no natural or biological hierarchy among humans and in nature (King 1989, 24).

3. A healthy, balanced and nonhuman diversity. Ecology is as significant as pollution. Biodiversity is not wiping out of reducing human or to the harm through mass natural life and organic for the Therefore we ment that is fo celebrates divi domination a inism is such

Diversity is n in the human pop essential to the h is identifying is th and nature to ove and objectificatio oversimplificatio American white r and ideals. Euro- phy, and literatur sons and silence and literature of subcultures and oversimplified to human value, the carded from the vacuum in unique movement safegu creatures.

4. The survival understandir our own bod dualism and ing of huma ecological pr

A radical tra action is necess ecosystem. To u connection with mation. When interdependenc nature, then we restructuring th threaten surviv dualism is one nature and acc dent upon the



3. A healthy, balanced ecosystem, including human and nonhuman inhabitants, must maintain diversity. Ecologically, environmental simplification is as significant a problem as environmental pollution. Biological simplification, i.e., the wiping out of whole species, corresponds to reducing human diversity into faceless worker, or to the homogenization of taste and culture through mass consumer markets. Social life and natural life are literally simplified to the inorganic for the convenience of market society. Therefore we need a decentralized global movement that is founded on common interests yet celebrates diversity and opposes all forms of domination and violence. Potentially, ecofeminism is such a movement (King 1989, 20).

Diversity is necessary to the ecosystem. Diversity in the human population and diversity in nature are essential to the health of the ecosystem. What King is identifying is the inadequacy of reducing humans and nature to oversimplification, homogenization, and objectification. Among humans, this kind of oversimplification results in the privileging of Euro-American white masculine cultural values, goals, and ideals. Euro-American white history, philosophy, and literature are assumed to speak for all persons and silence or discard the history, philosophy, and literature of women and non-dominant subcultures and cultures. If the values in nature are oversimplified to an identification with absolute human value, then unique creatures may be discarded from the ecosystem, leaving a dangerous vacuum in unique ecological niches. The feminist movement safeguards and remembers unique creatures.

4. The survival of the species necessitates a renewed understanding of our relationship to nature, of our own bodily nature, and of nature-culture dualism and a corresponding radical restructuring of human society according to feminist ecological principles (King 1989, 20).

A radical transformation of human thought and action is necessary for human survival and a healthy ecosystem. To understand the human body and its connection with nature is one step toward transformation. When humans admit the connection, interdependence, and continuity of humans with nature, then we will have made progress toward restructuring the deep, destructive assumptions that threaten survival. Rejecting the nature-culture dualism is one step toward embracing a kinship with nature and accepting that human destiny is dependent upon the well-being of nature.

### What is the Appeal of Hierarchy?

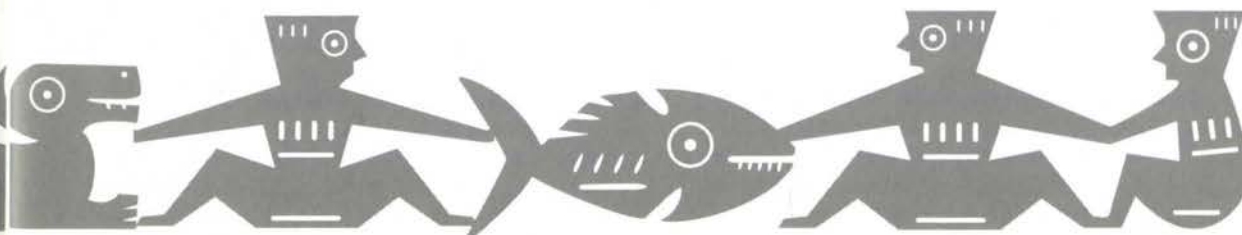
While these ecofeminist principles correspond with scientific data and human experience, they are not easily assimilated by culture at large. Antihierarchicalism seems to be a major obstacle. Antihierarchicalism is a central principle of the ecofeminist movement, yet the relativism and imprecision of this philosophy and ethic undermine it as a persuasive alternative even for some who sympathize with the feminist critique of hierarchy. Practically speaking, a hierarchical view of nature appears to be more useful, since a straightforward rank order of intrinsic or instrumental values simplifies human relations with nature and ethical considerations. I hear from critics that anything other than hierarchy is unimaginable or impractical. These critics are correct that antihierarchicalism is unimaginable. As Susan Griffin has argued, we are born with an "inherited habit of mind" which makes us incapable of imagining. This worldview no longer recognizes that hierarchy is an ideology and confuses hierarchy with objective reality (Griffin 1989, 8). The planet will probably succumb to our lack of imagination.

An ecofeminist antihierarchicalism, some might argue, is no competition for the clarity and beauty of Augustine's description of the rational hierarchy in *The City of God*.

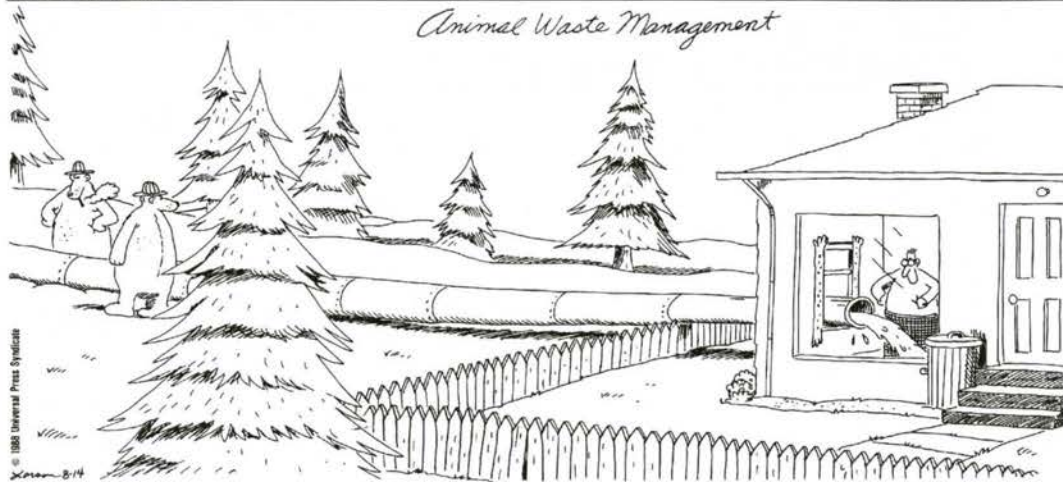
Among all things which somehow exist and which can be distinguished from God who made them, those that live are ranked higher than those that do not, that is to say, those that have the power of reproduction or even of appetite are above those which lack this faculty. In that order of living things, the sentient are superior to the non-sentient, for example, animals to trees. Among sentient beings, the intelligent are higher than the non-intelligent, as with men and cattle. Among the intelligent, the immortal are superior to the mortal, as angels to men (Augustine 1952, 211).

According to Augustine, the rational order of nature is an objective hierarchy that gives reason more freedom of choice than utilitarian decisions made at the mercy of passions. How certain and principled are choices made by reason and governed by the rational hierarchy!—Each decision is a simple and direct selection for the sentient and intelligent over the non-sentient and non-intelligent.

Does the clarity and intelligibility of hierarchy stand up to closer scrutiny? There is nothing inherently wrong with hierarchy or value-hierarchy, according to Karen Warren. However, value-hierarchical thinking and value dualism (a system of oppositional disjunctive pairs one disjunct of which is designated as a higher value) become problematic when coupled with a logic of domination. This combination creates an oppressive conceptual



## Animal Waste Management



© 1988 Universal Press Syndicate  
 THE FAR SIDE © 1988 FARROW'S, INC.  
 Distributed by UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

framework which justifies and maintains relations of subordination and domination, because the logic of domination entails a value system based upon characteristics that the dominant group is claimed to possess and that the subordinate group is said to lack. The oppressive conceptual framework entails a logical structure which establishes inferiority and, thereby, justifies subordination. Not only is the employment of value-hierarchy problematic in tandem with a logic of domination, but, Warren argues, the oppressive conceptual framework actually fails on logical grounds to establish moral superiority (Warren 1990, 128).

Aside from the questionable logic that plagues value-hierarchy employed in service of oppression, value-hierarchy may fail on empirical grounds.

Primate studies, for example by Irvin DeVore, Hans Kummer, Clarence Ray Carpenter, and Stuart Altman, have been concerned with dominance hierarchies. Working with rhesus monkeys, Carpenter's work focused upon correlation of male sexual potency and rank order dominance (Haraway 1989, 85). Kummer, in *Primate Societies: Group Techniques of Ecological Adaptation*, argued that dominance hierarchy has ecological adaptive value for hamadryas baboons in situations of scarcity of resources (Kummer 1971, 59).

In the early 1960's, doubts about dominance hierarchy interpretations began to arise among primatologists. Thelma Rowell questioned the dual standard of classifying males and females in primate societies: males classified in complex series of stages of seniority and females classified only as juvenile or adult as a function of breeding capacity (Haraway 1989, 292). Field observations of primate societies apparently suffered from narrow vision that concentrated upon observation of males and virtually neglected observation of female primates. The selectivity of primate observations coupled with a priori assumption of dominance hierarchy projected a human social model upon primate societies. While Jane Goodall was being criticized for anthropocentrism in her chimpanzee field research, the problem of anthropocentrism proliferated in male-biased dominance hierarchy interpretations of field observations. More recently, primate research has broadened the base of observed behavior of males

and females. The result is a reinterpretation of primate sexual selection, social organization, and female behavior.

The metaphors of dominance and hierarchy have shaped even cell biology. The cell has been interpreted by a hierarchical paradigm that describes DNA as the controlling molecule that determines RNA production which in turn regulates cell proteins. Feminist critics note that DNA is depicted not just as macromolecule, but as "machomolecule." In spite of the common awareness that the cell nucleus and cytoplasm are interactive, theoretical representations of the cell persist in using control imagery to describe cell function. The data do not support theories of exclusively chromosomal control of the cell and hierarchical theories may even obscure data pointing to extrachromosomal inheritance. Recently, David Nanney, Lynn Margulis, and Lewis Thomas have proposed a steady-state model of the cell as an ecological interacting unit (Beldecos 1989, 180-181).

Finally, I remind you that Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* confronted the dominance of humans over nature by describing the powerful resilience of nature and nature's capacity to strike back in response to the chemical assault from humans. Carson's conclusion was: "The 'control of nature' is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of a Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man." (Carson 1962, 297).

Although we are quite comfortable with hierarchical metaphors and analysis, we are compelled for three reasons to consider antihierarchical or nonhierarchical alternatives. First, scientific data suggest that nature is an ecological organism rather than a hierarchy. Second, there is reason to believe that hierarchicalism is an illogical and inadequate perspective on nature and value. Third, hierarchical thinking supports an ethic of control/domination and destructive (active and passive) behavior toward so-called inferior humans, animals, and other living and non-living "eco-beings." We have reason to cultivate our intellectual imaginations toward antihierarchical worldviews that value intrinsically the ecosystem and "eco-beings" in their particularity and eco-relationships. ♦

## References:

- Augustine, *The City of God*, in *The Fathers of the Church: Writings of Saint Augustine*, Volume 7, trans. C. G. Walsh and G. Monahan. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1952.
- Beldecos, Arthena et al., "The Importance of Feminist Critiques for Contemporary Cell Biology," in *Feminism and Science*, ed. Nancy Tuana. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Carson, Rachel, *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962.
- Griffin, Susan, "Split Culture," in *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*, ed. Judith Plant. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.
- Haraway, Donna, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- King, Ynestra, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology," in *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*, ed. Judith Plant. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1989.
- Kummer, Hans, *Primate Societies: Group Techniques of Ecological Adaptation*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971.
- Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex & Politics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1982.
- Warren, Karen, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism." *Environmental Ethics* 12 (2) (1990): 125-146.

# Human and Animal Creaturehood in Contemporary Theology and Biblical Interpretation

BY EDWARD LeROY LONG, JR.

In an exposition dealing with the first and second chapters of Genesis published in a major commentary on the Bible in 1904 we find this declaration:

For [the writer of Genesis] man was the chief work of God, for whose sake all else was brought into being. The work of creation was not finished till he appeared: all else was preparatory to this final product. That man is the crown and lord of this earth is obvious. Man instinctively assumes that all else has been made for him, and freely acts on this assumption.<sup>1</sup>

The writer continues, "Without man the whole material universe would have been dark and unintelligible, mechanical and apparently without any sufficient purpose. . . man is incommensurable with the rest of the universe."<sup>2</sup>

These statements reflect assumptions often prevalent in Western theology, especially during the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century. Although, as this same commentary emphasizes, "man" is insignificant with regard to God, he is practically all-significant in comparison with the other created beings.

Such thinking poses a sharp distinction between the status of human life and the status of animal life. It has influenced people in both academic circles and in popular discourse. For example, just recently a letter to the editor of a local Tacoma newspaper expressed shock over the fact that the paper had included an obituary for a dog on the same page on which it printed obituaries for humans. The writer of that letter asserted,

If it had been my parent or child's memory placed on the same level with an animal on that page, I would have been deeply hurt and insulted, as their memory was insulted. I know that it is politically correct to speak of mankind, made in the image of God, as just one species that shares this planet with other species, and so on. The schools have taught this for a generation, and now we see the fruit of it. The children who are taught that they are just another type of animal act like it, and the liberals wonder why.<sup>3</sup>

Although debate about the relationship between the status of humans and the status of animals is not as bitterly divisive as are debates about matters like sexuality and abortion in the contemporary maelstrom of religious controversy, there is a steady and widespread rethinking going on today which challenges the sharp dualism between the human realm and the animal realm that is illustrated by the quotations cited above. Moreover, this rethinking of the relationship between the human world and the animal world can be found in a wide spectrum of

contemporary theological writings, as the following examples indicate.

In a major work, one of America's most respected Christian ethicists deliberately blurs the sharp distinction between humans and other animals that has been the stock in trade of anthropomorphic and homocentric perspectives on human life. In a paragraph that stands in remarkable contrast to that found in the biblical commentary from 1904, James Gustafson writes,

Man is a valuing animal. Other animals are also valuing; they direct their activities to the meeting of needs and desires. They have purposes; in this sense it is not purposiveness that distinguishes between man and other animals as wanting, desiring, valuing creatures. But human choices and intentions are "built" on desires and wants; the continuities between biological, social, and cultural aspects of what we are, and the intentions we form and the choices we make, must be taken into account more than they often have been in moral philosophy and in theology.<sup>4</sup>

*Theology Today*, a scholarly journal publishing mainline Protestant thinking, contains an essay co-authored by another contemporary Christian ethicist (with quite a different theological stance) and a doctoral student which makes a remarkable break away from the anthropocentrism that divides humans from the other levels of created being. These authors hold that the scriptural witness suggests that humans and animals share an ultimate end, which is inclusion in God's peaceable kingdom. They flatly declare that "there is no good theological reason for claiming that what it means to be human is to possess some unique capacity that distinguishes humankind from that which is non-human."<sup>5</sup>

In a book dealing with the relationship between economics and ecology, written jointly by a process theologian and an economist, a dualistic interpretation of the biosphere that distinguishes sharply between animals and humans is explicitly repudiated. Observing that a sense of kinship between the community of humans and other species has been present in certain cultures (and is even present in important strands of thought in the West), the authors observe that an alternative outlook, symbolized by the idea of reverence for life (a strong witness to the continuity between various created beings) is appealing, even to minds that have been brought up on the notion that it is a sentimental outlook.<sup>6</sup>

A feminist biblical scholar, dealing with these matters, contends that the second chapter of Genesis portrays the human being (which she calls "the earth creature") and the animals as both created by God—albeit not by the same process. Although in

**By the sixteenth century the lands of the Occident, the countries of Asia, and all the civilizations and cities from the Indian subcontinent to the coast of North Africa were becoming ecologically impoverished. The people were rapidly becoming nature-illiterate... People who grew up in towns or cities, or in large estates, had less chance to learn how wild systems work. Then major blocks of citified mythology (Medieval Christianity and then the "Rise of Science") denied first soul, then consciousness, and finally even sentience to the natural world.**

Gary Snyder  
"The Etiquette of Freedom"  
in *The Practice of the Wild*

<sup>1</sup> *An Exposition of the Bible: A Series of Expositions Covering all the Books of the Old and New Testament, Volume I* (S.S. Scranton Co., 1904) 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 8.

<sup>3</sup> Jerry Larkins, *Tacoma News Tribune* (October 25, 1994) A13.

<sup>4</sup> James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective, Volume I* (University of Chicago Press, 1981) 286.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and John Berkman, "The Chief End of All Flesh," *Theology Today* 49 (July 1992) 199.

<sup>6</sup> Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Beacon Press, 1989) 202f.

the Genesis passage the difference between the human and the animal is highlighted,<sup>7</sup> in the Song of Songs, which is presented as a redeeming alternative to that "love story gone awry" in Genesis, animals are presented as "synonyms for human joy."<sup>8</sup> In the Songs of Songs,

The mare 1:9), the turtledove (2:12), and the lions and the leopards (6:8) also dwell in the garden where all nature extols the love of female and male. Clearly, the Song of Songs banishes the ambivalence toward animals that Genesis 2 introduced, just as it knows nothing of the villainous serpent in Genesis 3. Even the little foxes that spoil the vineyards can be captured by love (2:15). Thus, all animals serve Eros.<sup>9</sup>

Many other feminist writers, particularly ecofeminists, find the sharp distinction between what is human and what is not human to be unacceptable because such a dualistic outlook "authorizes the widespread destruction of individual animals, their habitats, and the earth itself."<sup>10</sup> According to ecofeminists other creatures have too often been treated as having only instrumental value, to enhance the well-being (even the selfish aggrandizements) of men. A stark dualism between the other beings and "man" is judged to be a means of allowing oppression and exploitation to take place.

The Australian biologist, Charles Birch, who has been active in the thinking about science and technology done by the World Council of Churches, has also indicated that attention to the plight of the oppressed must include not only concern about deprived and afflicted human beings, but about all other parts of the creation as well. According to Birch "God is concerned about all life and not only human life."<sup>11</sup> Although Birch would not entirely repudiate the distinctiveness of the human, he would press for an appreciation of the equality of moral standing between the human and the rest of nature. This calls for a new ethic.

The development of such an ethic means that values we place high on the human agenda, such as justice, must be extended to include the rest of nature. It involves a recognition of the intrinsic value of creatures besides ourselves and their value not simply to us but to themselves and to God. Taking our bioethic seriously in practice will mean a dramatic change in our behavior toward nature. The ethical task before us is to liberate all life from the constraints of oppression, human insensitivity, and dominion in whatever form they take.<sup>12</sup>

Along with these various theological perspectives we can cite the arguments of those who are concerned about the use (even the misuse) of animals for experimentation and medical research. Such animal rights advocates not infrequently condemn that part of the Western religious heritage that denies animals the protection of moral concern. Although some animal rightists root their position in a secular humanism, others root their position in an explicit theological belief that God is the source of rights and that humans are not at liberty (despite their "special value") to take away from animals the status that God has intended for them.<sup>13</sup>

A point of view that can be found in theological works written from as many different perspectives as this sampling illustrates is not to be quickly dismissed as a merely ephemeral blip in the shifting clouds of theological fadism. But neither can we expect that such a reconceptualizing, however widespread, will produce immediate and momentous consequences.

Many of our practices as a culture still remain more consistent with the idea of domination—with the premise that it is quite legitimate to treat animal and plant life instrumentally. Experiments that cause pain, food production that involves sentient discomfort, genetic alteration of metabolism, caging in zoos, gladiatorial contests that end in bloodshed, and hunting for wanton pleasure, et cetera, are widely found in contemporary culture. These practices may change as the realization grows that humans do not have a moral warrant to treat animals as mere means. A growing sensitivity to the mutuality between humans and animals may eventually prompt modifications in behavior as a new consciousness develops with respect to the relationship between humans and animals.

But an interesting question remains. Is the development of a new consciousness sufficient to prompt such changes, or, do we need a major shift in paradigm? Whereas a shift of consciousness involves a greater sensitivity to the mutuality between humans and animals and a repudiation of the notion that humans have been destined to dominate the other aspects of the created order, a shift of paradigm, in contrast, would quite possibly involve an ontological equating of all species.

Creation spirituality is perhaps the most striking illustration of an effort to shift the paradigm rather than merely transform consciousness. Instead of thinking of the species as parts of a world created by God, and deriving a more equal standing from God's concern and care, creation spirituality ascribes an ultimate significance to the creation itself. Although this way of thinking implicitly affirms the unity of the creation, strangely enough it does not seem to be as explicitly concerned to redefine the relationship between the humans and the animals as do the writers that approach this matter by seeking a new consciousness within a theistic perspective.<sup>14</sup>

Thinking about the relationship between humans, animals, and even other forms of life, is a matter that calls for continued inquiry, thoughtful analysis, and candid discussion. As far as we know at present only humans get involved in such highly abstract conceptualizing activities. But that does not render illegitimate the efforts of much contemporary religious thinking to appreciate the moral standing of all forms of creaturehood. The triumphalist androcentrism that reached its height in the late nineteenth century was by no means the only legitimate and probably not the most adequate Christian perspective on the created order. ♦

<sup>7</sup> Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Fortress Press, 1978) 91.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 156.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 156f.

<sup>10</sup> Lois K. Daly, "Ecofeminism, Reverence for Life, and Feminist Theological Ethics," Charles Birch, et al. eds., *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology* (Orbis Books, 1990) 88.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Birch, "Christian Obligation for the Liberation of Nature," Charles Birch, et al., eds., *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology* (Orbis Books, '90) 60.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>13</sup> See Andrew Linzey, "The Theological Basis of Animal Rights," *The Christian Century* 108 (October 9, 1991) 906.

<sup>14</sup> In his book *Creation Spirituality: Liberating Gifts for the Peoples of the Earth* (Harper San Francisco, 1991), Matthew Fox cites several contemporary problems which his outlook would help alleviate. (see e.g. ii and 46) The mistreatment of animals is not included in these lists. Fox does acknowledge the interdependence of all living things, but the point is made by citing a quotation from Thomas Merton. (45)



# Food for Thought: Dilemma and Sacrifice

BY ERIC NELSON

A group moves along a path. Flowers and leaves entwine their hair. All walk slowly along to the rhythm of a musical chant. Some sing, carry wine or special cakes. A young girl carries a basket and a jar. Several of them lead an animal, which is also crowned with flowers. They make their way into a cleared area where an ancient monumental stone lays. Another festively dressed person awaits the group there. A fire already burns at the stone, and the smell of dreamy incense perfumes the air. The group stops.

As the song continues, someone takes the jar and pours out water in a slow, steady stream until a circle has been drawn around the group and the stone. All wash their hands with the same liquid. They pour a small amount over the brow of the animal, who shakes the water off by twisting and nodding its head. The group smiles. The animal agrees.

The central figure passes the basket around to each member of the group. Each person takes a small handful of barley, or perhaps small stones, from the basket. They throw some of the barley at the stone, the rest on the animal. As they do, the central figure uncovers a knife at the bottom of the basket. Keeping it out of the animal's sight, he steps forward and quickly cuts a few hairs from the animal's forelock. Turning to the stone, he throws the hairs onto the fire, where they evaporate in flames.

As he turns back, the women of the group suddenly raise an eerie, shrieking howl. Others grasp the animal firmly. The central figure reaches out and with a smooth, resolute stroke slits the animal's throat wide open. The animal convulses, its blood exploding out in the pulsing rhythm of its heart. If it were small, they would have held it over the stone as it was cut; but it is big, so they hold it firmly and carefully catch the blood in containers brought for the purpose. The blood is carried and poured upon the stone until it is a wash, dripping crimson, steaming and sticky.

Quickly, the central figure disembowels the animal. The horror and awe of the slaughter passes and an air of purpose begins to pervade. The misting guts and organs pour out, mysterious and strange. Tradition governs what happens with each part. The dusky liver reveals signs of good or ill. The heart, still twitching, is placed on the stone. Some of the group roast parts of entrails, which everyone eats. This accomplished, the priest begins to carve up the animal.

The mood of festivity returns. Each person receives various portions of meat to roast over the fire on skewers. The priest receives a special portion. The skin is set aside for sale. But the bones (especially the thigh bones and pelvis) are set out in their proper order on the stone. Bits of meat from all parts of the animal are added to this structure. Then

the group builds up the fire, and adds the special cakes and wine to the growing flames. Gradually, the remains are consumed, leaving only the charred and hollow bones. These the group gathers and places aside to be stored. Order returns, and the satisfied group retreats.

I've been thinking about sacrifice. I've heard the term in politics, parenting magazines, and discussions of university budgets. Usually this means giving up something to a necessity that is not immediately apparent. Entwined is the implication that this giving up (or "offering") will gain something in the future unattainable by other means. For this reason, convincing people to sacrifice usually falls to those who can control or interpret the group's mechanisms for projecting the future and coping with uncertainty. It is a difficult job, since people must believe that a) benefits will occur, b) the benefits will exceed the cost of the offering, and c) there is no alternative other than the sacrifice to achieve the desired results. For the convinced, sacrifice is a binding, necessary, community-building act. For the unconvinced, sacrifice implies an irrational, meaningless, and destructive solution to a poorly understood problem. They focus on the players, calling the slain victim, the sacrificer heartless, the assenting group deluded. Sacrifice, for the unconvinced, is destructive, brutal, and anti-social. Casting a cynical eye on the whole process, they ask, "*cui bono?*" Indeed, those who profit most from the sacrifice are inevitably those who called for it, those who hold the means of power and interpretation. If it works, their power and order are upheld. If it does not...well, there's always additional sacrifice.

I've also been thinking about sacrifice because I will soon be teaching my course, Classical Mythology, which inevitably brings me face to face with blood sacrifice. This kind of sacrifice goes far beyond our colloquial use of the term. And yet, I find compelling and illuminating links between the context in which we use the term today and its historical practice as ritual.

At the heart, so to speak, of sacrifice is death. It seems so foreign to our sensibilities, our experience — so thoughtless, misguided, barbaric, savage. How many of us routinely witness life's end, much less participate in it? We fantasize about killing in our art and entertainment, but in reality we remove ourselves as far as possible from its occurrence. Even the family, the only vehicle most of us have for contact with natural human death, has been isolated. The *Ladies Home Journal* transformed the parlor (where, among other things, the dead lay in state) into the "living room" and moved the parlor out of the home, away from the living and next to the grave. And yet, there are periods in our life when we often toy with death and our role in it.

How many children (or should I ask, "How many of you . . .?") maliciously killed or wounded bugs, frogs, crabs, caterpillars — for the sheer fascination of it? As children, my brother and I begged my father to really use the shotgun he waved to scare away the crows from the orchard. At last we goaded him enough and he shot one out of the sky. We ran over to the writhing and bleeding bird, weeping, begged him to heal it, to bring it back to life. Somewhat later, I badly wounded a Robin with a friend's BB gun, the kind that isn't supposed to be accurate or powerful enough to really hurt anything. It was obvious that the bird would die a horrible death, so I tried to put it out of its misery by shooting it again, and again, and again. I forget the exact details of these experiences, but I'll never forget the combination of horror, revulsion, excitement, and shame. Why ritualize such a thing?

In exploring sacrifice, I wish to differentiate between institution and ritual. Sacrificial ceremony, set in the context of the institution that carries it out, is subject to all of the cultural inflections, representations of power, gender biases, symbolic limitations, and philosophic turns of the institution. It is mistaken, however, to project the preconceptions of the institution onto the ritual, and then to extract them as the *raison d'être* for the practice. This has been done in some studies that seek at the root of sacrifice an attempt by men to subjugate women or a symptom of male narcissism (e.g., William Beers). Much sacrificial ritual grows out of male hunting collectives, bands that come not only to be concerned with hunting, but with initiation (boys into men), war, and paternity. As collective bodies, they often regarded women as objects of awe, sexual desire (to be fulfilled or denied), or as a danger to the cohesion of the male commune. We need not be surprised to discover their sacrificial rituals intertwined with these issues. In the West, the Bronze Age brought men by and large into control of civic institutions responsible for sacrificial ritual. But sacrifice is not, *qua* sacrifice, patriarchal. Even the cultures of Çatal Hüyük and the Minoans of Crete, cultures sometimes cited as examples of thriving pre-patriarchal cultures, made sacrifice a central ritual. The issues sacrifice addresses arose in our earliest history, for the continuum of sacrificial ritual goes back well into the Paleolithic Age. I cannot pretend to pinpoint a single origin for sacrifice, nor a single-minded analysis that will unravel its complexities throughout history. A mere bibliography would fill pages with the names of great scholars from various and opposing schools. Nevertheless, I will suggest two fundamental human dilemmas to which sacrifice pertains, and which links ancient to modern, religious to colloquial sacrificial dialogue.

I described the outlines of such a ritual above to confirm in you the bizarre nature, the pretense, the brutality, the horror and repulsion of blood sacrifice. It is probably the oldest, most pervasive, and historically resilient of religious rituals. It was the central act of piety and social order in the ancient world. And yet it is not a modern development to find it offensive. Criticism in Greece, the tradition with which I am most familiar, was early in coming. Hesiod (c. 730 BC) records a myth about

the origins of sacrifice that rationalizes the fact that sacrifice actively benefits people, not the gods. Greek and Roman philosophers, along with religious orders such as Orphics and Pythagoreans, condemned the act and questioned its necessity. In other traditions, even gods (Hindu Krishna to the Iranian Zarathustra to the Hebrew Yaweh) voice objections at times. Some cultures attempted to abolish or reduce the bloody aspect of the ritual by substituting wild animals for humans, domestic animals for wild animals, small animals or vegetation for domestic animals, and so on. But something remained beneath the camouflage to demand its proper due. In times of extreme stress and uncertainty, cultures often returned to blood — small animal to large animal to human — in proportion to the crisis.

Blood sacrifice persists as practice and as metaphor. Christianity preserves blood sacrifice as the central metaphor to redemption and salvation, illustrated in the Eucharist. The pilgrims of the Hadj offer animal sacrifices to Allah the Merciful in such numbers that bulldozers are needed to clear the carcasses. Indigenous ritual and festival continue the practice worldwide. Psychotic killers, such as Jeffrey Dahmer, mimicked sacrificial ritual in startling and ghastly detail. We might call this a macabre parody, except that these practices can be paralleled in other cultures. Why? What is it about this ritual that so galvanizes religious response? After all, to sacrifice, from Latin *sacrificare* (and like Greek ) means "to make do/make [something] sacred." What about sacrifice is so central to our conception of the sacred, our paradigm of prophesy and anxious response that we cannot abandon it?

The answer lies partly in sacrifice's ability to address dilemmas common to all humanity, and to provide a therapeutic response to them. At its root, sacrifice primarily confronts a paradox that has faced us ever since the first hominid ate the flesh of another (once) living being and considered the implications. Life is somehow linked to death, death to life. By chance, by force, or by some unknown providence one thing dies that another lives. This realization probably came first from observation in scavenging and direct participation in hunting. Its overwhelming proof came during the Neolithic agricultural revolution, when sedentary agriculturists took hold of its mechanism in domesticating crops and animals. They pondered the consequences into early Bronze Age religion, whose legacy lives even into our present age.

We rarely have to confront this conundrum. I am bemused each semester to see how students react to this topic. Many have never considered that chicken breasts come from chickens, or just what the "rump" in rump roast means. They refuse to eat an organ (heart, liver, brain), not because of taste, but because they are repulsed by the inescapable realization of what it is. They encounter meat only in packages at the supermarket, where linings absorb the fluids of living flesh. Some cannot abide to touch the meat raw: they cut the cellophane wrapper and slide out the contents, untouched, onto the waiting fire. The realization that they participate in the killing of animals makes them uncomfortable,

**When vegetarians attempt to disarm the dominant control of language, they are seen as picky, particular, embittered, self-righteous, confrontative, and especially sentimental, rather than political liberators like Washington and Lincoln. The objection to the killing of animals is equated with sentimentality, childish emotions, or "Bambi-morality." By extension, this objection is seen as "womanish." Spinoza's oft-quoted opinion was that "The objection to killing animals was 'based upon an empty superstition and womanish tenderness, rather than upon sound reason.'" Consequently it is no wonder that vegetarianism has been seen as a woman's project and equated with women's status.**

Carol Adams  
*The Sexual Politics of Meat*

uneasy, even angry. Most of the vegetarians in the class relate their decision to not eat meat to these reactions.

These reactions are neither naive nor modern. They are, in these days, merely made avoidable. But the period that laid down the deepest currents of our individual and collective nature could not shield humans from direct communal participation in killing to live, nor from the anxieties that proceed from it. What is our role in this cycle? After all, if we kill something (even to live), have we not committed some awful deed? Must we too, in turn, not be killed and eaten? Beyond that, now that we have killed this thing, will there be any more?

Some contend that sacrifice requires the objectification of the victim. But for many cultures it appears to be the opposite. Sacrificial animals often have important status in myth and religion, with powers and significance above humans. Many cultures address this ambivalence with myths, such as the Northwest Indian myth of Salmon People or the Blackfoot myth of the Buffalo Dance. In these stories creatures offer themselves as food to humans in conjunction with rituals that magically rejuvenate them. Sacrificial rituals address these concerns in part by forming an interdependence between sacrificers and sacrificed. Apart from mythological explanations, sacrifice demands the pretense of willingness. The victim must go happily to the altar, nod assent to the washing that purifies the coming death. For its participation, the members honor the victim and reconstitute it on the altar. Life gives way to death, and through death life renews to each.

In all its permutations, sacrifice brought the participants into ritualized contact with a central mystery of life and death. The ritual synthesized, in gruesome detail, the process that bound the group together with itself and within the world at large. This contextualization may have also carried over into human sacrifice. One usually imagines human sacrifice in terms of an unwilling victim (and its family) struggling against a cruel priestly caste while a hapless and ignorant population looks on. While this picture is at times accurate, such as when the Aztecs made war for procuring sacrificial victims on a grand scale, at other times it was not. As our understanding of anthropology, sociology and psychology has developed, we have become aware that we can too readily imagine that other cultures conceptualized themselves and their world as we do. We have learned to resist death, to see it as an abnormal occurrence in almost any circumstance, an infringement on our personal potential. We see our individuality as something sacred, defined in opposition to the constraints imposed by our society at large. Other cultures did not perceive these same demarcations. Some human sacrifice was holy for both victim and community. Language to this effect permeates the New Testament. The Carthaginians (and probably some Celts) seem to have not only accepted, but taken pride in the sacrifice of their own children.

And yet the ritual must address the communal anxiety for killing something, even something that goes willingly to the slaughter. Communal crime is a powerful bond, as fraternal initiations, gang ritual,

and common experience tells us. The sacrificial ritual bound all in direct participation through tasting the innards. Nevertheless, guilt remains. Many sacrifices offer the victim some kind of apology. I remember, in a similar vein, saying a special benediction over the first meal from a butchered steer. We owed it that, even if we had always intended it for the table. One particular Greek ceremony went so far as to hold a trial. As the participants kept silent, the priest found the sacrificial ax guilty of murder and threw it (eliminating the testimony of its presence) into the sea.

But can't these issues be addressed without the bloody sacrificial act? When sacrifices became the providence of civil institutions, the act was sometimes mitigated by adding more and more elaborate rituals, almost as if to distract the participants. Often less disconcerting victims were substituted and the ceremony became bloodless. Some religious ritual attempts to move away from the actual sacrificial cycle. Christianity retains the language of sacrifice, but finalizes the process in the death of Christ, the perfect and timeless victim. The Hindu sage, in his progression away from the world of duality (life/death  $\rightarrow$  meat) moves into a less oppositional realm where sustenance seemingly emerges without death and killing (milk and grain  $\rightarrow$  life from life). Other cultural myths, such as we

**CEREMONY** by Rick Jones

*The turkey  
is pompous  
his head  
erect  
breast  
out*

*The grouse  
grovels  
through bushes  
when noticed  
feigns  
wounds*

*Ceremony  
demands  
we eat  
turkey*



find in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, represent a past golden age in which sacrifice is unnecessary and the earth feeds all effortlessly on its bounty. Traces of this belief appear in Genesis and when, after the flood, God sanctions Noah to kill and eat meat for the first time. But by and large, these are myths and rituals of mystic detachment, intended to throw us into or remind us of a realm beyond our own. Blood sacrifice is a ritual of tragic engagement, a

thrashing about of the community in the immediate and looming. One notes, however, that even in transcendence, in substitution, or in metaphor, the sacrificial death remains the immovable eye of whatever festivities whirl around the ritual.

Some have wondered if brutality is the point of sacrifice, and theorized that sacrifice arises out of aggression. There are more optimistic models of human cultural development in contrast to Lorenz's thesis that all human society arises from conflict, although sometimes these tend to be modeled on current views of individualism and egalitarianism. Nevertheless, it seems clear that aggression forms a cornerstone of our social and individual makeup. The ecstasy and euphoria brought on by severe physical trauma, the physiology of rage and fear, our experience with human competition and mob psychology indicate that we developed in an environment in which aggression was essential and common. Unfortunately the same aggression we apparently needed to survive can be turned against ourselves. We have seen astonishing examples in our own century of just how brutal and savage humans can be to others, even on a grand scale. I was taught that such horrors were the perverted results of human institutions gone awry. But as we hear of mass murder and rapes in the former Yugoslavia, and the Rwandan population's hands-on participation (axes, machetes, clubs) in a carnage no one thought possible without weapons of mass destruction, we may have to come to the awful realization that there is something inside of us that, under certain conditions, relishes doing these things.

Ancient cultures tended to grasp at sacrifice as an accustomed response in troubled times, often in escalating bloodiness in proportion to the problem. It may be that, just as sacrifice binds the group together in the guilt of killing, it also binds them together by focusing their collective rage on a victim who absorbs the aggression and gives back calm through the transforming socialization of the sacrificial meal. The mechanism of this aggression is a matter of dispute. Some, like Freud, link the victim to some unconscious symbolic representation. Others, like Walter Berkert, trace the aggression to natural behavior ritualized through hunting. René Girard suggests that society reenacts sacrifice as a controlled descent into anarchy, in imitation of the competitive impulses that threaten to tear society apart. Aggression, instead of being reciprocated among the group, is directed at the victim. Once dead, the victim becomes an object of veneration for eliminating the group's potential self-destruction. In any case, aggression or violence turns to reintegration and socialization through the prism of death.

Death, life, aggression and socialization. Sacrifice addresses humanity's communal place within these cycles. It is no surprise then that the ritual found its way into so many important moments of human activity. Initiation, marriage, and death bring communities to moments of crisis, anxiety, and potential conflict. Wars and disasters teem with unfocused aggression. Hunting and killing, planting and harvesting become linked with human procreativity and the mysteries of sexuality. Sexuality itself, so much the focus of desire and

repression, breeds uncertainty. Rituals of sacrifice, for all their brutal and blunt expression, navigated the ancient world through these imponderables and provided a mechanism for addressing their conflicting demands.

Sacrifice in present colloquial speech shows that we are vaguely aware of the issues — but what of the coping mechanism? The ritual suggests that without the means of collectively coming to terms with them, the community will implode in violence. I sometimes wonder if this is not already happening. We have no societal rituals to help us through these dilemmas; even most religion in America has abandoned ritual for the ecstasy of mysticism or the pablum of entertainment. In sacrificial terms, we want the thrill and socialization of the sacrifice, but not to face the other aspects of the ritual. Individuals are left to ponder, worry, and rage.

Nor will the need to find our uneasy locus in the cosmos decline. We have, in our relentless pursuit of individualization, done our best to deny the constraints of collective living. We have come through a period where nuclear power, advances in agriculture and even space exploration seemed to hold out the possibility of an unending progression of sustenance, like milk from the sacred Hindu cow. We came to view the cosmos as a victim so sustaining that we could continue to eat it indefinitely. We avoided coming to terms with killing it, and our responsibility in its recreation.

Now the same tools we used to make this view possible are beginning to show us otherwise. The circle is as it was. Resources are limited and limiting. Society and nature are connected frameworks where each participant resonates a measure of responsibility. One may not opt out of the process. These realizations will inevitably force a response from each of us, and our response will form the basis of a communal relationship within the new/old order. Hopefully we can find some mechanism other than sacrifice, but we will respond. There is no free lunch. ♦

---

#### Suggested reading:

Berkert, Walter (tr. Peter Bing), *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983.

Beers, Williams, *Women and Sacrifice. Male Narcissism and the Psychology of Religion*. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1992.

Girard, René, (tr. S. Bann and M. Metteer), *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. Research undertaken in collaboration with Jean-Michel Oughoudain and Guy Lefort. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1987.

# "That's a Good Dog!"

BY JUDY DOENGES

## A review of *Bandit: Dossier of a Dangerous Dog* by Vicki Hearne

New York: HarperCollins, 1991

First, my own dog story: Choppers, a Dangerous Pit Bull, sat in the lock-up of the local Humane Society. His crime? Barking and threatening, a disputed bite. His sentence? To wait in quarantine until his court case; he waited months, long months in his cage. So long that when we, the Saturday Humane Society volunteers, came on our shift, we headed first for Choppers' cage.

"Oooh, Choppers!" we would call. "Poor puppy!" Then would come our stream of dog biscuits through the cyclone fencing at the top of his cage. Choppers would stand up very gingerly against the door and open his enormous mouth (those snapping jaws!) to take the biscuits one by one, wagging his stubby tail and blinking happily.

Alas, Choppers' owner grew impatient. One night he busted his dog out of the slammer. That is: he cut through the utility door of the Humane Society, cut through the lock on Choppers' cage, and took his dog home where he tied him up in the front yard on a chain so he could bark and threaten and look like he was going to bite once again. Back Choppers went to quarantine, this time with a stronger lock on his cage, until his owner saw the writing on the kennel wall and gave in to the court's order to "destroy."

Vicki Hearne's book *Bandit*, one of three works she has written about the moral universes of animals and humans, gives us the linguistic frame we need to understand cases like Choppers'. Hearne, a professional dog trainer, poet, and fellow at Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies, would mark the story of Choppers as yet another case of imbecilic human behavior—on the part of the owner, the complaining public, the court, the Humane Society—that precipitated the death of a decent dog. Nearly the same set of agents conspired to doom one of Hearne's adopted dogs, and *Bandit* recounts Hearne's efforts to understand how one breed of dog came to embody a new kind of evil in the public's mind.

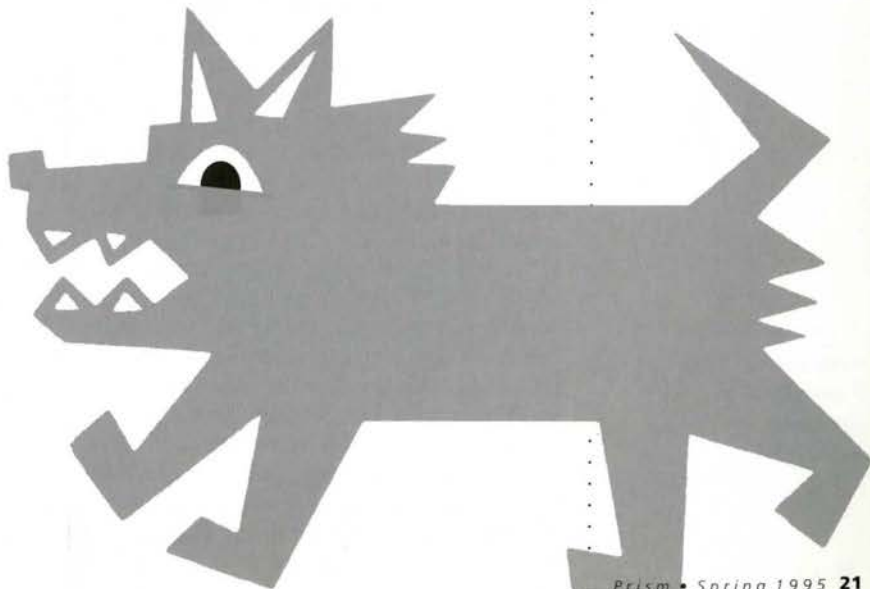
*Bandit*, a mixed breed bulldog, originally belonged to Lamon Redd, a black resident of Stamford, Connecticut, until the dog bit a neighbor who was threatening one of Mr. Redd's tenants with a broom. Several hearings, quarantines, and one more bite later, Hearne was named trainer and guardian of the dog pending a court case to determine *Bandit*'s "viciousness." While the story of Hearne and *Bandit*'s efforts to prove the dog's lack of viciousness runs through the book, Hearne's real focus is a philosophical and political exploration of humans' prickly relationships with animals and how our own fears and prejudices created the myth of vicious dogs (read: pit bulls). *Bandit* becomes an

emblem for Vicki Hearne's discussion of the process we go through to identify, name, alienate, and vilify a group as "other."

The analysis that lies at the center of Hearne's argument is her moving dissection of how contemporary language is used to describe dogs, animal behavior, viciousness, and, finally, *Bandit* himself. When the police, the public, the courts, and the media talk about a pit bull's "double jaws," or "vicious nature," or warn that the dogs are "time bombs just waiting to go off," Hearne despairs. When we use this rhetoric ourselves we are, she says, "trading awareness for language." As Hearne subsequently explains, "'language' is my word for what steals the knowledge of dogs away from us together with the rest of all that is sweet and fluent and real in our mundo."<sup>1</sup> And when these linguistic crimes apply to dogs, animals die as a result of the misuse of language: dogs are misnamed, dogs who are called vicious as soon as they are named "pit bulls," whether they are or not, so that Hearne can tell stories and make out lists of Rottweilers, Bloodhounds, Pugs, Labradors who have been seized and destroyed or even killed by the dog owners' vigilante neighbors. Of course, it is not long before words like "impure" and "dirty" and "genetically diseased" enter the pit bull wars, words that allow people to act on their desires for justice, which often take the form of incarceration and elimination, all for the good of society. Hearne is reminded that in 1933, Hermann Göring ordered scientists of "alien blood" to concentration camps in an effort to stop "animal torturing" in laboratories.

Göring's supposed commitment to end animal suffering was meant to appear as a kindness to

<sup>1</sup> Vicki Hearne, *Bandit: Dossier of a Dangerous Dog* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991) 56.



Aryan Germans. But be careful of kindness, Hearne warns, for it often hides hideous cruelties. It is kindness that leads dogcatchers to “rescue” Bandit from the ghetto environment that surely nurtured his viciousness, and it is kindness that leads the courts to condemn dogs to death in order to “protect” the public. These distortions of kindness lead Hearne to Hannah Arendt’s “Collective Guilt and Universal Responsibility,” and lead her to write that

...for all that I am here in the middle of a book in which there are figures who are from my point of view villains, I keep returning to the discovery that if I want to understand human villainy, one place to look—not the only place, but one place—is into myself, and not to look there for my hatreds, but rather for my loves and my loyalties.<sup>2</sup>

For Hearne, two of the vilest villains in Bandit’s story and in the stories of all dogs, are the animal rights groups, in particular People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and the Humane Society of the United States, two champions of kindness. PETA has, according to Hearne, called for the euthanasia of all “vicious” dogs and even the phasing out of all domestic animals (through mandatory spaying and neutering)—no more pets, in other words, while the Humane Society is, in Hearne’s view, responsible for much of the scary rhetoric surrounding pit bulls, not to mention the actual seizure of innocent dogs, like Bandit.

While I agree with Hearne that it’s difficult to know where real cruelty bleeds into the bland surfaces of kindness, especially in the case of humans and their dealings with animals, I also think it’s difficult to locate the real source of the pit bull hysteria. As a volunteer at a humane society, I’m hardly impartial, but I do have enough knowledge to remove that institution from Hearne’s list of unrepentant evil-doers. For one thing, Hearne doesn’t seem fully aware of the Humane Society’s status as an orphan organization: Technically a “charity” (a word she finds insidious), it is nonetheless charged with protecting all animals in its jurisdiction from human cruelty, as well as humans from threatening animals; to do this it must uphold city, county, and state laws that often ignore the subtleties of animal intelligence and the nobility of animal moral codes of which Hearne herself is so acutely aware. What Hearne cannot know is how clear-eyed the humane society kennel workers I have met are about how these laws “protect” the public at the cost of the truth: that the foolishness and cruelties of humans ruin good dogs, not some nasty canine character crafted from DNA.

But what, the reader nags, about dog bites? Real dog bites? And what about Bandit’s bites (witnessed, noted, brought to trial, convicted, *named*)? Aren’t there some genuine lousy curs out there, destined to fail at rehabilitation, fated to recidivism? Hearne says that dog bites are “a grammatical problem.” Somewhere, sometimes, in the relationship between a dog and its owner there is a language breakdown: not that a command gets misunderstood or ignored, but that a dog’s deeply felt desire to move in concert with its humans in every way is violated by what the

dog sees as a valid threat to its “territory.” So it was for Bandit, who bit, and from the story of whose bite came Hearne’s immediate response, “That’s a good dog!” Hearne understood Bandit’s wish to protect his owner’s tenants; she also saw in Bandit’s reaction the modern dog’s fumbling at its true calling. Bandit, Hearne says, like the dogs Socrates described in Plato’s *Republic*, had been given the just city to guard; this is what dogs can do best, Socrates says, because they work out of love of knowledge or learning. Not only that, this love of knowledge that dogs possess causes them to know where the just city lies and to thus protect the city by that knowledge. (Hearne therefore likens them (dogs) to true philosophers, but that’s another story.) But because Bandit lives in a society where no just city exists, what is he to know? What is his work? To protect his owner, his owner’s land, a smaller and smaller piece of a state in which justice is conspicuously absent. And while Bandit, being a dog, does not understand abstractions like justice, he does understand a violation, a disturbance to the people and the place and the social setting that matter to him, so in an effort, not of viciousness, or revenge, or to see justice done (those are the dubious provinces of humans), but in an effort to return to an order he knew and could thus protect (his own just city), Bandit bit.

One of the most potent chapters in *Bandit* is “Beastly Behaviors,” Hearne’s discussion of gender as it relates to the workings of animals and humans. She discovers, after reviewing dog-bite statistics, that a majority of bite victims are boys and a majority of owners of biting dogs are men. Why? Well, Hearne leads us through an examination of language, touches on kennel and stable lore that confirms that men and boys are often alienated from dogs and horses at a young age, and brings us up through a discussion of how men think, reason, and create logic that separates them from women and animals both. Hearne says, “[Men] are afraid of horses [or dogs] because neither their professional integrity nor logic will take them to a horse, and because they do not know how to turn, deflect, a horse’s fear or rage”; and “[women’s] minds are complex enough to sustain their contact with what they *do* know while noting also where their knowledge of [dogs] leaves off.”<sup>4</sup> Part of the problem, Hearne reveals, is that historically men have argued that they have no proof that animals have minds, meaning, they have no proof that animals think with a purpose, or reason—dogs, for example, may instead be only reacting when they chase cats or fetch. Men have come to believe that this lack of proof about animal minds is reason enough to deny the *existence* of animal minds at all. All of which circles back to men, “maddened by logic,” as Hearne says, who lack faith in complex relationships with dogs, ignore training, and, therefore, at their—no, the dogs’!—peril, get bit, have biting dogs, and/or “surrender” their dogs to the pound as unmanageable. Men create the idea of a dog having “viciousness,” and therefore create dogs who are monsters and laws with which to deal with monsters, all of which ignore the possibility of grace and dignity between the animals and humans.

Finally, the book deals with race. Readers may at first wonder what this issue has to do with pit bulls, dog napping, and euthanasia, but Hearne soon makes everything clear. Just as the state, embodied in logic-maddened maleness, created the ideas of viciousness and monstrous dogs, so did it use those ideas as symbols for other “uncontrollables” in society. It is no accident, Hearne believes, that Bandit was taken from a black owner; in fact, the first person convicted of manslaughter in the pit bull wars was a black man from Georgia whose three pit bulls had attacked a child who opened the gate to his yard. To be convicted of this felony, the court had to prove that the man knew of the dogs’ viciousness and acted on that knowledge, implying, perhaps, that he courted the dogs’ violence. Hearne recounts television specials in which reporters roam ghettos looking for dog fights and “drug dogs” (pit bulls); court testimony that links the characters of drug dealers with their reported dogs of choice (pit bulls); those same dogs described as “genetically diseased,” “walking time bombs,” and “untrainable by nature” (remember Göring). There is no need to make the extra step from dog to human here; one only has to examine one’s own images of a pit bull owner: male, of course, poor, at least, probably urban, potentially violent, no doubt involved in illegal activity, and, if one were truthful, Hearne suggests, black. Not convinced? Hearne gives us the voice of the state on pit bulls and on viciousness in the form of her own (admittedly privileged) legal struggle and her growing alarm at the power of local and state authorities to confiscate a person’s property (dogs) and hold that property for eternity without giving the owner power to appeal, all in the name of “rescuing” dogs from violent (often black) owners or “protecting” the public from such a disturbed breed as the pit bull. First the state marks the transgressors—human and dog—(before any harm has been done) by corrupting them with false names and claims about their natures; then it disenfranchises them by removing dogs from what they know and can control (home) and by usurping human’s power to bring order back to their lives through due process. Dogs—and humans—can no longer locate the just city, nor guard it, because, in a very real sense, we (the state) have erased the idea of justice from modern life and replaced it with our darkest and most destructive prejudices and fears.

In the end, *Bandit* is not really a dog story, but a story about our own drawbacks as creatures in this world. Yet all is not lost between animals and humans, or even for Bandit, whose fate is best left for Hearne to reveal. What remains is the often corrupt advantage humans have over animals. “We can know more than dogs can know,” Hearne says, “and can therefore fail more horribly than they can.”<sup>5</sup> And what we know more—our curse of language, our ability to manipulate laws and to create monsters and the fears to fight them—all that leads our animals to almost lose hope for us, is what we must use to find ourselves. Only then, Bandit suggests, can we understand the beauty of our intended relationships with animals, as well as our own true viciousness. ♦

## THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

by Rick Jones

### I The Centaur

As some young kid  
with a boom-box  
scrapes himself  
and his undersized  
bicycle up  
from the dust  
at the side of the road,  
  
a young brown dog  
romps across the street  
wagging his flagged tail,  
waggin his tail.

### II What Remains...

The tail  
is recognizable,  
reddish, bushy,  
stiff;  
  
one pointed ear,  
a few hairs  
tufted at the sharp  
tip;  
  
of the body  
the least said  
best...dead  
in the ditch:  
  
a red fox  
not quick enough  
in the lights  
of a late logging truck.

Prism takes this opportunity to introduce you to a new faculty member in the Religion department — Mary Jane Haemig. The following is an abstract of her dissertation.

# The Living Voice of the Catechism

BY MARY JANE HAEMIG

**Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching.<sup>1</sup>**

Martin Luther wrote these words in 1529 after visiting congregations in Electoral Saxony. Luther and other reformers took steps to ensure that the reformation's message reached and was understood by the people. In doing so, they faced an issue which we might phrase this way: "How does one sustain a movement?" That is, after the initial breakthroughs in reformation theology, how does one ensure that these insights are preserved and passed on? The leaders of the Lutheran reformation were more interested in the meaning of their message for their people than they were in founding an institution.

One of the major instruments for conveying their message was the catechism, a brief summary of the Christian faith. Originally, the term "catechism" meant simply the texts of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of institution of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The meaning of the term changed to not only include the texts themselves, but also brief explanations of the individual parts of the texts. Many theologians and preachers published their own catechisms. The most famous, of course, were Luther's *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism*, published in 1529. Luther's catechisms became part of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church.

Traditionally, historians and theologians have looked upon reformation catechisms as books. They have also focused on Luther's catechisms, often ignoring the multitude of catechisms available in the sixteenth century. My work has concentrated on the preached catechism, rather than on the catechism as taught in schools or at home. Preaching the catechism was a widespread practice in Lutheran areas of Germany in the sixteenth century. Some preachers printed their sermons for use by other preachers; these volumes of sermons on the Decalog, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and sacraments are the major source for my dissertation.



The vast majority of sixteenth-century Germans could not read. Their only way of learning the catechism was to hear it. To consider the catechism as only a printed text is to miss the oral form used to reach most people with its message. Preaching on the parts of the catechism was designed to reach every level of society with the

insights of the reformation. As Jakob Andreae told his congregation in 1560:

*Yes you say, "I am a layperson, a rough, ignorant person, I can neither write nor read. Who will tell me who preaches correctly or incorrectly, how should I be able to judge this?"*

*Pay attention...when you have learned these six main pieces well, even if you cannot write or read...no erroneous preacher shall lead you astray...<sup>2</sup>*

Lutheran preachers sought to empower all persons, regardless of educational or social status, to distinguish true from false teaching by learning and knowing the catechism.

The reasons for examining preaching are not only practical but also theological. The content of the sermons themselves is based on the idea that *hearing* is the way faith spreads. For Luther and Lutheran reformers, the sermon was not merely the transmission of content. Rather, it was a living word, the instrument by which the Holy Spirit was active, creating faith within the hearer. Catechetical preaching was not merely a means to inculcate knowledge of certain key Christian doctrines, it was intended to create faith in the hearer. *Fides ex auditu* — "Faith comes from hearing" is both a statement about content and effect. Faith includes not just intellectual assent to certain beliefs, but a change in understanding one's relationship to God and all of life. Concentrating on sermons not only enables one to focus on the way reformation teachings reached the most people, it also forces one to look at the content of those teachings in a different way.

The central message of the catechetical preachers concerns their hearers' relationship to God. Almost invariably the preachers follow the sequence



of topics in Luther's catechisms. Preachers start with an exposition of the Ten Commandments, describing what the hearers' relationships to God and to others should be. They emphasize the inevitable human failure to live up to these standards. The preachers then proceed to the Apostles' Creed, and elucidate what God has done to restore the relationship humans have broken. In theological terms, the preachers move from law to gospel, that is, from the announcement of what God expects from humans to the announcement of the good news of what God in Jesus Christ has done for us.

While anyone familiar with Lutheran theology will find this unsurprising, modern historians have analyzed the entire catechetical enterprise, including preaching, as a primarily ethical endeavor. These historians have thought that preaching or teaching the catechism was an effort to raise the moral level of the population. They do not see that this preaching was about a deeper sense of identity. Their claim is that the catechism fosters a sense of sin, guilt, and shame in order to promote better behavior in people. Their thesis is hard to sustain if one looks at the Lutheran concept of preaching and the contents of the sermons themselves. As explained above, the purpose of preaching is not moral admonition but rather creating faith. Further, if the main purpose were to improve people, it is hard to explain the fact that the preachers spend most of their time on the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. These, after all, are sections which are intended to deal with human inability to attain a right ordering of life through exertion. These preachers did not simply admonish their listeners to "try harder." To maintain that they did, to say they just wanted to improve moral conduct, is to ignore the fact that the bulk of their sermons are on those parts of the catechism intended to help people deal with the reality that they could not measure up to the expectations expressed in the Ten Commandments.

My dissertation begins by looking at the enterprise of catechetical preaching as a whole. It examines such questions as what constitutes a catechetical sermon, what forms the sermons use, whether the printed sermons reflect what was actually preached, the significance of the fact that the sermons were printed in German (not Latin), and the significance of the number and distribution of editions of the sermons. After reviewing relevant existing scholarship, the dissertation focuses on the stated intentions of the catechetical preachers. What did the preachers themselves say they were trying to accomplish? Why did they think it important to preach the catechism and why did they consider it important for their congregations to hear? Within the framework of understanding catechetical sermons as a living word which creates faith in the hearer, the preachers articulate several reasons for learning the catechism: knowledge of it is the mark

of the Christian, the catechism is a summary and introduction to both the Bible and Christian doctrine, the catechism enables the simple Christian to distinguish true and false teaching (something which previously only a clerical elite could do), and the catechism fosters desire for the Lord's Supper. Chapter four discusses the central message of the catechetical preachers, focusing particularly on sermons on the first commandment (what the human relationship to God should be) and sermons on the second article of the Apostles' Creed (what God has done to set this relationship aright). Chapter five examines and contests the assertion that the preaching of the Decalog supported the social status quo in sixteenth-century Germany. It challenges the claims that Lutheran preachers advocated an unthinking obedience to authority (the fourth commandment) and that Lutheran preachers never criticized crimes by the rich and powerful (the seventh commandment). A final chapter looks at the catechetical preachers' use of sources—the Bible, Luther, other reformatory theologians, and the church fathers.

Both historians and theologians are increasingly interested in looking at the methods and means by which key ideas are transmitted to all groups and levels of a population. Catechetical preaching was a means by which the message of the reformation—the message of how God relates to humans—was transmitted to all, whether educated or uneducated, literate or illiterate, upper or lower class. Scholars do well to remember that preaching was not just a vehicle for the message but was itself part of the life-transforming message. ♦

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, *Preface to The Small Catechism in The Book of Concord: The Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. and ed. by Theodore G. Tappert, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 338.

<sup>2</sup> Jakob Andreae, *Zehen Predig von den sechs Hauptstucken Christlicher Lehr....* (Tübingen, 1561), 78r.

Response to  
*Technology & the Humanities*

BY CLIFF ROWE

*This piece is a response by Cliff Rowe to an article in the last issue of Prism: Technology & the Humanities.*

**P**rism, as a publication of the Division of Humanities, obviously was on target in focusing its Spring 1994 issue on "Technology & the Humanities." Others in higher education should be—and are—focusing on technology and the social sciences, technology and the arts, and so on.

For me the significance of the juxtaposition lies in Doug Oakman's article that poses the questions of whether we are "educating for virtuous or virtual reality."

As one who educates future practitioners in and consumers of mass media, I marvel along with Oakman at the means available for gathering, packaging and distributing ideas and information. But, like Oakman, I find I'm asking of myself in moments of reflection and of others in conversations if all this technological wizardry is "good" for journalism and the society it serves.

What does the technology have to do, really, with the root values of social responsibility that underlie education in mass-media communication? Indeed, in identifying significant ethical issues in modern mass communication, as I was asked to do recently, I put near the top the use of new technology by both traditional media and the emerging and yet to emerge "new media."

In other words, will hardware and software be used for little more than putting together prettier packages holding information of ever lesser significance for a self-governing society? Or will it be used to gather, assemble and distribute in a more interesting and useful way information of greater significance than much of what mass audiences now receive?

Looking at contemporary journalism as it struggles for survival in an increasingly fragmented marketplace, one would be justified in taking a pessimistic stance in answering that question.

On the other hand, one could take the more

optimistic view that society may be better served in the long run by the new technology, given that things change so rapidly and better ways for marketing information in a free-market society may be just around the corner.

As a teacher, I'll take the optimistic view on the assumption that we can help shape the future through our teaching, whether of journalism or philosophy or whatever. The key to our success lies not only in what we teach, but how we teach.

For instance, the content of our journalism courses will continue to include instruction in reporting, writing, and editing. But now it will fold in the use of computers and related technology in applying those skills. And it must continue to present all this within historical, legal, and moral contexts. If we can keep all three of these elements intact, we will be well on our way to producing journalists capable of acting in society's best interests.

But to complete our task we also must teach in such a way that, as Oakman urges, we hold fast to the values that are at the heart of our society. We will accomplish that by not only teaching those values, but by modeling them in our teaching. If we give over our classrooms to the glitz, convenience, and passivity associated with "courseware," then we cannot blame our students for accepting such prepackaged discourse as the better way of acquiring and advancing knowledge.

Conversely, we can continue to share with our students the satisfaction that comes through diligent and diverse pursuit of knowledge through all avenues of human interaction—classical and contemporary.

And we can demand of them and ourselves that our courses employ that pursuit enroute to "virtuous reality."

*As always we welcome responses to the articles in Prism and encourage ongoing dialogue.*



## Recent Humanities Publications

### Megan Benton

"C. Volmer Nordlunde: The 'Grand Old Man' of Modern Danish Printing," *Printing History* 19 (1993) 33-42. Abstract/review in *Nyt for Bogvenner* 14 (December 1994): 7.

Carl Volmer Nordlunde was the central architect of both the ideology and the visual style of modern Danish typography. Under his guidance, Danish book design achieved the clarity, simplicity, and functional elegance that also distinguish the better-known forms of Danish craft and design. Committed to producing attractive yet inexpensive books, Nordlunde adapted modernist aesthetics and new production technologies to better serve the small but vigorous community of Danish-language readers.

"Typographic Yawp: Leaves of Grass, 1855-1992," *Bookways* 13 (October 1994): 22-31.

Each printer of *Leaves of Grass* has labored to design a book that conveys both the senses and the stature of the text. Whitman himself, in fact, designed editions that issued his rowdy yawp from ornately elaborate parlor-table books. The fundamental paradox of Whitman's poems, radical and populist yet increasingly canonized, has been repeatedly reflected in their modern typographic treatments.

### Susan Brown Carlton

"Constructing Narratives, Seeking Change." *Writing Theory and Critical Theory*. Ed. John Clifford and John Schilb. MLA Series on Research and Scholarship in Composition. New York: Modern Language Association, 1994. 335-340.

This paper is a response to five autobiographical essays in which prominent writing theorists discuss their intellectual development. The essays are analyzed in terms of their narrative ordering principles: models of intelligibility, collegial networks, texts, controversies, and crises precipitated by social stratification. Those principles are in turn examined for their distinctive and differing capacities as instruments for interpreting motive for inquiry.

"Voice and the Naming of Woman." *Voices on Voice: Perspectives, Definitions, Inquiries*. Ed. Kathleen Blake Yancey. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1994. 226-241.

This essay examines alternative feminist theories, cultural feminism, poststructuralist feminism, and positionality and critiques Linda Alcoff's assumption that their differences constitute a philosophical impasse. Drawing on Denise Riley's historical work, I argue that none of these theoretical positions should be jettisoned in the contemporary moment. Each constitutes a response to women's experience of voicelessness, of limitations on the efficacy of speech/writing. Together they constitute a taxonomy of rhetorics for addressing the myriad discourse situations which confront or are created by the feminist stance.

"Social-Epistemic Rhetoric: Traditions, Revisions, Transformations." *Mediations* 18.2 (1994): 25-36.

In an issue dedicated to the memory of James A. Berlin, I examine the relationship of my work on disciplinary discourse to Berlin's theory and practice of social-epistemic rhetoric. I argue for the efficacy of Foucault's definition of a discipline as a discursive formation and examine the implications of that definition for reshaping disciplinary's operative assumptions. I then connect the recent history of the poetic/rhetoric topos to the emergence of social-epistemic rhetoric in composition studies and cultural poetics in literary studies.

### Jack Cady

*Inagehi*, novel, Broken Moon Press, 1994

This is a novel about reverence, and about how humans create their own gods, only to find that their creations are real. The book tells the story of Harriette Johnson, a Cherokee, beginning in 1957. Her odyssey brings her to a confrontation with ancient Cherokee gods, and with the eternal and creative power that runs through the universe.

*Street*, novel, St. Martin's Press, 1994

It is a five act Elizabethan tragedy in the form of a novel. The narrator, a former television pitchman, seeks redemption for his sleazy

deeds by taking his actor's ability to the street. He hopes to identify and stop a murderer of young women. The book is roughly tied to the Green River murders. *If Inagehi* is about power regained, *Street* is about power lost; and worse, the loss of reverence. Metaphorically, it sees the modern city as Jericho, and the walls are tumbling.

"The Night We Buried Road Dog," novella, in *The Year's Best Science Fiction*, Gardner Dozois, ed., St. Martin's Press.

"A Sailor's Pay," short story, in *Sea Cursed*, an anthology of sea stories edited by Liam McDonald, and published by Barnes and Noble.

### Stewart Govig

*Souls Are Made of Endurance: Surviving Mental Illness in the Family* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

In an autobiography of a family and a biography of a patient, this book portrays the struggles of both in the weird, unexpected turns of schizophrenic thought, behavior, and quests for independence. The author weaves Biblical meditations in and out of a son and brother's pilgrimage covering a span of eighteen years. Eventually he finds himself as a companion on the sojourn.

The text also comprises a researched appraisal and critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the mental health laws and institutions of this country. A survey of the literature on the care of the chronically mentally ill population of our nation provides a reference source for counselors, clergy, and other families traveling a similar pathway.

### Patricia O'Connell Killen

*The Art of Theological Reflection*. with John de Beer, New York: Crossroad, 1994.

The seeming irrelevance of religious traditions on the one hand and the use of religious symbols and concepts as weapons of ideological warfare on the other mark on contemporary worlds. Standing on the verge of the twenty-first century is it still possible to relate to wisdom traditions of the past in ways that provide critical insight on our lives and fund creative responses to the myriad challenges that confront us individually and globally?

This book, the fruit of over a decade of work on theological reflection with people in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the Caribbean, offers a modestly affirmative answer. It presents theological reflection as the artful discipline "of exploring individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage" (viii). It shows readers how to engage in such a conversation by building on the ordinary ways that human beings reflect on their experience.

### Erin McKenna

"Social Contract," in *Ready Reference: Ethics*. Pasadena: Salem Press, 1994, pp. 815-817.

Social contract theory is a framework for understanding the origin and organization of human society. It begins with the basic assumption that people are autonomous rational moral agents who agree to give up some of their individual power to do as they please in order to live in cooperation with others who also agree to give up some of their individual power. This piece defines social contract theory and discusses its significance and influence as a political theory. The theories of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are presented, compared, and critiqued.

"Women's Ethics," in *Ready Reference: Ethics*. Pasadena: Salem Press, 1994, pp. 937-939.

Women's ethics have challenged philosophy's traditional emphasis on reason, impartiality, autonomy, and universal principles, thus opening up many areas of criticism not thoroughly considered before in ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and logic. This piece discusses the common classifications of women's ethics and their various affects on traditional theories. The article includes sections on maternal ethics, psychoanalytic ethics, liberal ethics, Marxist and socialist ethics, radical and lesbian ethics. There is also a list of the winners of the Women of Conscience Award from 1963-1990.

continued ►

## Contributors

**Charles A. Bergman**, Professor of English, chair of the English Department, author of *Wild Echoes: Encounters with the Most Endangered Animals in North America*, McGraw-Hill, 1984.

**Judith A. Doenges**, Lecturer in English, teaches women's literature and writing.

**Mary Jane Haemig**, Assistant Professor of Religion, finishing her dissertation on German Lutheran catechetical preaching, 1530-1580.

**Nancy R. Howell**, Assistant Professor of Religion, chair of Women's Studies, and co-chair of the American Academy of Religion, Theology, and Science group.

**Paul O. Ingram**, Professor of Religion, author of *The Modern Buddhist Christian Dialogue*, Edwin Mellon Press, 1985.

**Richard P. Jones**, Associate Professor of English, teaches American literature and poetry writing.

**Edward LeRoy Long, Jr.**, Lecturer in Religion, James W. Pearsall Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics and Theology of Culture, Drew University, author of *Higher Education as a Moral Enterprise*.

**Eric D. Nelson**, Lecturer in Languages, specialist in Greek paleography.

**Clifford G. Rowe**, Professor of Communication, advisor for *The Mast*, and former reporter and editor.

**David O. Seal**, Associate Professor of English, has written on elephants for the *Seattle Weekly* and *The Elephant Managers Association Newsletter*.

**Editorial Board:**  
Erin McKenna, chair  
Susan E. Young  
David O. Seal  
Paul O. Ingram

**Publication Design:**  
Dean Driskell

*Recent Publications continued*

**Douglas Oakman**  
"Cursing Fig Trees and Robbers' Dens: Pronouncement Stories Within Social-Systemic Perspective (Mark 11:12-25 and Parallels)" *Semeia* 64: *The Rhetoric of Pronouncement*, pp. 253-72. Edited by Vernon K. Robbins. Scholars Press, 1993.

*Commentators on the Synoptic Gospels have long puzzled over the meaning of the cursing of the fig tree episode. Recent scholarship has tended to argue that such a pronouncement was a figment of early Christian imagination.*

*In this essay, the cursing of the temple and fig tree are linked systematically in a real social world. Fig trees, proverbial in Israelite tradition for providing a staple food for peasants had become barren under the same powerful controlling interest that governed the Jewish temple. The Synoptics remembered accurately why Jesus had cursed both. His pronouncements had to do with the emergence of a new material order, symbolized under the umbrella concept "kingdom of God." Powerful interests stood in its way, so that a fair amount of cursing was necessary to bring in this new order of blessing.*

**David O. Seal**

"Village Renewal: Could Seattle's Best Urban Village Be in Tacoma?" *Seattle Weekly*, June 8, 1994.

*People tired of strip malls and shopping centers built for cars rather than people are returning to an old idea, the neighborhood, now back with an upscale name: the urban village. Tacoma's Proctor district, in the north end, is an urban village already at the fine-tuning stage. Seattle, urged to pursue the urban village idea by Mayor Norm Rice, is taking note.*

*Proctor's success has been steady if slow. Led by businessman Bill Evans, local business and property owners banded together a dozen years ago to create a distinct district.*

*"People want community now," Evans says. North Tacoma no longer have to drive to Seattle to eat well or see a good flick. When you can walk your son or daughter to a Bugs Bunny festival, you know you're in a neighborhood with soul.*

**Walter Pilgrim**

"Out of Africa - A New Namibia" *Dialog*, Vol. 33, Fall 1994, 305-307.

*This report on the new nation of Namibia arises out of my sabbatical experience teaching one term at Paulinum Seminary, deep in the near-barren heart of this semi-arid land. In my article I reflect on the "new Namibia" born in 1990. While it does not have the sharp tribal conflicts of other African nations, it is off to a slow start, groping for identity and the economic resources to keep alive. And the church, which led the way in the resistance to apartheid, also grapples for a new voice on behalf of the poor and marginalized. I fear Namibia could be forgotten, now that South Africa seeks to find its way in this brave, new, post-apartheid world. ♦*

*Prism is published annually by Pacific Lutheran University's Division of Humanities. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the University or the Division of Humanities. Contents copyright of Pacific Lutheran University, 1995.*



**PACIFIC  
LUTHERAN  
UNIVERSITY**  
Division of Humanities  
Tacoma, WA 98447-0003

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Tacoma, WA  
Permit No. 416

PRISM